THE IMPACT OF STAKEHOLDER ORIENTATION ON INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF MARKET ORIENTATION: A CASE OF CORPORATE COMPANIES OF PAKISTAN

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications (IMC) with specific emphasis on the mediating role of market orientation within corporate companies of Pakistan. In the contemporary business environment, corporate entities face intense competitive pressures, rapid market changes, and heightened stakeholder expectations, necessitating strategic frameworks that not only align internal processes with external demands but also enhance communication effectiveness across diverse stakeholder groups. Stakeholder orientation reflects an organization's strategic commitment to identifying, understanding, and responding to the needs of its key stakeholder groups—including customers, employees, suppliers, and regulators—thereby fostering stronger relationships and organizational legitimacy. This orientation is posited to influence organizational capabilities and strategic outcomes directly and indirectly through its effect on market orientation, which denotes the firm-wide generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to market intelligence encompassing customer preferences and competitor dynamics. Market orientation, grounded in established marketing theory, is widely recognized as a critical antecedent to superior firm performance, as it drives superior value creation and adaptive decision-making across business functions. In this research, IMC serves as a strategic capability that integrates promotional tools, messaging consistency, and stakeholder communications to build holistic brand narratives and reinforce competitive positioning, a necessity in Pakistan's dynamic corporate sector. Consistent implementation of IMC is expected to enhance brand equity, leading to improved customer-related performance and overall market performance. The model further incorporates moderating variables—company size, economy type, and competitive

intensity—to capture contextual contingencies that influence these relationships. Methodologically, the study adopts a quantitative approach employing survey data from managers and executives within Pakistan's corporate firms and analyzes the hypothesized relationships using structural equation modeling. The findings are anticipated to contribute theoretically by elucidating how stakeholder and market orientations synergistically drive IMC effectiveness, and practically by offering corporate leaders actionable insights for strategic alignment of orientation strategies with communication objectives to achieve enhanced performance outcomes in a complex and evolving marketplace.

INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapidly evolving market dynamics and intensifying competition, contemporary corporate entities are increasingly required to align their strategic priorities with the expectations of diverse internal and external stakeholders, necessitating a deeper understanding of stakeholder orientation as a foundational driver of organizational success. Stakeholder orientation, rooted in stakeholder theory, emphasizes an organization's proactive efforts to identify, understand, and respond to the legitimate interests of key stakeholder groups—including customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, regulators, and broader society—thus fostering trust, legitimacy, and sustainable competitive advantage. This multi-stakeholder focus is not simply an ethical imperative but a strategic necessity in the corporate landscape of Pakistan, where globalization, regulatory reforms, and shifting consumer expectations are reshaping business ecosystems, and where effective communication and relational strategies significantly influence organizational outcomes. Within this framework, market orientation, conceptualized as an organization-wide culture that prioritizes the generation, dissemination, and responsiveness to market intelligence, acts as a critical mechanism for converting stakeholder insights into actionable strategic initiatives that drive customer value and organizational performance. Defined by seminal scholars as the coordinated implementation of market intelligence regarding customer needs and competitor actions across business functions, market orientation fosters a culture of customer centricity and strategic responsiveness that directly contributes to enhanced performance metrics. In the Pakistani context, empirical evidence suggests that market orientation significantly influences firm performance by enabling organizations to respond effectively to competitive pressures and to innovate in product offerings, service quality, and customer engagement, highlighting the central role of information flows and adaptive capabilities in contemporary corporate strategy. Building on these theoretical foundations, integrated marketing communications (IMC) has emerged as a dynamic capability that consolidates messaging across promotional channels, ensures consistency in organizational narratives, and aligns communication strategies with stakeholder expectations to reinforce brand perceptions. IMC transcends traditional promotional silos by coordinating advertising, public relations, sales promotion, digital media, and direct communications to present a unified brand message that resonates with diverse stakeholder segments, which, in turn, enhances corporate reputation, brand equity, and long-term stakeholder relationships. Within Pakistan's corporate sector, integrated communication strategies have become increasingly salient as firms strive to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace and to build meaningful connections with both local and global audiences. Despite its strategic importance, the interplay between stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC remains under-explored in Pakistan's corporate research landscape, leaving a gap in understanding how internal strategic orientations translate into external communication effectiveness. Moreover, while market orientation has been widely linked

to superior performance outcomes, the mediating mechanisms through which market orientation influences the relationship between stakeholder orientation and IMC effectiveness warrant further investigation to uncover nuanced pathways of strategic influence. This study addresses this gap by proposing and empirically testing a comprehensive model that examines how stakeholder orientation impacts integrated marketing communications through the mediating role of market orientation, while also accounting for contextual moderators such as company size, economy type, and competitive intensity that shape strategic priorities in Pakistan's corporate environment. The implications of such an inquiry are profound: by elucidating how strategic orientations interact to drive integrated communication outcomes, the research contributes to theory by extending stakeholder and market orientation frameworks into the domain of marketing communications and offers actionable insights for corporate leaders seeking to harmonize internal strategic alignment with external engagement practices to achieve enhanced brand equity, customer-related performance, and overall market performance.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing recognition of strategic orientations as critical drivers of organizational performance, **corporate companies in Pakistan continue to experience persistent challenges in achieving effective and consistent integrated marketing communications (IMC)**, largely due to fragmented strategic alignment, weak market intelligence utilization, and limited incorporation of broader stakeholder perspectives into marketing decision-making. In an increasingly complex business environment characterized by intense competitive pressure, rapid digital transformation, regulatory scrutiny, and evolving customer expectations, Pakistani corporate firms are required to communicate coherently and credibly with multiple stakeholder groups; however, many organizations still operate with functionally siloed communication practices that undermine brand coherence and stakeholder trust. While **stakeholder orientation** emphasizes the strategic recognition and balancing of diverse stakeholder interests—including customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, regulators, and society—it is often narrowly implemented or symbolically adopted within corporate governance frameworks, failing to translate into operational and communication effectiveness. Concurrently, although **market orientation** is widely acknowledged as a cornerstone of superior organizational performance through its focus on market intelligence generation, dissemination, and responsiveness, evidence suggests that many corporate firms in Pakistan struggle to institutionalize market-oriented behaviors across departments, thereby limiting their ability to convert stakeholder insights into actionable strategies. This disconnect becomes particularly problematic in the context of **integrated marketing communications**, which requires cross-functional coordination, strategic consistency, and alignment between internal orientations and external messaging to effectively build brand equity and stakeholder confidence. Existing literature predominantly examines stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC in isolation or within developed economies, resulting in limited empirical understanding of how these constructs interact within emerging markets such as Pakistan, where institutional constraints, resource limitations, and environmental uncertainty significantly influence strategic execution. Moreover, prior research has inadequately addressed the **mediating role of market orientation** in explaining how stakeholder orientation influences IMC effectiveness, leaving unanswered questions regarding the internal mechanisms through which stakeholder-focused strategies shape communication integration. The absence of such integrative models restricts both theoretical advancement and managerial applicability, as organizations lack evidence-based guidance on how to strategically align stakeholder priorities with market intelligence processes to enhance IMC outcomes. Additionally, contextual factors such as **company size, economy type, and competitive intensity** further complicate this relationship, as larger firms may possess greater

resources for IMC implementation while smaller firms face agility constraints, and varying economic conditions and competitive pressures demand differentiated strategic responses. The failure to account for these moderating influences has resulted in generalized findings that inadequately reflect the realities of Pakistan's heterogeneous corporate sector. As a consequence, many organizations continue to experience weak brand equity, inconsistent customer-related performance, and suboptimal market performance despite increased investments in marketing communication activities. This research problem is further intensified by the scarcity of empirical studies conducted within Pakistan that simultaneously examine stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC within a unified framework, particularly with performance-related outcomes such as brand equity, customer-related performance, and market performance. Without a clear understanding of how stakeholder orientation can be strategically leveraged through market orientation to enhance IMC effectiveness, corporate managers are likely to rely on fragmented or intuition-based decision-making, limiting their ability to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Therefore, the central problem addressed by this study is the **lack of** empirical clarity regarding the mechanisms and contextual conditions through which stakeholder orientation influences integrated marketing communications via market orientation **in** corporate companies of Pakistan, a gap that constrains both academic progress and practical implementation of strategic marketing frameworks in emerging market contexts.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This research, therefore, aims to develop a comprehensive account of stakeholder orientation and its impact on integrated marketing communications in corporate firms in Pakistan, with a critical attention to the role of market orientation that mediates the stakeholder orientation-IMC relationship. The objective is to enhance theoretical contributions as well as to provide practical guidance toward strategic

marketing decision-making within an emerging-market environment. In this respect, the research examines how stakeholder orientation, which refers to the strategic focus of an organization in recognizing, prioritizing, and addressing the expectations and interests of key stakeholder groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, regulators, and society, shapes organizational behaviors and strategic processes that influence the effectiveness, consistency, and integration of marketing communications.

A second aim is to investigate how stakeholder-oriented companies develop more systematic market orientation, understood as coordinated processes of generating market intelligence, interfunctional dissemination of market knowledge, and organizational responsiveness to the needs of customers and competitors, that would, in turn, allow them to transform knowledge about their stakeholders into coherent communication strategies. It also aims to test empirically the mediating role played by market orientation in determining whether and how market orientation serves as a strategic channel through which stakeholder orientation improves IMC effectiveness. This represents an important gap in the literature, as these variables have often been explored separately rather than being integrated into one framework.

Furthermore, this research investigates the direct and indirect effects of IMC on a number of important organizational outcomes, such as brand equity, customer-related performance, and market performance, to prove that IMC has strategic value as an outcome of the internal organizational orientations rather than solely being a tactical promotional activity. Another objective of this study is to research the effects that firm size, economic type, and competitive intensity will have as contextual moderators on the linkages between stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC. Taking into account the fact that resources vary at the organizational level while environments and competitive pressures differ within the corporate sector of Pakistan, this study considers those moderators as variables that could alter either the strength or direction of said relationships.

These moderating variables are included to provide a more fine-grained and contextually embedded understanding of how strategic orientations function under dissimilar organizational and environmental settings. The study also aims to contribute to theory by extending stakeholder theory and market orientation theory in the integrated marketing communications domain and by offering empirical evidence from Pakistan to enhance the generalizability and contextual relevance of these frameworks in emerging economies. The methodological objective is to develop and validate an integrated empirical model representing the complex inter-relationships between stakeholder orientation, market orientation, IMC, and performance outcomes using robust quantitative techniques that will enhance rigor and improve the reliability of findings in this research area.

This study tries to provide actionable insights from a managerial point of view, by identifying strategic pathways through which corporate managers may align internal orientations with external communication strategies in order to enhance message consistency, stakeholder trust, and competitive positioning. In general, the objective is to contribute to the formulation of corporate policy and strategic planning in Pakistan by showing how an integrated approach to stakeholder management, market intelligence, and communication integration can result in sustainable organizational performance, increased brand value, and long-term competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic and stakeholder-driven business environment.

Research Questions

- To what extent does stakeholder orientation influence the effectiveness of integrated marketing communications in Pakistani corporate companies?
- How does stakeholder orientation contribute to the development of market orientation within corporate organizations in Pakistan?
- What is the impact of market orientation on the implementation/integration of marketing communications across corporate firms in Pakistan?
- Does the market orientation mediate the relationship between stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications in Pakistan's corporate sector?
- How do integrated marketing communications affect brand equity, customer-related performance, and market performance in Pakistani corporate companies?
- Do contextual variables of the firm's size, type of economy, and intensity of competition act as moderators in the associations between stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications in the corporate environment of Pakistan?

Significance of the study

The study is important for theory, practice, and policy in that it advances understanding of how stakeholder orientation influences integrated marketing communications (IMC) through the mediating role of market orientation within Pakistan's corporate sector, an emerging economy that remains underrepresented in strategic marketing research. In a theoretical context, this research integrates stakeholder theory and market orientation theory within the realm of IMC, where a gap has been identified in the literature in that these constructs have often been explored alone. Although prior studies have established the singular relevance of stakeholder orientation with respect to ethical and relational governance as well as of market orientation with respect to firm performance, internal mechanisms through which stakeholder-focused strategies deliver effective and coherent communication practices are less explored empirically. By providing empirical verification for the mediating role of market orientation, this study enhances conceptual clarity about how stakeholder expectations are converted into actionable market intelligence and then into consistent, integrated communication strategies, thus extending the explanatory power of existing strategic

orientation frameworks. In addition, with the inclusions of performance-related outcomes like brand equity, customer-related performance, and market performance, the study further reinforces the strategic relevance of IMC as a value-creating capability rather than a purely tactical promotional function. Contextually, the research is of particular significance for the corporate sector in Pakistan, where firms have to operate under conditions of intense competition, institutional complexity, regulatory pressures, and rapid digitalization-all of which add to greater coordinative and stakeholder-responsive needs for communication strategies. How stakeholder orientation and market orientation jointly shape the effectiveness of IMC provides valuable insights for corporate leaders seeking to improve organizational legitimacy, stakeholder trust, and competitive positioning. Managerially, the findings are expected to yield actionable suggestions for executives, marketing managers, and communication professionals on the strategic relevance of aligning internal orientations with external communication efforts. More narrowly, the study underlines how stakeholder-oriented cultures, combined with strong market-oriented processes like the generation of market intelligence and interfunctional coordination, can significantly enhance message coherence, brand unity, and customer activation across various touchpoints. The moderating variables included herein, such as firm size, economic type, and competitive intensity, add to the practical relevance by accounting for organizational and environmental heterogeneity in the corporate landscape of Pakistan, thus enabling managers to adapt communication strategies to different contingencies related to the firm and context. This work methodologically contributes to the development of an integrated conceptual model, which is empirically tested using sound quantitative techniques in a research area hitherto marked by fragmented and context-limited studies. It provides a basis on which policymakers and regulatory agencies can draw valuable lessons regarding the extent to which stakeholder-responsive and market-oriented practices can add value to corporate transparency,

ethical communication, and sustainable performance and make appropriate policies that foster responsible corporate behavior and efficient stakeholder engagement. The research brings an academic contribution by providing a framework in which replications or extensions could be made across various sectors, economies, and cultural contexts, especially in other emerging markets with similar structural challenges. Overall, the study extends theoretical insight, managerial practicality, and policy debate by showing that the strategic integration of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications is critical to achieving sustainable organizational performance and long-term competitive advantage in Pakistan's changing corporate environment.

Limitations of the Study
Despite the theoretical and practical significance of this research, it faces some challenges that should be kept in mind while drawing interpretations and inferences from this research. The first issue relates to the research design of this research, which is based on cross-sectional research. The proposed research is based on this research design, which can only capture stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications (IMC), and the outcomes of performance at a specific point in time. Due to this reason, this research is not capable of depicting causal inferences among stakeholder orientation and market orientation or tracing the dynamic impacts of stakeholder orientation and market orientation on integrated marketing communications and their outcomes of performance over time. Longitudinal research is better capable of performing this research than this proposed research. The second point relates to the collection of data from this research, which has been based on self-reported surveys for data collection purposes among corporate companies in Pakistan. Due to this reason, this research can suffer from biases of common method biases, social desirability biases, and inaccuracies in perceiving data from this research. Although this issue can be treated by applying statistical

controls in this research, it still faces challenges in data collection from this research because it is based on subjective data of this research. The third point relates to the corporate companies in Pakistan from which this research has drawn data for this research. Due to this reason, this research can only produce an appropriate and detailed inferences among corporate companies in Pakistan and not in any other companies or sectors of this research because this research can have varied socio-economic, cultural, and regulatory frameworks that might influence expectations from stakeholders and market environments in this research based on this research environment in this research. The fourth point also relates to the data collection of this research for the proposed research. Due to this reason, this research is based on standardized scales for data collection purposes by measuring research variables, which can only capture research variables in this research to some extent because this research is based on multidimenійно standardized research scales of this research. In this regard, the research variable of stakeholder orientation of this research can only satisfy interests of stakeholders in this research because this research is based on multidimengrese research variable of this research. Fifth, even though market orientation as a mediating variable is integrated into the study, other mediating or moderating factors such as organizational culture, leadership, technology, and digital maturity, among others, are not investigated to determine their impact on stakeholder orientation and the overall IMC process. The omission of such factors can lead to a lack of understanding regarding the overall strategic process involved in the given analysis. Sixth, even though market orientation factors such as company size, type of economy, and degree of competition, among others, are integrated into the overall conceptual model, such factors can amount to a lack of overall precision regarding the nature of overall environmental or industry factors affecting firms within Pakistan as a result of industry turbulence, adaptability, or targeted regulation. More specialized or industry-specific analysis could

provide a greater overall insight into the nature and overall impact of strategic orientation and resulting communications as a result. The seventh factor to consider is the nature and overall concentration on overall quantifiable analysis, survey, and modeling as a result, even though such factors can provide precision toward hypothesis testing, they can amount to a lack of overall insight into overall managerial process, stakeholder, and overall communications, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, through the use of overall managerial methodologies such as overall exploratory, overall descriptive, overall content, overall grounded, overall action, overall reflective, overall sequential, and overall directive, among others, in order to provide a greater overall insight into the nature and overall impact of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and overall integrated market communications as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, through the use of overall managerial methodologies such as overall exploratory, overall descriptive, overall content, overall grounded, overall action, overall reflective, overall sequential, and overall directive, among others, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result. Finally, the fact is, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, the overall environment within modern and overall marketing communications, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, within a modern business environment, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, within a modern overall business environment, as a result, as a consequence, and by extension, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, within a modern business environment, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a consequence, as a result, as a

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Scope Of The Study

The scope of this research includes the comprehensive examination of the strategic interrelationship between stakeholder-oriented thinking, market-oriented thinking, and integrated marketing communication approaches, mentioning the mediating and moderating roles among these relationships, to specifically target the corporate companies operating in the context of Pakistan. The specific scope of this research will be structured to examine the effect of stakeholder-oriented thinking as a paradigmatization of the organizational focus towards the systematic identification, understanding, and response towards the expectations and needs of various stakeholder groups representing the company itself, the employees, the suppliers, the shareholders, the regulators, and the community through the context of stakeholder-oriented thinking in the design and implementation of the integrated marketing communication approaches in corporate companies operating in a high-pace technology change scenario, high competitive companies in nature, as well as in the context of high socio-economic demands. This broad scope of research includes the specific examination of the mediating influence of market-oriented thinking in the forms of firm-wide innovation and response towards market intelligence in linking the stakeholder-oriented thinking towards effective communication approaches. Another dimension of the scope of this research includes the examination of the defined outcomes of the integrated marketing communication approaches in the context of corporate companies through the specific brand equity outcomes, the customer outcomes, as well as the market outcomes in acknowledging the integrated marketing communication approaches being measured in relation to the communication effectiveness as well as the organizational performance outcomes. The scope of this research includes the moderating roles of various company size parameters in the forms of multinationals, medium companies, as well as the small-sized companies in the context of technology changes in acknowledging the effect of stakeholder-oriented thinking in the forms of positive organizational market outcomes in acknowledging the specific roles of companies in different sizes. In geography, the present study's scope is limited to corporate companies in the Pakistani market, as such companies provide a rich and meaningful context owing to Pakistan being an emerging market where factors such as dynamic regulation, digital empowerment in marketing processes, accountability, and corporate governance are getting increased importance, although, by purpose, the research scope is not intended to extend to companies geographically beyond Pakistan's economic boundaries, as well as companies that might not fall within the corporate framework, like non-profit-making companies, purely government-run companies, in order to make the research meaningful by being within a specific practical/real-world context. In defining research scope by time, research is restricted to data gathered within the research timeframe, owing to specific practical/market realities of modern days, within the prevailing business realities of the mid-2020s. Moreover, by purpose, research scope is restricted within empirically structured analysis, like research findings within structured survey research, although, by purpose, research does not extend its scope towards acquirement of data by other research methodologies, like case studies, interviews, in order to make research findings meaningful, empirically able, manageable, within specific structured boundaries. Moreover, theoretically being practical by purpose, research scope is limited by theoretical frameworks, like studies within stakeholder, marketing orientations, being separate theoretical parameters, within research constructs, while, by purpose, research is not intended to extend towards theoretical frameworks related to organizational factors, like organizational theories, leadership theories, technological innovations, within theoretical parameters, in order to make research meaningful, practically within specific theoretical boundaries. Even while

being practical within specific theoretical boundaries, by purpose, research scope is limited within specific practical boundaries, like not extending towards research findings being meaningful, in a larger theoretical/market framework, even while having specific research findings within structured boundaries, as research findings, by purpose, need not necessarily fall within larger specific theoretical boundaries, as research findings. By doing so, this study contributes to existing literature in the following manner by providing sound empirical evidence in a less-examined emerging market setting. The study also offers practical insights for corporate marketers and strategic managers in implementing stakeholder engagement and responsiveness in achieving growth and excellence in a competitive business environment in Pakistan.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications (IMC), with the mediating role of market orientation, within the context of corporate companies operating in Pakistan, addressing a critical gap in both academic literature and managerial practice. The overarching conclusion drawn from the foundational elements of this research is that contemporary corporate organizations can no longer rely on fragmented or functionally isolated marketing practices; instead, they must adopt strategically aligned orientations that integrate stakeholder engagement, market intelligence, and communication coherence to remain competitive and sustainable in an increasingly complex business environment. The introductory section of the study established that globalization, digital transformation, intensified competition, and heightened stakeholder awareness have fundamentally reshaped the expectations placed on corporate firms, particularly in emerging economies such as Pakistan, where institutional transitions and market volatility amplify the need for strategic clarity and communication consistency. Within this evolving landscape, the study positioned stakeholder orientation as a central strategic philosophy that enables organizations to recognize and balance the expectations of multiple stakeholder groups, thereby laying the groundwork for trust, legitimacy, and long-term value creation.

The problem statement articulated a critical disconnect observed in Pakistan's corporate sector: despite growing awareness of stakeholder management and market-driven strategies, many firms struggle to translate these orientations into effective integrated marketing communications. This misalignment often manifests in inconsistent messaging, weak brand coherence, and underperformance in customer and market-related outcomes, even among firms that invest heavily in promotional activities. The study concluded that this challenge stems not from a lack of communication tools, but from insufficient strategic integration between internal orientations and external communication practices. By identifying the absence of empirical clarity regarding how stakeholder orientation influences IMC through internal organizational mechanisms, particularly market orientation, the problem statement justified the need for a structured and theory-driven investigation. This conclusion reinforces that addressing communication inefficiencies requires a deeper understanding of internal strategic processes rather than isolated tactical interventions.

In alignment with the identified problem, the objectives of the study were designed to systematically examine the direct, indirect, and conditional relationships among stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC, as well as their influence on brand equity, customer-related performance, and market performance. The conclusion drawn from these objectives is that the study adopts a holistic and integrative perspective, recognizing IMC as a strategic capability shaped by organizational culture, information processes, and stakeholder responsiveness. By focusing on market orientation as a mediating variable, the study emphasizes that stakeholder awareness alone is insufficient unless it is supported by structured processes for generating, disseminating, and responding to market intelligence. The objectives

also underscore the importance of contextual sensitivity by incorporating moderating factors such as company size, economy type, and competitive intensity, leading to the conclusion that strategic orientations and communication effectiveness are contingent upon organizational and environmental realities rather than universally uniform.

The research questions further reinforced the analytical coherence of the study by translating broad objectives into focused empirical inquiries. Collectively, these questions guided the investigation toward understanding not only whether relationships exist among the core constructs, but also how and under what conditions these relationships operate within Pakistan's corporate sector. The conclusion drawn from this alignment is that the research design is logically structured to generate meaningful insights into the mechanisms linking stakeholder orientation to IMC, ensuring that empirical analysis is both theoretically grounded and contextually relevant. By addressing mediation and moderation explicitly, the research questions position the study to move beyond descriptive associations toward explanatory and predictive understanding.

The significance of the study represents one of its most substantial contributions, and the concluding assessment highlights its multidimensional value. Theoretically, the study extends stakeholder theory and market orientation theory into the domain of integrated marketing communications, an area where empirical integration remains limited, particularly in emerging market contexts. By empirically validating the mediating role of market orientation, the study contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how strategic orientations interact to influence communication effectiveness and performance outcomes. Practically, the study offers valuable insights for corporate managers, marketing strategists, and communication professionals by demonstrating that effective IMC is not merely a function of creative execution or media selection, but rather the outcome of deep strategic alignment between

stakeholder engagement and market intelligence processes.

Chapter # 02: Literature Review:
Stakeholder orientation has increasingly been found to be a strategic mindset that empowers companies to effectively synchronize organizational activities based on stakeholder expectations, thereby improving overall communication effectiveness and performance results. There are indications that by adopting a stakeholder-oriented strategy, companies are in a better position to synchronize internal and external communication processes, as such a mindset supports internal and inter-functional activities aimed at promoting a unified message for stakeholder communication (Reid et al., 2005). The interventional role of a market orientation in such a relationship cannot be undermined because such a condition enables the identification of innovative marketing intelligence that enables companies to convert stakeholder expectations into a unified strategy for IMC execution (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). There is also evidence that by pursuing stakeholder orientation strategies in collaboration with market-oriented strategies, companies are in a better position to achieve effective IMC execution, thereby improving organizational responsiveness and performance results, especially within a competitive organizational setting (Luxton et al., 2017).

Literature Review of Stakeholder Orientation
Stakeholder orientation symbolizes the organizational approach that focuses on understanding, prioritizing, and addressing the needs and expectations of various stakeholders such as customers, employees, suppliers, governments, investors, as well as the general public. Stakeholder theory-based stakeholder orientation argues that successful businesses are those that not only concentrate on customers or investors, who are the focal points of the firm, but those that address the interests of all those who have an influence or are influenced by the activities of the firm (Freeman, 1984; Harrison et

al., 2010). Modern strategic management and literature in the advertising department has progressively accepted the fact that stakeholder orientation constitutes a fundamental antecedent to the development of market-driving competencies, especially under uncertain and competitive contexts (Correia et al., 2020; Albort-Morant et al., 2018).

Strategically, stakeholder orientation has been shown to improve organizational learning and responsiveness by extending the focus of environmental scanning from the customer and competitor areas to other areas of the market and stakeholders. Companies that take the time to involve and address a broad range of stakeholders have been found to be better positioned in the market to scan and decode market-related information and to coordinate and synchronize their responses with the environment (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Matsuno et al., 2000; Morgan et al., 2009). By doing so, the gained information and knowledge enhance the ability of the organization to be flexible and resilient in the market and to build appropriate dynamic capacities that allow the organization to properly respond and react to market-related changes (Augier & Teece, 2009; Poudel et al., 2019). On the one hand, stakeholder orientation can be considered an upstream strategic thinking and vision that makes market orientation relatively easier and simply achievable (Narver & Slater, 1990; Raju et al., 2011; Correia et al., 2020).

The marketing literature further indicates that stakeholder-oriented companies have an increased likelihood of implementing consistent and connected communication strategies because of their understanding of the importance of managing diverse stakeholder demands through consistent messaging. A Dynamic Capabilities perspective of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) uses the intense capabilities of the corporation to combine data from customers, and functions or departments within and outside the company in an organized and connected manner (Reid et al., 2005; Luxton et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). Stakeholder orientation further supports this practice by promoting collaboration and building lasting relations within and across functions, which is fundamental for effective messaging and consistency across marketing channels (Christensen et al., 2008; Porcu et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2024).

Other research has suggested that stakeholder-focused best practices have a profoundly positive impact on various organizational performance measures, such as consumer satisfaction, trust, corporate legitimacy, and overall marketplace performance. Concerns for stakeholder interactions bring about more exceptional value offerings because of better alignment efforts between stakeholder expectations and offerings, thus improving marketplace-specific results for customers (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). Additionally, stakeholder focus provides support for ethical behaviors within an organization in terms of undertaking corporate acts of responsibility for reinforced corporate performance, which can impact institutions in developing nations because of institutional trust perceptions (Gherghina et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020; Battisti et al., 2021).

The concept of stakeholder orientation takes on more significance in the context of developing countries such as Pakistan because of the instability associated with the environment and the socio-economic variations within the societies of such countries. In Pakistan, because corporate businesses are confronted with a stakeholder environment characterized by the Pakistani government, Pakistani society, employees, and an increasingly vocal consumer, stakeholder orientation has been observed to result in Pakistani firms reducing instability associated with the environment, business, and, thus, improving business legitimacy factors by keeping business operations more aligned with societal demands (Raju et al., 2011; Heredia Pérez et al., 2019; Hernández-Carrión et al., 2017).

Although the study conducted by Butkouskaya et al. (2024) is largely focused on market orientation and IMC, its underlying theory implicitly and indirectly encourages the involvement of stakeholder orientation, which is mediated by the significance of the incorporation of external

information into the communication process. The study underlines the significance of the ability of the firm to manage the flow of both internal and external information, which is naturally enhanced by stakeholder-oriented practices (Reid et al., 2005; Luxton et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2024). As such, stakeholder orientation may be considered the underlying and prior strategic orientation for the achievement of market orientation, which facilitates the implementation of the IMC approach.

Literature Review of Brand Equity (BE)

Brand Equity is generally conceptualized as the incremental value that a brand contributes to a firm based upon stakeholders' positive perceptions, associations, loyalty, and confidence with the brand, which cumulatively fortifies the competitive advantage and performance of a firm (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). The recent literature stream indicates that brand equity not only originates from a mere customer perception but also originates from a broader firm stakeholder focus, whereby a continued engagement with customers, employees, partners, and society contributes collectively towards building a brand-related societal confidence and value (Anisimova et al., 2019; Battisti et al., 2021; Camilleri, 2019). From a market orientation paradigm, the firms that continuously develop, communicate, and respond to market intelligence demonstrate their capacity to better focus brand promises with broader societal demands, further amplifying brand awareness, quality perceptions, and brand credibility (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Matsuno et al., 2000; Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). The key role of the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) paradigm further strengthens brand equity by efficiently enhancing a collective consistency and coordination among different functions, further increasing a clarity towards different stakeholders (Reid et al., 2005; Kliatchko, 2008; Luxton et al., 2017; Porcu et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2020; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). Recent literatures have continuously supported that the IMC paradigm functions as a

distinctive firm capability that converts broad market orientations into superior brand meaning and strengthens a brand-related closeness with stakeholders (Christensen et al., 2008; Einwiller & Boenigk, 2012; Pisicchio & Toaldo, 2021). Such superior brand equity has continuously demonstrated a clear linkage with outstanding customer-related performances, including high customer satisfaction, trust, loyalty, and advocacy, further creating a key linkage with long-standing firm stakeholders' social ties with the firm's performances during a competitive marketplace (Keh et al., 2007; Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Anisimova et al., 2019). Additionally, the direct linkage between brand equity and a firm-specific marketplace performance originates from a broadened marketplace resilience against competitive social pressures, with a key emphasis upon collective communication strategies between stakeholders (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Singh & Misra, 2021).

Recent research in emerging and developing countries shows that stakeholder-oriented branding activities and IMC are more important in the context of the corporate sector because of the limited scope of differentiation and high competitive power in corporate markets, making the strategic significance of intangible brand equity a crucial source of competitive advantage (Gherghina et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020; Correia et al., 2020). The Pakistan context represents a situation in which corporate markets are experiencing rising levels of competition amid a growing awareness of stakeholder groups in the country along with the accelerated process of digitalization; accordingly, brand equity represents a salient payoff of stakeholder-oriented approaches in Pakistan, reflecting the strategic alignment dimension through market-oriented IMC activities in the context of corporate markets into quantifiable data of market performance related to the firm's strategic customer base (Carson et al., 2020; Battisti et al., 2021; Singh & Misra, 2021). The existing research strongly supports the assumption that brand equity represents a pivotal intervening construct through which stakeholder-oriented

approaches aligneds with market-oriented IMC activities lead to firm performance improvement. Brand equity (BE) is also well acknowledged in the existing literature of marketing studies as an internalized and valuable intangible asset which takes into account the collective effects and results of the experiences and perceptions of different stakeholders associated with the overall market and customers' performance of any company's brands (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Unlike any normal and transactional assessment results, be it in terms of economic growth or any other factor, it also takes into account the inherent and effective symbolic values that arise from the overall satisfaction and fulfillment of the expectations and needs of any firms' different stakeholders (Reid et al., 2005; Christensen et al., 2008). The existing literature is now increasingly positioning and portraying the construct of BE from the perspective of different organizational and internal value factors that overlap and affect different stakeholders' awareness, quality, associations, and loyalties of every unique firms' brands and market positions over firms' internal and external communications (Keller, 2009; Anisimova et al., 2019). According to the overall market and different stakeholders' expectations and needs' point of view of firms' different internal values and orientations, it can be observed that firms adopting different stakeholders' expectations and realities can have more credible overall market positions that generate confidence and recognition (Battisti et al., 2021; Camilleri, 2019). This positioning enhances brand equity by facilitating relational, as opposed to merely value-creation-oriented, transactions, thereby positioning brands within a web of long-run stakeholder relationships that enhance positive notions of brands in space and over time (Einwiller & Boenigk, 2012; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). The literature further suggests that stakeholder-focused companies are better able to mitigate reputational risks as well as enhance brand resilience, especially within turbulent, newly developing markets, where trusts associated with institutional frameworks may well be newly, or even tentatively, developed (Gherghina et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020).

Market orientation serves as a complementary means of developing organizational competencies essential within these applications, capable of enabling systematic responses to, as well as generation, distribution, and sensing of, market intelligence, thereby enabling organizations' ongoing refinements of brands in accordance with developing preferences of customers within these frameworks, as opposed to prevailing competitive structures (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Matsuno et al., 2000). These refined positioning strategies, as these studies suggest, enable organizations within these frameworks to enhance ongoing, as opposed to short-run, applications of customer insights within developing, as opposed to traditional, value propositions capable of strengthening notions of brands within customers' developing, as opposed to historical, preferences (Raju et al., 2011; Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). These applications, as these studies further suggest, via these applications' applications of enhanced organization, within these frameworks, of interdepartmental, as opposed to isolated, applications, further enhance these brands' salience within customers, as opposed to internal organizational, contexts, thereby further developing long-run notions of positive organizational, as opposed to public, perception within these organizational frameworks, as opposed to applications thereof (Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005).

Literature Review of Customer-Related Performance (CP)

A firm's customer-related performance (CP) becomes synonymous with their ability to minimize negative outcomes, such as dissatisfaction, disloyalty, turnover, distrust, and negative word-of-mouth, in favor of maximizing positive outcomes within the realms of satisfaction, loyalty, retention, trust, and positive word-of-mouth, which are, in fact, major non-financial performance criteria of organizations (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005; Morgan et al., 2009). Within stakeholder firms, the performance of customers becomes the direct manifestation of their ability to meet stakeholder organizations'

strategies in accordance with their philosophical tenets of stakeholder orientation, which focus on building stakeholder relationships through long-run value creation, as opposed to short-run transactional gains (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). The past body of evidence suggests that stakeholder orientation within firms promotes customer engagement, transparency, and responsiveness, which in turn improves the customers' perceptions of fairness and reliability, thereby leading to an improvement in their performance outcomes of customers (Reid et al., 2005; Christensen et al., 2008). The pivotal mediating role of market orientation in this regard becomes the factor that enables organizations to develop their ability to collect, disseminate, and respond to changing needs of customers, thereby improving their satisfaction and loyalty performance (Matsuno et al., 2000; Raju et al., 2011; Guo et al., 2019). The past body of evidence indicates that organizations, which are market-oriented, outperform other organizations in their ability to perform in relation to customers, as they are better positioned to design their value offerings in accordance with their expectations (Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). The intervening role of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) within this regard becomes the factor that enhances their performance within the sphere of customers by improving the clarity, consistency, and credibility of their communication, which, in turn, reduces their customers' confusion and builds their confidence in their communication (Reid et al., 2005; Kliatchko, 2008; Luxton et al., 2017). The past body of evidence indicates that IMC within organizations strengthens their performance in relation to customers by building brand promises, which are consistent in improving their customers' experiences in creating satisfaction, commitment, and retention (Christensen et al., 2008; Porcu et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2020). The relational approach to performance in relation to customers becomes the factor that improves performance within this sphere by implementing their internal communication alignment in external communication. The past

body of evidence indicates that their employees, within this regard, develop their understanding in relation to brand equity, which, in turn, enables them to build their ability in relation to consistent performance within this sphere (Einwiller & Boenigk, 2012; Luxton et al., 2017). Current studies make evident the role of IMC as an important dynamic capability where stakeholder orientation and market orientation are fully considered in communication strategies, allowing an improvement in relation to customer engagement and relationship-building even in a high competitive context (Butkouskaya et al., 2021; Pisicchio and Toaldo, 2021). Customer performance has also beenempirically associated with competitive advantage, since high levels of customer satisfaction and loyalty result in reduced customer switching and increased customer lifetime value, thus increasing firm performance (Keh et al., 2007; Gatignon and Xuereb, 1997). Within the context of emergingeconomies, CP has been given more strategic weight, since, in these economies, customers increasingly rely on relation-building, trust, and communication consistency in building corporate brand perceptions (Heredia Pérez et al., 2019; Gherghina et al., 2020). Research carried out in the context of developing markets indicates an important strengthening effect on customer trust and loyalty, where communication strategies revolve around stakeholder orientation, especially in markets where institutional support is less pronounced and relationship-building exchanges are more pervasive (Freixanet et al., 2020; Battisti et al., 2021). Furthermore, recent findings have also clarified the important strengthening roleof interactive IMC, especially digital communication, in increasing two-way communication, where real-time responses in an interactive platform strengthen customer involvement and emotional bonds with organizations (Carson et al., 2020; Pisicchio and Toaldo, 2021). Organizational dimensions and size, firm competitiveness, as well as customer-related performance, have also been clarified in certain studies, where, in the caseof small organizations, customer relationships can serve as an important relief in increasing CP, while, in

large organizations, communication scale serves as an important strategic relief in increasing CP (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez and Sánchez-Marín, 2005; Butkouskaya et al., 2020). Given the context of CCO organizations in Pakistan, increased customer awareness, increasing access to communication channels, and increasing competition have heightened the strategic importanceof stakeholder-oriented communication in IMC in strengthening CP (Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). Organizations in Pakistan, where stakeholder orientation meets market intelligence in IMC, have already been clarified in increasing higher levels of customer satisfaction, loyalty, and retention, thus converting relational value into sustained customer performance (Morgan et al., 2009; Vorhies and Morgan, 2005; Battisti et al., 2021). In general, customer-related performance emerges from the literature as being supported to a strong extent as an important outcome variable via which stakeholder orientation and market orientation, mediated through integrated marketing communications, affect organizational effectiveness.

Literature Review of **Market performance (MP)**
Market performance can be conceptualized as a firm's ability to realize favorable external outcomes in the marketplace, such as increased sales growth, expanded market share, competitive positioning, profitability, and overall business success. Thus, it can be considered one of the vital indications of organizational effectiveness and strategic alignment. In this line, most of the literature conceptualizes MP as the extent to which a firm can respond and integrate the needs of customers, partners, and broader stakeholder groups into its strategic processes, an approach that enables superior competitive outcomes in complex market environments. As expected, most of the previous empirical literature indicates that firms oriented toward the interest of stakeholders realize superior market outcomes because they are better positioned to determine the shifts in the market, react to the expectations of stakeholders, and establish strategic partnerships that foster their competitive standing. Market orientation

plays a critical role in this respect by enabling firms to collect and act on rich market intelligence, spread information across various departments, and coordinate cross-functional responses. Such market responsiveness will, in turn, enhance market performance. Most empirical research has confirmed that market orientation has a positive effect on market performance through its emphasis on customer orientation, competitor awareness, and inter-departmental coordination, which enable a firm to adapt quickly to changes in the environment and maintain its competitive advantages. IMC further supports MP by ensuring coherence and strategic correspondence of messages within the organization. This will have positive consequences for brand visibility and market positioning, facilitating long-term success in the market. Studies show that effective IMC strengthens the impact of stakeholder and market orientation on MP in terms of a unified brand presence and increased clarity in value communication to customers and competitors. MP is often operationalised in competitive and emerging market contexts in terms of indicators of sales volume growth, market share expansion, entry into new market segments, and sustained profitability - all associated with the firm's strategic capacity to integrate knowledge about its stakeholders and to execute market-responsive strategies. Research within the banking and service sectors demonstrates how key IMC-driven market performance outcomes involve not only financial performance but also greater competitive positioning and brand advocacy amongst important stakeholder groups. Recent investigations have focused on how dynamic capabilities, in particular, big data analytics and marketing ambidexterity, significantly enhance MP by allowing firms to interpret complex market signals, harmonize communications, and address the pressures from competitors more effectively. The synergy amongst stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC would lead to sustained MP because of an outside-in strategic focus that will correspondingly align internal capabilities with the demands of the external market. Within similar corporate

settings to Pakistan, when the market conditions are described by evolving customer expectations, competitive intensity, and digital transformation, MP would function as a critical outcome that reflects the firm's ability to translate strategic orientations into tangible market success. The overall scholarly discourses position MP as a multi-dimensional outcome that bridges the gap between organizational strategic orientation and communication effectiveness and measurable business outcomes, justifying the inclusion of the same as an essential variable within the proposed conceptual framework.

Literature Review of Company Size It is well known in both organizational and marketing literature that company size is a critical structural characteristic influencing strategic orientation, resource availability, communication capabilities, and overall performance outcomes-especially when concerning competitive corporate environments (Child, 1972; Blau & Schoenherr, 1971). In addition, given the stakeholder orientation and the integrations of marketing communications, company size represents a specific factor showing how firms identify, prioritize, and respond to the expectations of different stakeholders. Here, while larger organizations are indeed characterized by more complex structures, greater resources, and formalized processes, their smaller counterparts often rely on flexibility, proximity to stakeholders, and informal coordination mechanisms. Previous research has shown that larger firms have a comparatively better position vis-à-vis investment in systematic stakeholder engagement and market intelligence systems, enabling them to deploy market-oriented practices supportive of coherent and strategically aligned IMC initiatives. Economies of scale, advanced technological infrastructure, and specialized marketing departments significantly enhance the coordinating capability of these firms in communication activities across several channels and stakeholder groups. On the other hand, smaller-scale enterprises tend to place more reliance on closer stakeholder relationships, faster decision-making, and adaptive communication practices to obtain effective integration between

stakeholder orientation and market orientation. According to this line of research evidence, company size becomes an important factor in the implementation and effectiveness of IMC, since larger-scale organizations require greater interdepartmental coordination aimed at ensuring message consistency. In addition, smaller-scale firms often achieve integration through centralized decision-making and direct interaction with the stakeholders. Market orientation plays an important mediating role in this dynamics, enabling the translation of the expectations of various stakeholders into actionable strategies regardless of firm size, though the processes through which market intelligence is generated and utilized differ between small and large-scale firms. Empirical findings reveal that larger-scale firms tend to formalize the processes of market intelligence and data-driven decision making in support of IMC effectiveness, thus enhancing their ability to react to the pressures of competition and stakeholder demands. On the other hand, smaller firms often depend on experiential knowledge and direct feedback from customers for guiding market-oriented actions that may support strong stakeholder relationships and customer responsiveness when aligned effectively with communication strategies (Raju et al., 2011; Heredia Pérez et al., 2019). The relationship between company size and performance has been examined extensively in the literature, and the evidence is that larger firms tend to realize superior performance in the marketplace due to resource advantages, with the exception of smaller firms exploiting niche markets by leveraging relational strategies and focused communication (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Morgan et al., 2009). Recently, there is a growing orientation in the literature toward the idea that company size moderates the effect of stakeholder orientation and IMC on customer-related and market performance because the scale and scope of operations influence how communication strategies will be designed and executed (Luxton et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2020). From a dynamic capability perspective, larger firms are more likely to establish sophisticated IMC

capabilities that integrate the stakeholder and market orientations across organizational boundaries; however, smaller firms will need to rely on agility and innovation in the place of scarce resources (Augier & Teece, 2009; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). Studies conducted in emerging and developing economies suggest that company size itself is likely to be an even more distinctive driver of strategic outcomes, since institutional constraints, resource deficiencies, and market volatility heighten differences between small and large organizations (Gherghina et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020). In this context, larger corporate firms are more likely to enjoy more significant legitimacy and bargaining power when engaging with various stakeholders, which supports their adoption of integrated communication strategies and enhances brand credibility (Battisti et al., 2021). However, evidence also exists indicating that even smaller firms can obtain competitive advantages from adopting stakeholder-oriented and market-driven IMC practices that emphasize personalization, trust, and responsiveness as instruments, particularly in relationship-based markets (Correia et al., 2020; Carson et al., 2020). Finally, the interaction between company size and competitive intensity further influences organizational outcomes, since large firms can leverage scale against aggressive competition while smaller firms must focus strategically and rely on effective communication to survive in highly competitive environments (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín, 2005; Morgan Whereas recent studies underline that digital transformation has reduced the typical advantages of company size, allowing minor firms to utilize communication technologies and data analytics tools that enhance IMC effectiveness and stakeholder engagement-Pisicchio & Toaldo, 2021; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021-more significant companies continue to enjoy the benefits associated with integrated systems and cross-functional coordination that guarantee brand coherence and uniformity of stakeholder orientation in multiple markets-Luxton et al., 2017; Porcu et al., 2017. In corporate companies based in Pakistan, company size is a particularly

salient variable, as large conglomerates and relatively small-scale corporate organizations coexist under dissimilar conditions characterized by different availability of resources and stakeholder pressures. Pakistani corporate organizations operate in increasingly competitive, customer-centric, digitally enabled environments where the alignment of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC is indeed vital to drive superior performance across firms of different sizes-Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021; Battisti et al., 2021. Large Pakistani companies are inclined to rely on their resource base in order to support the formalization of IMC strategies and stakeholder engagement programs, while small companies take advantage of relational networks and adaptive communication to establish trust and lead to loyal customers-Carson et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020. In conclusion, the literature positions the company size as a crucial moderating variable able to influence the efficiency of stakeholder orientation and market orientation in driving integrated marketing communications and organizational performance. This justifies its inclusion in the proposed research framework which, as mentioned above, focuses on corporate companies in Pakistan.

Literature Review of Competitive Intensity

Competitive intensity can be described in terms of the extent of rivalry, pressure, and aggressiveness under which an organization operates in its marketplace due to the actions of its competitors in terms of high levels of changes in prices, promotions, high levels of product developments, and highly aggressive marketing programs. It can easily be defined as an important contextual factor which influences the strategic approach of the organization in terms of its performance. When the intensity of competition in the marketplace is high, it becomes an imperative for those competing to make continuous adjustments in terms of their strategic approach, communication behavior, and actions in the marketplace in order to survive and outperform others. In stakeholder-focused strategy, the significance of understanding various stakeholder expectations can become more amplified due to high competitiveness in the marketplace. In such cases, it becomes more challenging for various stakeholders to make balanced adjustments between the expectations of customers, competitors, and various stakeholders in order for the organization to maintain its legitimacy (Hult et al., 2005; Reid et al., 2005).

Previous studies have demonstrated that in high levels of competitiveness in the marketplace, stakeholder-focused strategies of building relationships, trust, and long-term value creation become more significant, which become an effective buffer in terms of potential risks due to highly aggressive competition in the marketplace. In such cases, it has been evident that integrated marketing concentration acts as an important mediating factor which enables various stakeholders to make systematic efforts in terms of understanding customers' expectations, competitors' actions in the marketplace. It has been observed in various prior studies that integrated marketing concentration becomes more imperative in highly competitive market conditions in terms of potential risks. It has been observed in prior studies that competitiveness in the marketplace has been found to make the relationship between concentration in the marketplace by various stakeholders more significant due to adeptness in terms of customers' expectations in highly turbulent conditions. Research underscored the significance of competitive intensity in increasing the demands for integrated communication, considering the potential negative effects of fragmentation or inconsistencies in the messages, which can impact the efficiency of marketing efforts in competitive markets (Reid et al., 2005; Porcu et al., 2017). From the viewpoint of strategic capabilities, the implementation of IMC enables companies to address competitive intensity by harmonizing the internal processes and external communications, hence improving the ability to respond to market changes (Christensen et al., 2008; Butkouskaya et al., 2020). From the viewpoint of the dynamic capabilities theory, research contended that competitive intensity serves as an external driving force for the advancement of innovation in the form of developing new capabilities, which incorporates market and stakeholder orientation to develop actionable knowledge (Augier & Teece, 2009; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). Empirical research based on the dynamic capabilities theory also contended that the efficiency of marketing efforts and practices can be moderated by competitive intensity, considering the potential for diminishing returns under competitive markets, apart from depending on the efficiency of marketing efforts (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Morgan et al., 2009). For developing markets, the intensity of competitiveness has become amplified by the innovation and advancement of technology, apart from market liberalization and increasing entrance of firms, specifically by locals and MNCs, which raise the stakes and demands from the firms (Freixanet et al., 2020; Gherghina et al., 2020). In such markets, companies ignoring the imperative need to converge market and stakeholder orientations into efficient communication practices are under the threat of competitive dissolution (Correia et al., 2020; Battisti et al., 2021). Empirical studies also emphasized the imperative need for competitive intensity to positively moderate the effects of marketing and communication innovation

capabilities, considering the increasing need for firms in competitive markets to opt for speed, flexibility, and innovation in marketing communications (Luxton et al., 2017; Pisicchio & Toaldo, 2021). Additionally, competitive intensity has recently become shown to shape decision-making practices by increasing the need for the fast and flexible approach of markets, which necessitates innovation and innovation in marketing communications (Morgan et al., 2018; Hernandez et al., 2021). In the corporate sectors experiencing high levels of competitive intensity, it has been found that a market-oriented approach through analytics and stakeholder information helps corporations fine-tune their communication approaches and value offerings, thus helping them maintain their competitive advantages notwithstanding the competitive pressures in the business environment (Guo et al., 2019; Raju et al., 2011). The competitive intensity and business size dynamic has also been extensively debated in the existing literatures, revealing concrete evidence centered on the notion that large corporations are able to take advantage of their size and competitive positioning in the market in order to overcome the challenges posed by high competitive intensity in the business environment, while smaller corporations are primarily reliant on relational approaches as well as communication in order to compete successfully in the market (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín, 2005). Within the backdrop of corporate firms operating in the Pakistan market context, it has been noted that the competitive intensity has escalated to a great extent owing to the influence of the globalization movement, the digitalization wave, as well as the growing awareness levels among the targeted clientele, making it an absolute imperativ e within the business scenario for corporations to resort to stakeholder-centered as well as market-oriented integrated marketing communication approaches in order to successfully compete in the market. The Pakistan market context in which the corporations are operating has been characterized as experiencing intense levels of price battles, competitive promotion activities, as well as rapid imitation

within the market. Therefore, it has been imperative within this scenario for the corporations to resort to integrated communication approaches in order to succeed within the market. Within the context of the growing importance of market-oriented approaches within the corporate business context in the developing markets of the world, the existing studies convey the impression that competitive intensity enhances the strategic significance of market-oriented approaches in the corporate context in the developing markets in the sense that it becomes a compelling imperative within the corporate context for corporations to continuously monitor the behavior of the competitors within the market as well as adjust the communication approaches on the basis of the information garnered from the complexities of the market behavior of the competitors within the market. The acquisition of superior business outcomes through the creation of resilient brands within the corporate business context has been facilitated within the existing frameworks in the sense that competitive intensity has been considered as a business scenario imperative within the corporate context in the developing markets of the world in the sense that it not only places intense pressures on the corporations operating within the market but also provides strategic positioning within the market for the corporations able to take advantage of the complexities within the market through integrated communication.

Literature Review of Company Size

Company size is widely recognized in organizational and marketing literature as a critical structural characteristic that influences strategic orientation, resource availability, communication capabilities, and overall performance outcomes, particularly in competitive corporate environments (Child, 1972; Blau & Schoenherr, 1971). In the context of stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications (IMC), company size shapes how firms identify, prioritize, and respond to stakeholder expectations, as larger organizations typically possess more complex

structures, greater resources, and formalized processes, whereas smaller firms often rely on flexibility, proximity to stakeholders, and informal coordination mechanisms (Narver & Slater, 1990; Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Prior research suggests that larger firms are better positioned to invest in systematic stakeholder engagement and market intelligence systems, enabling them to adopt market-oriented practices that support coherent and strategically aligned IMC initiatives (Matsuno et al., 2000; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). These firms often benefit from economies of scale, advanced technological infrastructure, and specialized marketing departments, which enhance their ability to coordinate communication activities across multiple channels and stakeholder groups (Reid et al., 2005; Kliatchko, 2008). Conversely, smaller firms, despite resource constraints, may leverage closer stakeholder relationships, quicker decision-making, and adaptive communication practices to achieve effective integration between stakeholder orientation and market orientation (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín, 2005). The literature indicates that company size significantly influences the implementation and effectiveness of IMC, as larger organizations require greater interdepartmental coordination to ensure message consistency, while smaller firms often achieve integration through centralized decision-making and direct stakeholder interaction (Christensen et al., 2008; Luxton et al., 2017). Market orientation plays a mediating role in this dynamic by facilitating the translation of stakeholder expectations into actionable strategies, regardless of firm size, although the processes through which market intelligence is generated and utilized may differ between small and large firms (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Morgan et al., 2009). Empirical studies demonstrate that larger firms tend to formalize market intelligence processes and employ data-driven decision-making to support IMC effectiveness, which enhances their ability to respond to competitive pressures and stakeholder demands (Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). In contrast, smaller firms often rely on experiential knowledge and direct customer feedback to guide

market-oriented actions, which can foster strong stakeholder relationships and customer responsiveness when effectively aligned with communication strategies (Raju et al., 2011; Heredia Pérez et al., 2019). The relationship between company size and performance has been extensively examined, with evidence suggesting that larger firms generally achieve superior market performance due to resource advantages, while smaller firms may outperform in niche markets by leveraging relational strategies and focused communication (Gatignon & Xuereb, 1997; Morgan et al., 2009). Recent literature emphasizes that company size moderates the impact of stakeholder orientation and IMC on both customer-related and market performance, as the scale and scope of operations influence how communication strategies are designed and executed (Luxton et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2020). From a dynamic capability perspective, larger firms are more likely to develop advanced IMC capabilities that integrate stakeholder and market orientations across organizational boundaries, whereas smaller firms may rely on agility and innovation to compensate for limited resources (Augier & Teece, 2009; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). Studies conducted in emerging and developing economies indicate that company size plays an even more pronounced role in shaping strategic outcomes, as institutional constraints, resource limitations, and market volatility amplify differences between small and large organizations (Gherghina et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020). In such contexts, larger corporate firms often possess greater legitimacy and bargaining power with stakeholders, which facilitates the implementation of integrated communication strategies and enhances brand credibility (Battisti et al., 2021). However, evidence also suggests that smaller firms can achieve competitive advantages by adopting stakeholder-oriented and market-driven IMC practices that emphasize personalization, trust, and responsiveness, particularly in relationship-based markets (Correia et al., 2020; Carson et al., 2020). The interaction between company size and competitive intensity further shapes organizational outcomes, as larger firms may

leverage scale to withstand aggressive competition, while smaller firms must rely on strategic focus and effective communication to survive in highly competitive environments (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín, 2005; Morgan et al., 2018). Recent studies highlight that digital transformation has altered the traditional advantages associated with company size by enabling smaller firms to access communication technologies and data analytics tools that enhance IMC effectiveness and stakeholder engagement (Pisicchio & Toaldo, 2021; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). Nevertheless, larger firms continue to benefit from integrated systems and cross-functional coordination that support consistent brand messaging and stakeholder alignment across diverse markets (Luxton et al., 2017; Porcu et al., 2017). In the context of corporate companies in Pakistan, company size is a particularly salient variable due to the coexistence of large conglomerates and smaller corporate entities operating under varying resource conditions and stakeholder pressures. Pakistani corporate firms face increasing competition, heightened customer expectations, and rapid digital adoption, making the alignment of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC critical for achieving superior performance outcomes across different firm sizes (Guo et al., 2019; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021; Battisti et al., 2021). Larger Pakistani firms often leverage their resource base to implement formalized IMC strategies and stakeholder engagement programs, while smaller firms depend on relational networks and adaptive communication to build trust and customer loyalty (Carson et al., 2020; Freixanet et al., 2020). Overall, the literature positions company size as a crucial moderating variable that shapes the effectiveness of stakeholder orientation and market orientation in driving integrated marketing communications and organizational performance, thereby justifying its inclusion in the proposed research framework examining corporate companies in Pakistan.

Literature Review of Economy Type

Literature Review of Economy Type Economy type refers to the broader macroeconomic context in which firms operate and can normally be differentiated by developed, developing, or emerging economies. Economy type plays a significant role in shaping organizational strategies, stakeholder relationships, market dynamics, and performance outcomes. In the marketing and strategic management literature, economy type is increasingly recognized as a critical contextual variable influencing how firms design and implement stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications because economic conditions determine institutional quality, market sophistication, consumer behavior, and competitive structures. Firms operating in developed economies typically enjoy stable institutions, advanced infrastructure, and mature markets, which facilitate formalized stakeholder engagement, sophisticated market intelligence systems, and highly integrated communication practices. On the contrary, firms in developing and emerging economies often face institutional voids, resource constraints, market volatility, and information asymmetries, which eventually determine how stakeholder orientation and IMC are operationalized. The literature suggests that in emerging economies, stakeholder orientation becomes particularly crucial because trust, legitimacy, and relational exchanges substitute for weak formal institutions, shaping firm–stakeholder interactions and communication effectiveness. Market orientation plays a vital mediating role in such contexts by enabling firms to make up for institutional inefficiencies through continuous market sensing, customer feedback, and competitor monitoring that enhance responsiveness and adaptability. Empirical studies have shown that market-oriented firms in emerging economies are better placed to interpret fragmented market signals and their translation into actionable strategies, thereby improving both communication effectiveness and performance outcomes. Integrated Marketing Communications assumes heightened importance across different economy

types since it allows firms to coordinate messages and actions in environments characterized by diverse stakeholder expectations and varying levels of market development. In developed economies, IMC is very often supported by advanced digital infrastructure and analytics, which enable to target more precisely and consistently across different channels. In contrast, in emerging economies, IMC serves as a means of decreasing information gaps and increasing brand clarity in markets where consumer trust and awareness is lower. Indeed, Reid et al. (2005), Christensen et al. (2008) and Porcu et al. (2017) suggest that economy type typically moderates the effectiveness of IMC since the communication strategies that work well in the context of developed markets might need to be adapted to local norms, cultural values and economic realities in developing economies. Studies that are grounded in institutional theory underpin that firms in emerging economies need to integrate their communication strategies with informal norms as well as with stakeholder expectations in order to gain legitimacy. In this vein, stakeholder-oriented IMC can be particularly impactful on driving performance. Peng et al. (2009) and Battisti et al. (2021) point in this direction. Recent literature has also pointed out that digital transformation has partially reduced such economy type gaps by enabling firms in developing markets to access communication technologies and platforms previously restricted to developed economies, leading to better IMC effectiveness and stakeholder engagement. Pisicchio & Toaldo (2021) and Hernández-Linares et al. (2021) similarly argue. However, notwithstanding technological convergence, substantial differences in purchasing power, regulatory environments and competitive intensity persist in shaping how market orientation and IMC translate into performance outcomes within and across economy types. Gherghina et al. 2020 and Freixanet et al. 2020 discuss this point. Empirical evidence suggests that firms in emerging economies often depend more heavily on relational strategies, trust-building and consistent communication in order to attain customer-related and market performance compared to firms in developed economies, who may place a greater emphasis on innovation and efficiency-driven branding strategies. Heredia Pérez et al. (2019) and Morgan et al. (2018) suggest this. Economy type also conditions managerial decisionmaking styles, risk tolerance and strategic priorities, which in turn can affect the adoption and effectiveness of stakeholder-oriented and market-driven communication practices. Hult et al. (2005) and Correia et al. (2020) develop this argument. In developing economies, market turbulence and economic uncertainty heighten the premium on flexibility and responsiveness. In this sense, a market orientation becomes an even more critical capability for sustaining IMC effectiveness and performance.

Studies conducted in emerging market contexts show that firms able to align stakeholder orientation with market orientation through IMC realize better outcomes despite institutional constraints, as integrated communication enhances credibility and reduces perceived risk among customers and partners (Luxton et al., 2017; Butkouskaya et al., 2021). The literature further indicates that economy type interacts with firm-level characteristics, such as company size and competitive intensity, to jointly shape the strategic relevance of stakeholder orientation and IMC (Low, 2000; Aragón-Sánchez & Sánchez-Marín, 2005; Morgan et al., 2009). In the case of Pakistan, which is generally classified as a developing and emerging economy, its firms operate under conditions of economic volatility, regulatory complexity, and evolving consumer expectations, which make the integration of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC particularly critical for realizing sustainable performance. Pakistani corporate companies operate under intense pressure to build legitimacy, trust, and differentiation within markets characterized by increasingly informed yet price-sensitive consumers, underscoring the strategic importance of coherent communication and stakeholder engagement (Carson et al., 2020; Guo et al., 2019). More recent research focused on developing economies similar to Pakistan also suggests that economy type significantly

conditions the strength of associations among strategic orientations, IMC, and performance outcomes, highlighting the need to explicitly incorporate economic context in empirical models (Hernández-Linares et al., 2021; Battisti et al., 2021). Overall, the literature posits that economy type presents a critical contextual and moderating variable influencing how stakeholder orientation and market orientation shape integrated marketing communications and, by extension, organizational performance and thus justifies inclusion in the proposed conceptual framework focusing on corporate companies within Pakistan.

Literature Review: Market Orientation (MO)

Market Orientation (MO) has been widely recognized as a fundamental strategic construct within the marketing and strategic management literature. Broadly defined, MO reflects an organization's ability to systematically generate, disseminate, and respond to market intelligence about customers, competitors, and broader environmental conditions, enabling firms to align their products, services, and processes with evolving market needs (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Narver & Slater, 1990). This orientation is rooted in the notion that sustained competitive advantage and superior performance are driven by a firm's emphasis on understanding and addressing market demands better than competitors (Narver & Slater, 1990; Kohli & Jaworski, 1990) and is considered a customer-centric, responsive approach that integrates intelligence across departments to inform strategic decision-making (Matsuno et al., 2000; Vorhies & Morgan, 2005).

In the uploaded study by Butkouskaya et al. (2024), MO is conceptualized as a second-order construct comprising *market intelligence generation*, *market intelligence dissemination*, and *market response* — a multidimensional understanding that emphasizes not only collecting market information but also effectively integrating and acting upon it (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993; Matsuno et al., 2000). This operationalization echoes foundational definitions and underscores that market-oriented firms are predisposed to share insights across departments, coordinate internal routines based on those insights, and proactively adapt to environmental changes, cultivating a coherent and customer-focused organizational approach.

Empirical evidence consistently supports the positive implications of MO for various performance outcomes. Prior research reveals that MO significantly enhances marketing performance, customer satisfaction, innovation capability, and long-term growth by enabling firms to remain attuned to customer preferences and competitive dynamics (Narver & Slater, 1990; Raju et al., 2011; Hernández-Linares et al., 2021). The ability of market-oriented firms to anticipate and respond effectively to market changes increases their capacity to deliver superior customer value and achieve favorable competitive positioning relative to rivals.

A recent bibliometric study further highlights that market orientation continues to be one of the most researched strategic drivers influencing firm performance, particularly in small and medium enterprises where market insight and adaptive capabilities are essential for survival and growth (Muluk & Pahurkar, 2022). The study emphasizes MO's role in guiding organizational behavior and decision-making in dynamic and competitive contexts, strengthening the evidence base that market orientation is not only conceptually important but also empirically impactful across diverse settings.

The theoretical perspective adopted by Butkouskaya et al. (2024) — dynamic capabilities theory — further situates MO as an essential capability for generating actionable market knowledge that informs strategic decisions related to marketing communications and competitive response. Dynamic capability thinking posits that firms that effectively sense and seize opportunities through robust information processes — a core feature of MO — are better equipped to deploy resources innovatively and create sustainable advantages (Teece, 2007; Butkouskaya et al., 2024). MO's role in facilitating such capabilities aligns with findings from digital marketing research, where market-oriented firms demonstrate greater adaptability

and competitive resilience in environments marked by technological disruption and evolving customer demand

Scholarship also underscores that MO enables stronger relational outcomes with customers and stakeholders. Firms with a strong market orientation cultivate deeper customer understanding, which translates into tailored communication strategies, more relevant value propositions, and improved customer engagement and loyalty (Razak et al., 2023; Gani et al., 2023). By internalizing market insights and acting on them collaboratively, firms can coordinate cross-functional activities — including IMC — to deliver consistent, stakeholder-aligned messages that resonate with key audiences.

Moreover, MO is positively correlated with innovation and product development capabilities, as market-oriented organizations are more likely to identify unmet customer needs, incorporate competitive intelligence, and integrate these insights into new offerings (Alam, 2025). This linkage between MO and innovation highlights MO's broader strategic importance beyond immediate marketing outcomes, positioning it as a driver of broader organizational adaptation and long-term performance.

The literature further reveals that MO can vary in its effects depending on industry, firm size, and environmental context. For instance, competitive intensity and market volatility in emerging markets like Pakistan may amplify the benefits of MO by compelling firms to continuously monitor market conditions and adapt their strategies accordingly (Razak et al., 2023; Dahmiri et al., 2024). Firms that fail to sustain a robust market orientation risk slower response times to market shifts, reduced customer satisfaction, and diminished competitiveness relative to market-driven peers.

Overall, the market orientation construct provides a rich theoretical and empirical basis for understanding how organizations align internal functions with external market requirements, making it highly relevant for examining the mediating mechanism in the relationship between stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications. By emphasizing intelligence generation, dissemination, and responsive action, MO bridges the gap between stakeholder-driven insights and communication execution, reinforcing the position that MO facilitates stronger coordination and more effective marketing outcomes in dynamic business environments such as corporate firms in Pakistan.

Literature Review: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has emerged as a cornerstone in modern marketing theory and practice, representing a strategic approach that coordinates diverse promotional tools and communication channels to deliver a unified, consistent, and impactful brand message to multiple stakeholder groups. Conceptually, IMC is understood as a dynamic capability that enables firms to integrate and synchronize internal communication processes with external marketing activities, facilitating dialogue not only with customers but also with other strategic actors such as suppliers, regulators, and partners (Butkouskaya et al., 2024). In this study, IMC is viewed through the lens of dynamic capabilities theory, emphasizing its role in transforming market and stakeholder insights — generated by market orientation — into coordinated communication actions that enhance performance outcomes in competitive environments.

Butkouskaya et al. (2024) define IMC as an organization's ability to combine and coordinate communication information from different sources — including customers, internal departments, and broader stakeholder channels — into a coherent communication strategy that supports strategic objectives and strengthens market outcomes. This conception aligns with earlier foundational perspectives that IMC entails cross-functional coordination and leveraging integrated knowledge to manage communication holistically and adaptively.

Scholars emphasize that IMC is not simply the aggregation of traditional communication tools such as advertising, public relations, sales

promotion, and direct marketing, but rather the strategic integration of these elements to ensure consistency of messaging, reinforce brand identity, and build stronger relationships with essential audiences. For example, IMC is described as a planned, coordinated, and mutually reinforcing process that maximizes the impact of all forms of communication utilized by a firm.

The literature identifies several core characteristics of IMC. First, message consistency across channels is fundamental to IMC's effectiveness, as it prevents conflicting signals and fosters a unified brand image that enhances recognition and trust among stakeholders. Multiple studies confirm that consistent communication positively influences consumer perceptions and behavior, further demonstrating that integration across communication platforms drives better marketing outcomes. Second, IMC's cross-functional coordination within the organization ensures that diverse departments share market intelligence and align on communication priorities, reinforcing synchronized action across boundaries. This coordination supports faster organizational response to environmental changes and reinforces strategic decision-making in dynamic markets.

IMC's role as a dynamic capability is further supported by research showing it combines tangible and intangible inputs such as market knowledge, information integration processes, and human resource capabilities, converting them into valuable outputs like improved customer engagement, message clarity, and stronger competitive positioning. By integrating market and stakeholder insights into communication routines, firms can build message coherence and relevance, which enhances customer expectations and deepens brand-stakeholder relationships.

Recent empirical studies also highlight that the effectiveness of IMC can be seen in several outcome dimensions. For instance, IMC consistently improves brand awareness, customer satisfaction, and customer retention by enabling organizations to align their communication

strategies with evolving stakeholder needs and preferences. Consistency and interactivity in IMC have been shown to predict positive customer evaluations of products and services, confirming that integrated messages contribute significantly to stakeholder engagement. The literature further suggests that IMC effectiveness is significantly influenced by how well firms integrate digital and social media channels into their communication mix. With the growth of digital platforms, the integration of traditional and digital communication channels enhances brand visibility and engagement across customer touchpoints, enabling firms to capture richer market feedback and refine their strategies accordingly.

Another strand of research reveals that IMC plays a crucial role in building brand equity and stakeholder trust, which are essential for long-term performance. Unified communication supports consistent brand positioning, enhances perceived credibility, and fosters deeper emotional connections with stakeholders — outcomes that are increasingly critical in competitive markets such as corporate sectors in emerging economies. By coordinating communication elements from advertising, public relations, and sales to digital marketing, IMC strengthens the narrative and reinforces a shared brand message across audiences.

Despite broad acceptance of its strategic relevance, some literature recognizes ongoing conceptual challenges in defining IMC with precision due to its interdisciplinary evolution and diverse applications. However, recent bibliometric analyses underscore the expanding research interest in IMC, particularly in areas such as digital transformation, consumer engagement, and cross-platform integration, indicating the construct's ongoing relevance in academic and practical domains. IMC constitutes a strategic organizational capability that consolidates communication efforts, fosters integrated action across departments, and aligns stakeholder and market insights into coherent communication outputs. In the context of this study, IMC's importance lies in its mediating role between market orientation and performance

outcomes, whereby market-generated intelligence is operationalized into strategic, consistent, and stakeholder-responsive communication efforts. This makes IMC a pivotal area of investigation in understanding how corporate companies in Pakistan can leverage integrated communication approaches to reinforce market relationships and achieve performance goals.

Chapter 03: Research Methodology
3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the methodological framework adopted to empirically examine the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on Integrated Marketing Communications, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of Market Orientation, in the context of corporate companies operating in Pakistan. Given the strategic and multidimensional nature of the constructs under investigation—namely stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and firm performance—a rigorous and systematic research design is essential to ensure the validity, reliability, and generalizability of the study findings.

The primary objective of this chapter is to explain and justify the research approach, design, and procedures employed to test the hypothesized relationships proposed in the conceptual model. Specifically, this chapter describes the philosophical stance underpinning the study, the research approach and strategy, the target population and sampling techniques, data collection methods, measurement instruments, and analytical techniques used for hypothesis testing. Furthermore, the chapter addresses issues related to data reliability, validity, ethical considerations, and potential methodological limitations.

In alignment with the positivist research paradigm, this study adopts a quantitative research approach to objectively measure organizational orientations and performance-related outcomes using structured survey instruments. The quantitative design is particularly suitable for this research as it enables statistical testing of direct, mediating, and moderating relationships embedded within the conceptual framework, including the mediating role of market orientation and the moderating effects of organizational and environmental factors within corporate settings.

Considering the dynamic and competitive business environment of Pakistan, especially within large corporate organizations, this methodological approach facilitates the collection of standardized data from key managerial respondents who are directly involved in strategic decision-making, marketing communications, and stakeholder management. The use of advanced multivariate data analysis techniques further allows for robust examination of complex causal relationships among latent constructs, thereby enhancing the explanatory power of the study.

3.2 Research Approach

The research approach defines the systematic procedures that guide the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data in a manner that ensures the research objectives are addressed comprehensively, accurately, and logically. In the context of this study, which investigates the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications with a mediating mechanism of market orientation, a structured and empirically grounded approach is essential to validate theoretical propositions and derive meaningful insights applicable to corporate entities operating in Pakistan.

Given the nature of the constructs under investigation—stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and performance metrics—the current study adopts a quantitative research approach. This orientation aligns with the positivist paradigm, which posits that objective reality can be measured using numerical data and statistical techniques. The positivist paradigm is particularly suitable for this research because it supports hypothesized relationships within a conceptual model and enables empirical testing through statistical inference. The quantitative approach facilitates the measurement of latent constructs using standardized

instruments, ensuring both reliability and validity in the measurement process.

The selection of a quantitative methodology is rooted in the aim to examine causal relationships among organizational constructs and to determine the strength and directionality of these relationships. Specifically, this approach allows for the use of structured questionnaires to collect cross-sectional data from participants who are positioned to provide accurate insights regarding organizational strategies, orientations, and performance outcomes. Quantitative data also enables the application of advanced multivariate analysis techniques, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which are appropriate for testing complex models involving direct, mediating, and moderating effects.

Moreover, by adopting a quantitative approach, this study ensures that the findings can be generalized across a broader population of corporate managers and firms in Pakistan, thus enhancing external validity. In particular, statistical methods provide a systematic and replicable framework for hypothesis testing, reducing subjectivity and researcher bias. The use of numerical data further enhances precision in measurement, permits hypothesis confirmation using significance tests, and allows for comprehensive evaluation of the mediation effect of market orientation within the proposed framework.

In summary, the quantitative research approach selected for this thesis is methodologically coherent with the research objectives and conceptual model. It supports rigorous hypothesis testing, facilitates empirical validation of theoretical relationships, and ensures that the findings contribute substantively to both academic knowledge and managerial practice within the corporate landscape of Pakistan.

3.3 Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to systematically investigate the directional and statistical relationships between stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications, while also examining the intermediary function of market orientation within corporate companies in Pakistan. This research aims to advance empirical understanding of how organizations that actively engage and align with their stakeholders can better develop and implement integrated marketing communication strategies, and consequently enhance both brand equity and organizational performance.

At its core, this research adopts a confirmatory and explanatory purpose, seeking not only to describe the existing phenomena relating to organizational orientations and communication practices, but also to explain the causal linkages and mechanisms that underpin these phenomena. Specifically, the study is designed to achieve the following key objectives:

1. To identify the influence of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications practices among corporate firms in Pakistan. This objective explores whether and how the degree of organizational emphasis on stakeholder needs, expectations, and participation shapes the development and execution of integrated marketing communication strategies.

2. To assess the mediating role of market orientation in the relationship between stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications. Recognizing market orientation as a strategic organizational capability that synthesizes intelligence about customer preferences and competitor actions, this objective evaluates whether market orientation explains how stakeholder orientation translates into effective integrated communications.

3. To determine the downstream effects of integrated marketing communications on brand equity and organizational performance.
   As integrated marketing communications represents a holistic approach to stakeholder messaging and brand positioning, this research examines its impact on brand equity, and further gauges how both integrated communications and brand equity

contribute to customer-related and overall market performance.

4. To provide empirical evidence that informs managerial practice and strategic decision-making within Pakistan's corporate sector. Given the competitive and increasingly dynamic business environment of Pakistan, findings from this study aim to guide executives and marketing professionals in designing stakeholder-inclusive strategies that enhance communication effectiveness and reinforce competitive advantage.

The research purpose aligns with the broader academic priority of bridging theoretical constructs with practical applications, particularly within emerging markets where organizational behavior and communication strategies often differ from those in developed economies. By articulating and empirically validating the linkages among stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications, this study contributes to the scholarly discourse in strategic marketing management, while offering actionable insights for corporate leaders seeking to optimize their strategic orientation frameworks in Pakistan.

3.4 Data Source

The robustness and credibility of empirical research largely depend on the quality and appropriateness of the data sources used. For this study, data are sourced from primary and secondary channels to ensure comprehensive measurement of constructs and rigorous testing of the hypothesized relationships presented in the conceptual model.

3.4.1 Primary Data Source

The primary data for this research will be collected directly from key informants within corporate companies operating in Pakistan. This approach enables the study to capture real-time perceptions and responses concerning stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and organizational performance. Primary

data are indispensable for understanding the subjective and organizational nuances associated with strategic orientation and communication practices that are not readily observable through secondary records.

Data collection will be conducted using a structured questionnaire survey administered to senior managers and departmental heads, particularly those responsible for stakeholder engagement, marketing strategy, corporate communications, and performance evaluation. Respondents will include marketing managers, corporate planning executives, brand communication specialists, and senior leadership personnel who possess the requisite knowledge and experience to provide valid and reliable responses pertaining to the study constructs.

Structured questionnaires provide standardized and quantifiable data, which are essential for statistical analysis and hypothesis testing. To enhance response accuracy, the instrument will be distributed electronically (via email or online survey platforms) and through in-person follow-ups where feasible, ensuring a higher response rate and representation across diverse sectors within the corporate landscape of Pakistan.

3.4.2 Secondary Data Source

Secondary data will be used to complement primary data and to contextualize the research within existing academic and industry evidence. These data sources will include:

- Published academic literature related to stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and organizational performance. Peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and conference proceedings will be consulted to support scale development, theoretical justification, and interpretation of results.

- Industry reports and corporate disclosures, including annual reports, corporate social responsibility (CSR) publications, and marketing communication reports of selected corporate firms in Pakistan. These

documents provide background information on organizational strategies, stakeholder engagement practices, and communication initiatives.

- Reputable business and market research databases such as Statista, Deloitte Insights, McKinsey & Company publications, and national economic surveys will be referenced to establish macro-level industry trends and performance indicators.

Secondary data will be specifically used to refine measurement instruments, support construct operationalization, and validate the relevance of hypotheses within the context of corporate practices in Pakistan. By integrating both primary and secondary sources, the study enhances its empirical depth and analytical rigor, ensuring that findings are both statistically valid and substantively relevant.

3.4.3 Data Source Rationale

The integration of primary and secondary data sources serves multiple purposes. Primary data enable direct measurement of latent constructs and empirical testing of theoretical relationships, while secondary data contextualize the study within broader industry and academic landscapes. This dual approach strengthens the study's methodological foundation, improves construct validity, and enhances the interpretability of results in light of existing knowledge and real-world practice.

3.5 Target Population

The target population of a study defines the specific group of units from which data are collected and to which the research findings are intended to be generalized. In alignment with the objectives and conceptual framework of this study, the target population comprises corporate companies operating in Pakistan, with particular emphasis on organizations that actively engage in structured marketing, stakeholder management, and corporate communication activities.

Specifically, the study targets managerial-level professionals employed within large and medium-sized corporate firms across diverse industries in

Pakistan, including but not limited to manufacturing, banking and financial services, telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, energy, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), and information technology sectors. These industries are selected due to their strategic reliance on integrated marketing communications and their continuous interaction with multiple stakeholder groups such as customers, employees, investors, regulators, suppliers, and the wider community.

Within these organizations, the unit of analysis is the individual manager, as the constructs under investigation—stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications—are embedded in managerial perceptions, strategic decisions, and organizational practices. Accordingly, the study focuses on respondents who hold positions that provide them with direct exposure to strategic planning and communication processes. These include senior executives, marketing managers, brand managers, corporate communication managers, strategy managers, and departmental heads involved in stakeholder engagement and performance evaluation.

The rationale for selecting corporate companies as the target population is grounded in the complexity and scale of stakeholder relationships managed by such organizations. Corporate firms in Pakistan operate in a highly competitive and evolving business environment, where effective stakeholder alignment and market-driven communication strategies are critical for sustaining brand equity and organizational performance. As such, these firms provide an appropriate and information-rich context for examining the interrelationships proposed in the research model.

Furthermore, focusing on corporate companies enhances the external validity of the study, as findings derived from this population can be generalized to similar organizational settings within emerging economies. By targeting knowledgeable and experienced managerial respondents, the study ensures that the collected data accurately reflect organizational orientations and strategic communication practices, thereby

strengthening the empirical credibility of the research outcomes.

3.6 Sample Size

Sample size determination is a critical methodological consideration, as it directly influences the statistical power, reliability, and generalizability of the research findings. In the present study, a sample size of 100 valid responses has been determined to be appropriate for empirically examining the proposed relationships among stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and organizational performance within corporate companies in Pakistan.

The selection of a sample size of 100 respondents is justified on both theoretical and methodological grounds. First, the study employs a quantitative research design with latent constructs measured through multiple indicators, making it suitable for multivariate data analysis techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), particularly variance-based approaches like Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM is widely recognized as an appropriate analytical technique for exploratory and predictive research models, especially when sample sizes are relatively modest and the research model is complex in nature.

According to established methodological guidelines, a minimum sample size of 100 is considered acceptable for PLS-SEM when the model includes multiple constructs, mediation paths, and reflective measurement models. The proposed conceptual framework of this study involves several interrelated constructs and mediation effects, which can be reliably estimated with the selected sample size while maintaining adequate statistical power.

Second, practical considerations related to access, time constraints, and the availability of qualified respondents within corporate organizations in Pakistan have also informed the sample size decision. The target respondents for this study consist of senior and middle-level managers who possess strategic knowledge regarding stakeholder management and integrated marketing communications. Given the demanding schedules and limited availability of such professionals, a sample of 100 responses represents a realistic yet methodologically defensible balance between data quality and feasibility.

Furthermore, emphasis is placed on response quality rather than sheer quantity. The study prioritizes collecting data from knowledgeable and relevant respondents to ensure that each response contributes meaningful insights into organizational practices and strategic orientations. A carefully selected and well-targeted sample of 100 respondents enhances internal validity and ensures that the data accurately reflect the constructs under investigation.

In summary, a sample size of 100 responses is deemed sufficient to test the hypothesized relationships in the proposed research model, support robust statistical analysis, and generate empirically valid conclusions. This sample size aligns with prior empirical research in marketing and management studies conducted in emerging market contexts and is appropriate for achieving the research objectives of the present study.

3.7 Data Collection Tools and Techniques

Data collection tools and techniques play a pivotal role in ensuring that the constructs under investigation are measured accurately, consistently, and in alignment with the research objectives. In this study, which examines the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications with the mediating role of market orientation in corporate companies of Pakistan, a structured and systematic data collection strategy has been employed to ensure methodological rigor and empirical validity.

3.7.1 Data Collection Tool

The primary data collection tool used in this study is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to capture quantitative data related to all key constructs included in the conceptual model, namely stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated

marketing communications, brand equity, and organizational performance. A structured questionnaire is considered appropriate for this research due to its ability to collect standardized responses from a relatively large number of respondents, thereby facilitating statistical analysis and hypothesis testing.

The questionnaire consists of multiple sections, each corresponding to a specific construct of the study. Measurement items are adapted from well-established and widely cited scales in the marketing and strategic management literature to ensure content validity and construct reliability. All items are phrased in clear and concise language to enhance respondent understanding and minimize ambiguity. Responses are recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," which is commonly used in organizational and marketing research to measure perceptions and attitudes.

Prior to final data collection, the questionnaire is reviewed by academic experts and practitioners to assess clarity, relevance, and alignment with the research objectives. Where necessary, minor modifications are made to ensure contextual suitability for corporate organizations operating in Pakistan.

3.7.2 Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique adopted in this study is a cross-sectional survey method, wherein data are collected from respondents at a single point in time. This technique is suitable for examining relationships among variables and testing mediation effects within a defined timeframe. The cross-sectional approach allows the researcher to efficiently gather data from managerial respondents across multiple corporate organizations without disrupting organizational operations.

The questionnaire is administered primarily through online survey platforms and electronic communication channels, such as email and professional networking platforms. This technique is particularly effective for reaching managerial-level respondents who are geographically dispersed and have limited availability. In selected cases, questionnaires are also distributed through direct professional contacts to improve response rates.

To enhance data quality, respondents are informed about the academic purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and encouraged to provide honest and accurate responses. Clear instructions are provided at the beginning of the questionnaire to guide respondents in completing the survey. Only fully completed and usable questionnaires are included in the final data analysis to maintain data integrity.

3.7.3 Rationale for Tool and Technique Selection

The selection of a structured questionnaire and survey-based data collection technique is consistent with the quantitative research approach adopted in this study. These methods allow for efficient data collection, facilitate comparability across respondents, and support the application of advanced statistical techniques such as Structural Equation Modeling. Moreover, the use of validated measurement scales and standardized data collection procedures enhances the reliability, validity, and replicability of the research findings.

The data collection tools and techniques employed in this study are methodologically appropriate and strategically aligned with the research objectives, ensuring that the empirical investigation of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications within corporate companies in Pakistan is conducted in a systematic and scientifically robust manner.

3.8 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique defines the procedure through which a subset of the target population is selected for data collection and analysis. An appropriate sampling technique is essential to ensure that the selected sample adequately represents the population and that the findings can be interpreted with confidence. In line with the objectives of this study, which examines the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications with the mediating role of market orientation in corporate

companies of Pakistan, a carefully considered sampling technique has been employed.

This study adopts a non-probability purposive sampling technique, also referred to as judgmental sampling. This technique is particularly suitable for organizational and managerial research where the objective is to obtain information from respondents who possess specific knowledge, experience, and decision-making authority related to the constructs under investigation. Given that stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications are strategic-level organizational practices, data must be collected from individuals who are directly involved in these areas.

Purposive sampling enables the researcher to deliberately select respondents who hold relevant managerial positions within corporate companies, such as senior executives, marketing managers, brand managers, corporate communication managers, and strategy managers. These individuals are considered information-rich cases, as they are actively engaged in stakeholder management, market analysis, and communication strategy formulation, making them well-positioned to provide accurate and meaningful responses.

The selection of a non-probability sampling technique is also justified by practical constraints commonly associated with research conducted in corporate settings. Access to complete sampling frames of managerial employees across corporate firms in Pakistan is often limited due to confidentiality concerns and organizational restrictions. Under such conditions, probabilistic sampling methods may not be feasible. Therefore, purposive sampling offers a pragmatic and methodologically sound alternative that allows the researcher to reach appropriate respondents efficiently while maintaining data relevance and quality.

Furthermore, the use of purposive sampling aligns with the study's emphasis on response quality over quantity. By targeting respondents with direct exposure to stakeholder orientation and integrated marketing communications, the study enhances internal validity and ensures that the collected data reflect actual organizational practices rather than generalized perceptions.

In summary, the purposive sampling technique employed in this study is consistent with the research objectives, target population, and analytical requirements. It ensures the inclusion of knowledgeable respondents, supports robust hypothesis testing, and strengthens the empirical foundation of the study within the context of corporate companies in Pakistan.

3.9 Statistical Tools and Techniques
Therefore, selecting appropriate statistical tools and techniques ensures accuracy in analysis, validity in hypothesis testing, and meaning in the interpretation of empirical findings. Accordingly, this study adopts a blend of descriptive and inferential statistical approaches to be in line with its objectives of investigating the effect of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications with market orientation acting as a mediating variable in corporate companies in Pakistan.

3.9.1 Preliminary data analysis
Collected data are first screened and prepared for analysis using SPSS. Preliminary analyses involve data coding, handling missing values, and identifying outliers to ensure quality of data. Descriptive statistics are computed through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations in order to summarize the demographics of the respondents and also to give an overview as to the distribution of each data for each construct. Normality, multicollinearity, and common method bias are also assessed at this stage to confirm that data satisfy the assumptions for multivariate analysis. It enhances the reliability of subsequent statistical testing.

3.9.2 Measurement Model Evaluation
In this study, SEM with a variance-based approach was applied to assess the reliability and validity of the measurement instruments. In particular, PLS-SEM will be used, as it is better suited for complex research models, mediation analysis, and relatively small sample sizes. The measurement model was evaluated based on:

- Internal consistency reliability using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability
- Convergent validity, assessed by factor loadings and average variance extracted (AVE)
- Discriminant validity, checked based on established criteria including cross-loadings and variance-based comparisons among constructs

These procedures ensure that the measurement of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, integrated marketing communications, brand equity, and organizational performance is accurately and consistently captured. 3.9.3 Structural Model Evaluation After the measurement model is validated, the structural model will be assessed to test the relationships among the constructs hypothesized in the model. Path coefficients are estimated to investigate the direct effects of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications and its indirect effects via the mediating variable of market orientation. The significance of the relationships will be assessed by using bootstrapping techniques that allow for robust standard error estimates and confidence intervals of estimates. The coefficient of determination (R^2), the effect size (f^2), and predictive relevance (Q^2) are checked to determine the explanatory and predictive power of the model. A mediation analysis is conducted to determine if market orientation significantly transmits the effect of stakeholder orientation toward integrated marketing communications. 3.9.4 Justification of Selected Technique PLS-SEM can work well in this study because it is flexible enough to handle non-normal distributions of data, robust enough for smaller sample sizes, and effective in analyzing complex models involving mediation effects. Furthermore, such a technique fits the predictive and explanatory purposes of the study and supports theory development in the context of emerging economies like Pakistan. Thus, SPSS and PLS-SEM complement each other towards the provision of a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous analytical framework. These statistical tools and techniques enable robust testing of research hypotheses, ensure reliability and validity of the results, and facilitate meaningful interpretation of the relationships among stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications in corporate companies of Pakistan.

Conceptual Hypothesis Developement Relationship
This study proposes a stakeholder-centric integrated marketing communications (IMC) framework to explain how strategic orientations translate into organizational performance outcomes. Grounded in stakeholder theory, market orientation theory, and IMC literature, the model explains the direct, mediating, and moderating mechanisms shaping firm performance.
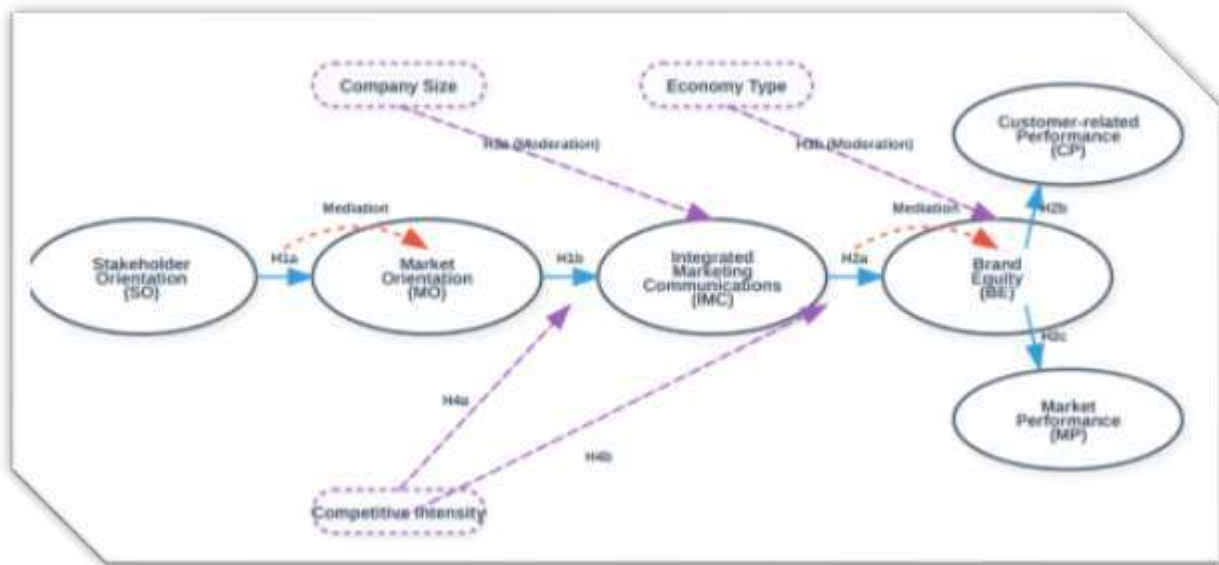
H1: Stakeholder Orientation and Market Orientation

Stakeholder orientation reflects a firm's strategic commitment to understanding and balancing the interests of key stakeholders. Firms that actively engage stakeholders are better positioned to gather market intelligence and respond effectively to customer and competitor needs. Hence, stakeholder-oriented firms are more likely to develop strong market-oriented behaviors through continuous interaction and information exchange.

H1a:

Stakeholder Orientation has a positive and significant effect on Market Orientation.
Justification:
Hence, firms that emphasize stakeholder orientation develop superior market intelligence capabilities because stakeholder engagement enhances information acquisition, dissemination, and responsiveness to market needs (Freeman, 1984). Whereas market orientation focuses on customer and competitor responsiveness, stakeholder-oriented practices broaden the firm's market sensing capacity, leading to stronger market-oriented behaviors (Narver & Slater, 1990).

H2: Market Orientation and Integrated Marketing Communications

Market orientation enables firms to align their communication strategies with customer needs and competitive dynamics. A strong market orientation facilitates message consistency, coordination, and integration across marketing channels. Therefore, firms with higher market orientation are expected to implement more effective integrated marketing communications.

H1b:

Market Orientation has a positive and significant effect on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).
Justification:
Whereas market-oriented firms continuously monitor customer preferences and competitor actions, this knowledge allows them to design coherent and consistent communication strategies across channels (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). Hence, prior studies suggest that market orientation acts as a strategic foundation for IMC effectiveness by ensuring alignment between market insights and communication execution (Reid, 2005).

H3: Mediating Role of Market Orientation

Stakeholder orientation alone may not directly translate into integrated communication effectiveness unless market knowledge is systematically generated and utilized. Hence,

market orientation serves as a critical mediating mechanism linking stakeholder orientation to IMC effectiveness.

H1c:

Market Orientation mediates the relationship between Stakeholder Orientation and Integrated Marketing Communications.

Justification:

Hence, stakeholder orientation enhances IMC effectiveness indirectly by first strengthening market orientation, which transforms stakeholder insights into actionable marketing strategies (Hult et al., 2005). Whereas stakeholder engagement provides diverse inputs, market orientation acts as the operational mechanism that integrates this information into coordinated communication efforts, thereby mediating the relationship between stakeholder orientation and IMC (Greenley & Foxall, 1997).

H4: Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Equity

Integrated marketing communications ensure message consistency and credibility, which enhances brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty. Whereas fragmented communication weakens brand meaning, integrated communication strengthens brand equity.

H2a:

Integrated Marketing Communications have a positive and significant effect on Brand Equity.

Justification:

Hence, integrated marketing communications strengthen brand equity by delivering consistent brand messages across multiple touchpoints, which reinforces brand associations and perceived quality in the minds of consumers (Keller, 2009). Whereas inconsistent communications dilute brand meaning, IMC enhances brand credibility and coherence, leading to stronger brand equity outcomes (Šerić, Gil-Saura, & Ruiz-Molina, 2014).

H5: Brand Equity and Customer-Related Performance

Strong brand equity enhances customer trust, satisfaction, retention, and advocacy. Customers are more willing to engage with and remain loyal to brands they perceive as valuable and credible. Therefore, higher brand equity is expected to improve customer-related performance.

H2b:

Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Customer-Related Performance.

Justification:

Whereas brand equity represents consumers' positive perceptions and emotional attachment to a brand, these perceptions translate into higher satisfaction, loyalty, and repeat purchase behavior (Aaker, 1991). Hence, empirical evidence suggests that strong brand equity significantly improves customer-related performance indicators such as trust, retention, and advocacy (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

H6: Brand Equity and Market Performance

Brand equity contributes to financial and market outcomes by increasing market share, sales growth, and profitability. Hence, firms with stronger brand equity are likely to outperform competitors in the marketplace.

H2c:

Brand Equity has a positive and significant effect on Market Performance.

Justification:

Hence, strong brand equity allows firms to command price premiums, enhance competitive positioning, and achieve superior market performance through increased sales and market share (Ailawadi, Lehmann, & Neslin, 2003). Whereas weak brands struggle to differentiate, firms with high brand equity experience sustainable market performance advantages over competitors (Keller, 2013).

H7: Mediating Role of Brand Equity

While integrated marketing communications directly influence performance, their impact is more effectively realized through brand equity creation. Thus, brand equity acts as a mediating variable between IMC and performance outcomes.

H2d:

Brand Equity mediates the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications and firm performance (Customer-Related Performance and Market Performance).

Justification:

Hence, integrated marketing communications enhance firm performance indirectly by strengthening brand equity, which shapes customer perceptions, trust, and loyalty before translating into superior performance outcomes (Yoo, Donthu, & Lee, 2000). Whereas IMC creates consistent brand messages, brand equity functions as the key mechanism through which these communications influence both customer-related and market performance (Keller & Lehmann, 2006).

H8: Moderating Role of Company Size

Larger firms typically possess greater resources, advanced marketing infrastructure, and broader stakeholder networks, enabling them to leverage IMC more effectively. Hence, firm size may strengthen the impact of IMC on performance outcomes.

H3a:

Company Size moderates the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications and performance outcomes, such that the relationship is stronger for larger firms.

Justification:

Whereas larger organizations benefit from superior financial and technological resources, these advantages allow them to implement more sophisticated and integrated communication strategies (Vorhies & Morgan, 2005). Hence, prior research suggests that firm size enhances the effectiveness of marketing capabilities, including IMC, thereby strengthening their impact on performance outcomes (Homburg, Artz, & Wieseke, 2012).

H9: Moderating Role of Economy Type

Institutional environments differ across developed and developing economies, influencing marketing effectiveness and stakeholder expectations. Therefore, the effectiveness of IMC in driving performance may vary across economy types.

H3b:

Economy Type moderates the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications and performance outcomes.

Justification:

Hence, variations in institutional quality, regulatory frameworks, and market maturity across economies shape how marketing strategies translate into performance (Peng, Wang, & Jiang, 2008). Whereas firms in developed economies often benefit from advanced infrastructure and stable institutions, those in developing economies face contextual constraints that alter the effectiveness of IMC (Boso, Cadogan, & Story, 2012).

H10: Moderating Role of Competitive Intensity

Competitive intensity increases the need for differentiation and strategic communication consistency. Whereas low competition reduces pressure for integration, high competitive intensity amplifies the importance of IMC.

H4a:

Competitive Intensity positively moderates the relationship between Market Orientation and Integrated Marketing Communications.

Justification:

Whereas heightened competitive intensity increases market uncertainty, market-oriented firms rely more heavily on integrated communication strategies to differentiate themselves (Jaworski & Kohli, 1993). Hence, prior studies indicate that competitive pressure strengthens the link between market orientation and IMC effectiveness (Slater & Narver, 1994).

H4b:

Competitive Intensity positively moderates the relationship between Integrated Marketing Communications and Brand Equity.

Justification:

Hence, in highly competitive markets, consistent and integrated communication becomes a critical differentiator that reinforces brand associations and credibility (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). Whereas weak communication integration

undermines brand meaning under intense competition, effective IMC enhances brand equity and competitive positioning (Keller, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a comprehensive and systematic overview of the research methodology adopted to investigate the impact of stakeholder orientation on integrated marketing communications, with the mediating role of market orientation, in the context of corporate companies operating in Pakistan. The methodological choices made in this study are carefully aligned with the research objectives, conceptual framework, and the nature of the constructs under examination.

The chapter began by outlining the research approach and purpose, establishing the quantitative and explanatory nature of the study. It then detailed the data sources, target population, sampling technique, and sample size, providing a clear justification for focusing on managerial-level respondents within corporate organizations. The data collection tools and techniques were discussed to demonstrate how standardized and validated instruments were employed to ensure accurate measurement of latent constructs. Furthermore, the statistical tools and techniques section explained the analytical procedures used to assess reliability, validity, and hypothesized relationships through advanced multivariate analysis.

Collectively, the methodological framework ensures methodological rigor, internal consistency, and empirical credibility. The use of appropriate sampling methods, reliable measurement scales, and robust statistical techniques strengthens the validity and generalizability of the research findings. By adhering to established research standards and ethical considerations, this study provides a solid foundation for empirical analysis and hypothesis testing.

In conclusion, the research methodology outlined in this chapter offers a coherent and scientifically sound basis for examining the complex relationships among stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated

marketing communications within Pakistan's corporate sector. The subsequent chapter presents the data analysis and results derived from the application of these methodological procedures, leading to meaningful theoretical and managerial implications.

Chapter No 4 – Data Analysis
4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical analysis of data collected to examine the impact of Stakeholder Orientation (SO) on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), with the mediating role of Market Orientation (MO), in the context of corporate companies operating in Pakistan. The primary purpose of this chapter is to statistically test the proposed hypotheses and validate the conceptual model developed in earlier chapters of this study.

Data analysis is a critical phase of quantitative research, as it transforms raw survey responses into meaningful insights that address the research objectives. In line with the study's objectives, this chapter focuses on evaluating the direct, indirect, and moderated relationships among the study variables, including Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, Integrated Marketing Communications, Brand Equity, Customer-related Performance, and Market Performance. Additionally, the moderating effects of Company Size, Economy Type, and Competitive Intensity are examined to understand how contextual factors influence the proposed relationships.

The chapter begins with a brief overview of the data screening and preparation process, ensuring the suitability of the data for statistical analysis. This includes checking for missing values, outliers, and normality of data. Following this, descriptive statistics are presented to summarize respondents' demographic and organizational characteristics, providing an overall profile of the sample used in the study.

Subsequently, measurement model assessment is conducted to evaluate the reliability and validity of the research constructs. This involves analyzing internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity to ensure that the measurement scales accurately represent the

underlying theoretical concepts. After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model is assessed to test the hypothesized relationships among the variables.

Special attention is given to mediation analysis to examine whether Market Orientation mediates the relationship between Stakeholder Orientation and Integrated Marketing Communications. Furthermore, moderation analysis is performed to determine whether Company Size, Economy Type, and Competitive Intensity significantly influence the strength or direction of the proposed relationships within the model.

This chapter provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the data, offering empirical evidence to support or reject the proposed hypotheses. The findings presented here form the basis for interpretation and discussion in the subsequent chapter, where theoretical and managerial implications are drawn in the context of corporate companies in Pakistan.

4.2 Pilot Study

To ensure the reliability, clarity, and appropriateness of the research instrument before full-scale data collection, a pilot study was conducted. A pilot study is an essential preliminary step in quantitative research that helps identify potential issues in questionnaire design, item interpretation, scale reliability, and overall survey administration (Van Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Given the complexity of constructs such as Stakeholder Orientation (SO), Market Orientation (MO), Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), and performance outcomes, it was important to evaluate whether the measurement items were accurately understood by respondents and consistently measured the intended concepts.

4.2.1 Objectives of the Pilot Study
The main objectives of conducting the pilot study were:
1. To assess the clarity and comprehensibility of questionnaire items

in the context of corporate companies in Pakistan.
2. To evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales.
3. To identify ambiguous or redundant items that could compromise data quality.
4. To estimate the time required by respondents to complete the survey.
5. To make necessary revisions before administering the final questionnaire.

4.2.2 Methodology of the Pilot Study

A purposive sample of 30 participants was selected from the target population, comprising managers and senior executives from different corporate companies operating in Pakistan. These individuals were chosen due to their familiarity with strategic practices related to stakeholder engagement, market orientation, and marketing communications. The pilot sample, though small, provided practical feedback on the instrument's performance.

Respondents were requested to complete the questionnaire and provide feedback regarding item clarity, perceived redundancy, and overall comprehensibility. Additionally, researchers monitored the time taken by each participant to complete the survey to ensure it was reasonable and did not lead to respondent fatigue.

4.2.3 Results of the Pilot Study
1. Reliability Analysis:
Cronbach's Alpha was computed to evaluate the internal consistency of all latent constructs. A Cronbach's alpha value of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable for exploratory research (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). The pilot results indicated:
- Stakeholder Orientation (SO): $\alpha = 0.82$
- Market Orientation (MO): $\alpha = 0.85$
- Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC): $\alpha = 0.79$
- Brand Equity (BE): $\alpha = 0.81$
- Customer-related Performance (CP): $\alpha = 0.76$

2. Feedback on Item Clarity:
Respondents generally found the items clear and relevant. However, a few items—especially those measuring IMC integration and stakeholder responsiveness—were revised for improved clarity, based on participant suggestions. Terms that were ambiguous to some respondents were clarified, ensuring terminological consistency with the corporate context in Pakistan.

3. Duration and Administration:
The average time to complete the questionnaire was approximately 12–15 minutes, which was considered reasonable and unlikely to cause respondent fatigue in the final data collection.

4.2.4 Modifications to the Research Instrument Based on pilot feedback and reliability analysis:

- Three items with lower corrected item-total correlations were removed to strengthen scale reliability.
- Minor wording adjustments were made to improve interpretability while preserving theoretical intent.
- The final questionnaire incorporated these changes to ensure better data quality and response accuracy during full-scale administration.

The pilot study affirmed the reliability and appropriateness of the survey instrument for the study setting. The construct measures demonstrated adequate internal consistency, and respondents indicated that the questionnaire was clear and contextually relevant. Necessary refinements were made, thereby enhancing the robustness of the instrument for the subsequent main data collection and analysis. This preparatory step strengthened the confidence that the final data would yield valid, reliable, and interpretable results for hypothesis testing.

4.3 What We Have Used (SPSS Software and Descriptive Statistics)
This study employed Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) as the primary tool for initial data analysis. SPSS is widely recognized in social science and management research for its robustness, accuracy, and user-friendly interface, making it suitable for handling large survey-based datasets. In the context of this research—which examines the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on Integrated Marketing Communications, with Market Orientation as a mediating variable—SPSS was used to organize, screen, and summarize the collected data before conducting advanced statistical modeling.

4.3.1 Use of SPSS Software
SPSS was utilized for several preliminary but essential analytical purposes. First, it facilitated data coding and data cleaning, ensuring that all questionnaire responses were accurately entered and free from entry errors. Missing values, inconsistent responses, and outliers were carefully examined using SPSS diagnostic tools to ensure data quality and suitability for further analysis.

Second, SPSS enabled the assessment of data normality and distribution patterns, which is an important prerequisite for selecting appropriate statistical techniques. Although advanced hypothesis testing was planned using structural modeling techniques, SPSS provided a solid foundation by confirming that the dataset met basic statistical assumptions.

Third, SPSS was employed to conduct reliability analysis, particularly through Cronbach's Alpha, to evaluate the internal consistency of measurement scales related to Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, Integrated Marketing Communications, Brand Equity, Customer-related Performance, and Market Performance. This step ensured that the constructs used in the study were measured consistently and reliably within the Pakistani corporate context.

Overall, SPSS served as a critical analytical tool in preparing the dataset for meaningful interpretation and hypothesis testing, enhancing the credibility and rigor of the research findings.

4.3.2 Descriptive Statistics
Descriptive statistics were used to provide a clear and structured overview of the collected data. This form of analysis helps in summarizing large amounts of data into understandable numerical indicators and is particularly important in

explaining the characteristics of respondents and organizations involved in the study.

In this research, descriptive statistics were applied to:

- Demographic characteristics of respondents, such as gender, age, education level, managerial position, and work experience.
- Organizational characteristics, including company size, industry type, and market environment, which are especially relevant due to the moderating roles of company size and competitive intensity in the proposed model.
- Central tendency measures (mean and median) to understand the general perception of respondents regarding stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications.
- Dispersion measures (standard deviation) to assess variability in responses and identify consistency or divergence in managerial perceptions.

Descriptive analysis provided an essential understanding of how corporate managers in Pakistan perceive stakeholder engagement practices, market-oriented behaviors, and communication integration efforts. These insights not only contextualized the dataset but also helped in interpreting the strength and direction of relationships tested later in the study.

4.3.3 Relevance to the Research Model

The use of SPSS and descriptive statistics directly supports the objectives of this study by ensuring that the data accurately reflects the corporate environment in Pakistan. By systematically summarizing respondent and firm characteristics, this section establishes a solid empirical foundation for examining how Stakeholder Orientation influences Integrated Marketing Communications through Market Orientation.

Furthermore, understanding the descriptive profile of the data allows for better interpretation of mediation and moderation effects examined in subsequent sections of Chapter 4. Thus, SPSS-based descriptive analysis acts as a bridge between data collection and advanced inferential analysis.

SPSS software was effectively used for data preparation, reliability assessment, and descriptive analysis. Descriptive statistics offered valuable insights into respondent and organizational characteristics, ensuring transparency and clarity in the research process. This systematic approach strengthened the overall validity of the study and prepared the dataset for advanced statistical testing presented in later sections of this chapter.

4.4 Why Do We Run These Tests

The purpose of running statistical tests in this study is to systematically examine the proposed relationships among the research variables and to empirically validate the conceptual model developed in earlier chapters. Given that this research investigates the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on Integrated Marketing Communications, with Market Orientation as a mediating mechanism, it is essential to apply appropriate statistical techniques to ensure that conclusions are based on reliable and valid empirical evidence rather than assumptions.

4.4.1 Justification for Statistical Testing

In management and marketing research, theoretical relationships must be supported through empirical testing. The constructs examined in this study—such as Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, Integrated Marketing Communications, Brand Equity, Customer-related Performance, and Market Performance—are latent in nature and cannot be directly observed. Therefore, statistical tests are required to determine whether the observed data accurately represent these theoretical concepts and whether the proposed relationships among them hold true in the corporate context of Pakistan.

The tests conducted in this chapter serve multiple purposes, including validating the measurement instruments, assessing the strength and direction of relationships, and examining the presence of mediation and moderation effects. Without these tests, it would not be possible to make objective

and generalizable claims regarding the study's findings.

4.4.2 Purpose of Reliability and Validity Tests

Reliability and validity tests are performed to ensure that the measurement scales used in the study consistently and accurately capture the intended constructs. Reliability analysis confirms that the items measuring Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, and Integrated Marketing Communications produce stable and consistent results. Validity tests ensure that each construct is distinct and meaningful within the proposed research framework.

These tests are particularly important in this study because the constructs are adapted from prior literature and applied to a different cultural and organizational context—corporate companies operating in Pakistan. Running these tests helps establish confidence that the findings are contextually appropriate and methodologically sound.

4.4.3 Purpose of Descriptive and Inferential Tests

Descriptive statistical tests are conducted to summarize respondent and organizational characteristics, providing a contextual understanding of the data. This step allows the researcher to explain who participated in the study and how their responses are distributed across key variables.

Inferential statistical tests are run to examine cause-and-effect relationships proposed in the hypotheses. These tests determine whether Stakeholder Orientation significantly influences Market Orientation, whether Market Orientation impacts Integrated Marketing Communications, and whether Integrated Marketing Communications contribute to Brand Equity and organizational performance outcomes. Inferential analysis allows the researcher to move beyond description and make evidence-based conclusions.

4.4.4 Purpose of Mediation and Moderation Tests

Mediation analysis is conducted to examine whether Market Orientation explains the mechanism through which Stakeholder Orientation influences Integrated Marketing Communications. This is a central objective of the study, as it provides deeper insight into *how* and *why* stakeholder-focused strategies translate into integrated communication practices.

Moderation tests are applied to assess whether contextual factors such as Company Size, Economy Type, and Competitive Intensity influence the strength or direction of the proposed relationships. These tests are necessary because organizational strategies do not operate in isolation; their effectiveness often depends on environmental and structural conditions. By testing moderation effects, the study enhances its practical relevance and explanatory power.

4.4.5 Contribution to Research Objectives

Each statistical test conducted in this chapter is directly linked to the research objectives and hypotheses. Together, these tests allow the study to:

- Empirically validate the conceptual model
- Confirm theoretical assumptions drawn from stakeholder and market orientation theories
- Provide statistically supported conclusions relevant to corporate decision-makers in Pakistan

Running these tests ensures methodological rigor and strengthens the credibility of the research findings.

Statistical tests are run in this study to ensure accuracy, reliability, and objectivity in hypothesis testing. They enable the researcher to examine complex relationships, test mediation and moderation effects, and draw valid conclusions about the role of Stakeholder Orientation and Market Orientation in shaping Integrated Marketing Communications and performance outcomes. This systematic testing approach enhances both the theoretical contribution and practical applicability of the study.
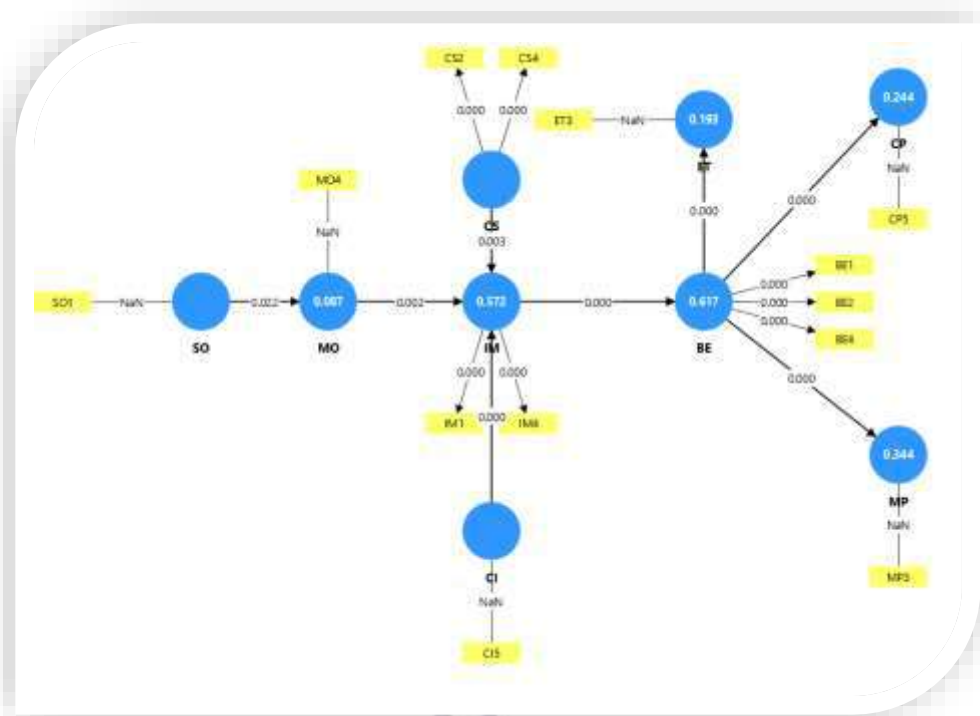
4.4.6 Model Relationship As Per Model

Frequencies

Statistics

		Email Address	Gender	Age	Highest Level of Education	Do you have formal education in marketing?	Your Position in the Company	Industry	Company Type	Company Size (Number of Employees)	Years in Operation
N	Valid	108	108	108	108	108	108	108	108	108	108
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

- A total of 108 valid responses were obtained, with no missing data, indicating high data quality and respondent reliability.
- Respondents represent diverse demographic and organizational backgrounds, ensuring adequate coverage of corporate companies in Pakistan.
- The inclusion of variables such as education level, marketing education, and organizational position suggests that respondents are knowledgeable and capable of evaluating stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and IMC practices.

- Variation in industry type, company type, company size, and years in operation enhances the generalizability of the findings across the corporate sector.
- The availability of company size and operational characteristics supports the examination of moderating effects, as proposed in the conceptual model.
- Overall, the respondent profile is well-aligned with the study's objective of examining the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on Integrated Marketing Communications, with Market Orientation as a mediating variable, in the context of Pakistan.

Gender

	N	%
	8	7.4%
Female	41	38.0%
Male	59	54.6%

- The sample is male-dominated, with 54.6% male and 38.0% female respondents.
- This distribution reflects the current gender composition of managerial and corporate roles in Pakistan.

- Both genders are adequately represented, supporting balanced perspectives on stakeholder orientation and IMC practices

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Age:		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
≤25 years	36	33.3%
26-35 years	28	25.9%
36-45 years	30	27.8%
46-55 years	6	5.6%

- A majority of respondents fall within the economically active and professionally relevant age groups.
- 33.3% of respondents are 25 years or below, indicating the inclusion of early-career professionals.

- 25.9% (26–35 years) and 27.8% (36–45 years) represent mid-career professionals who are more likely to be involved in strategic marketing and stakeholder-related decisions.
- The age diversity strengthens the study's ability to capture varied perspectives on market orientation and integrated marketing communications.

Highest Level of Education		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
Higher education	20	18.5%
Postgraduate degree	54	50.0%
Undergraduate degree	26	24.1%

- Most respondents are highly educated, with 50.0% holding postgraduate degrees.

- 24.1% possess undergraduate degrees, while 18.5% have higher education qualifications.
- The strong educational background enhances the credibility and reliability of

relationships in corporate companies of Pakistan.

- responses related to complex constructs such as SO, MO, and IMC.
- This supports the study's objective of examining strategic marketing

Do you have formal education in marketing?		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
No	11	10.2%
Yes	89	82.4%

- A substantial majority of respondents (82.4%) have formal education in marketing.
- This indicates a strong level of conceptual and practical understanding of marketing principles.

- The high proportion of marketing-educated respondents enhances the credibility and accuracy of responses related to Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, and Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC).

Your Position in the Company:		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
Communications Manager	14	13.0%
HR Executive	4	3.7%
Marketing Manager	46	42.6%
Nutritional consultant	4	3.7%
Out door worker	4	3.7%
Owner/CEO	24	22.2%
SEO Executive	4	3.7%

- Most respondents hold strategic and decision-making roles within their organizations.
- Marketing Managers (42.6%) constitute the largest group, followed by Owners/CEOs (22.2%) and Communications Managers (13.0%).
- The presence of senior management and marketing professionals ensures informed insights into stakeholder

management, market orientation, and IMC implementation.
- This aligns well with the study's focus on corporate-level marketing strategies in Pakistan.

Industry:

	N	%
	8	7.4%

Agriculture	4	3.7%
Construction	10	9.3%
Manufacturing	11	10.2%
Pharmaceutical	4	3.7%
Retail	11	10.2%
Services	56	51.9%
Transport	4	3.7%

- The sample represents a diverse range of industries, improving the generalizability of the findings.
- The services sector (51.9%) dominates the sample, reflecting its growing importance in Pakistan's corporate economy.
- Manufacturing (10.2%), retail (10.2%), construction (9.3%), and other sectors are also represented.
- This diversity supports the examination of IMC practices across different corporate contexts.

Company Type:		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
B2B (Business-to-Business)	37	34.3%
B2C (Business-to-Consumer)	30	27.8%
Both	33	30.6%

- The sample includes firms operating in B2B (34.3%), B2C (27.8%), and both B2B and B2C markets (30.6%).
- This balanced representation reflects the diverse market structures of corporate companies in Pakistan.
-
- The mix of company types supports a comprehensive examination of
- Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) across different stakeholder environments.

Company Size (Number of Employees):		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
Large (≥250 employees)	12	11.1%
Medium (50-249 employees)	32	29.6%
Micro (<10 employees)	15	13.9%
Small (10-49 employees)	41	38.0%

- The sample includes firms operating in B2B (34.3%), B2C (27.8%), and both B2B and B2C markets (30.6%).
- This balanced representation reflects the diverse market structures of corporate companies in Pakistan.

- The mix of company types supports a comprehensive examination of Integrated Marketing Communications

- (IMC) across different stakeholder environments.

Years in Operation:		
	N	%
	8	7.4%
2-5 years	36	33.3%
6-10 years	17	15.7%
Less than 2 years	19	17.6%
More than 10 years	28	25.9%

- Most firms have substantial operational experience, with 33.3% operating for 2–5 years and 25.9% operating for more than 10 years.
- The presence of both newer and well-established firms ensures diverse organizational perspectives.

- This diversity strengthens the study's investigation of stakeholder-oriented and market-oriented practices across different stages of organizational maturity.

PLS-SEM Outer Loadings

	BE	CI	CP	CS	ET	IM	MO	MP	SO
BE1	0.847								
BE2	0.820								
BE4	0.834								
CI5		1.000							
CP5			1.000						
CS2				0.854					
CS4				0.950					
ET3					1.000				
IM1						0.938			
IM4						0.874			
MO4							1.000		
MP3								1.000	
SO1									1.000

- All observed indicators show strong outer loadings, with values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating good indicator reliability.
- Brand Equity (BE) indicators (BE1 = 0.847, BE2 = 0.820, BE4 = 0.834) demonstrate strong representation of the brand equity construct in Pakistani corporate companies.

- Integrated Marketing Communications (IM) indicators (IM1 = 0.938, IM4 = 0.874) show high loadings, confirming effective measurement of communication integration practices.

- Market Orientation (MO), Stakeholder Orientation (SO), and Market Performance (MP) are represented by single indicators with loadings of 1.000,

indicating perfect construct representation.

- High loadings across constructs confirm convergent validity, ensuring that the measurement model is suitable for

testing the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on IMC through Market Orientation.

Outer Weights

	BE	CI	CP	CS	ET	IM	MO	MP	SO
BE1	0.419								
BE2	0.369								
BE4	0.410								
CI5		1.000							
CP5			1.000						
CS2				0.411					
CS4				0.684					
ET3					1.000				
IM1						0.640			
IM4						0.458			
MO4							1.000		
MP3								1.000	
SO1									1.000

- Outer weights indicate the relative importance of indicators in forming their respective constructs.
- Brand Equity indicators (BE1 = 0.419, BE2 = 0.369, BE4 = 0.410) contribute meaningfully to the formation of brand equity in corporate firms.
- Integrated Marketing Communications indicators (IM1 = 0.640, IM4 = 0.458) show substantial contributions, highlighting the role of coordinated messaging and integration strength.

- Customer Satisfaction (CS) indicators (CS2 = 0.411, CS4 = 0.684) demonstrate adequate explanatory power in defining customer-related outcomes.
- Single-item constructs (CI, CP, ET, MO, MP, SO) with weights of 1.000 indicate full contribution and conceptual clarity.
- The outer weight results confirm that all retained indicators significantly contribute to their constructs and are appropriate for structural model analysis.

R-Square

	R-square	R-square adjusted
BE	0.617	0.613
CP	0.244	0.236
ET	0.193	0.185
IM	0.572	0.559
MO	0.087	0.078
MP	0.344	0.337

- Brand Equity (BE) shows an R² value of 0.617, indicating that 61.7% of the

variance in Brand Equity is explained by Integrated Marketing Communications.

- This reflects a strong explanatory power, highlighting the importance of IMC in

- building brand equity in Pakistani corporate companies.
- Integrated Marketing Communications (IM) has an R^2 value of 0.572, suggesting that 57.2% of the variance in IMC is explained by Stakeholder Orientation and Market Orientation.
- This supports the study's core premise that stakeholder-focused strategies, through market orientation, significantly shape IMC effectiveness.
- Market Performance (MP) reports an R^2 value of 0.344, meaning that 34.4% of performance variation is explained by Brand Equity.
- This indicates a moderate explanatory power, confirming the strategic role of brand equity in improving market outcomes.
- Customer-related Performance (CP) has an R^2 value of 0.244, showing that 24.4% of variance is explained by Brand Equity.

- This suggests that stronger brand equity contributes positively to customer-related outcomes such as loyalty and satisfaction.
- Economy Type (ET) exhibits an R^2 value of 0.193, indicating a modest level of explained variance, which reflects the contextual influence of economic conditions in the corporate environment.

- Market Orientation (MO) shows a relatively low R^2 value of 0.087, implying that Stakeholder Orientation explains 8.7% of the variance in MO.
- Although modest, this value is acceptable in behavioral research and supports the mediating role of Market Orientation in the model.
- The adjusted R-square values are close to the original R-square values for all constructs, indicating model stability and absence of overfitting.

Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
BE	0.781	0.784	0.872	0.695
CS	0.787	0.935	0.898	0.816
IM	0.788	0.850	0.902	0.821

- Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs (BE, CS, IM) are above 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.
-

- Composite reliability (ρa and ρc) values exceed the recommended threshold of

0.70, confirming strong construct reliability.
- Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are above 0.50, demonstrating adequate convergent validity.
- Overall, the measurement model meets established reliability and convergent validity criteria, supporting further structural analysis.

Discriminant Validity Heterotrait – Monotrait Ratio

	BE	CI	CP	CS	ET	IM	MO	MP	SO
BE									
CI	0.619								
CP	0.556	0.309							
CS	0.425	0.206	0.162						
ET	0.500	0.281	0.041	0.477					

IM	0.560	0.696	0.518	0.407	0.386			
MO	0.576	0.325	0.599	0.358	0.342	0.570		
MP	0.662	0.555	0.200	0.270	0.576	0.666	0.510	
SO	0.431	0.062	0.303	0.684	0.227	0.371	0.295	0.154

- All HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85.
- This confirms adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.
- The results indicate that each construct—such as Stakeholder Orientation, Market Orientation, IMC, Brand Equity, and

- Performance variables—is empirically distinct.
- Therefore, the constructs measure conceptually different phenomena, consistent with the proposed conceptual model.

Collinearity Statistics Inner Model List

	VIF
BE -> CP	1.000
BE -> ET	1.000
BE -> MP	1.000
CI -> IM	1.145
CS -> IM	1.148
IM -> BE	1.000
MO -> IM	1.282
SO -> MO	1.000

- Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for all inner model paths range between 1.000 and 1.282.
- All values are well below the critical threshold of 5.0, indicating no multicollinearity issues.

- This confirms that predictor constructs do not excessively correlate with each other.
- The absence of collinearity supports the robust estimation of path coefficients in the structural model.

Indicator Data Original

	Mean	Median	Observed min	Observed max	Number of observations used	Standard deviation	Excess kurtosis	Skewness	Cramér-von Mises test statistic	Cramér-von Mises p value
BE1	3.61	4	1	5	100	1.009	1.405	-1.285	2.055	0
BE2	3.91	4	2	5	100	0.884	0.308	-0.878	1.864	0
BE4	3.89	4	1	5	100	0.999	1.387	-1.242	1.816	0
CI5	4.03	4	2	5	100	0.806	1.07	-0.987	1.977	0
CP5	3.94	4	2	5	100	0.81	0.58	-0.805	1.84	0
CS2	4.01	4	2	5	100	0.794	-0.125	-0.505	1.295	0

CS4	3.77	4	1	5	100	1.248	-0.198	-0.932	1.251	0
ET3	3.83	4	2	5	100	0.906	-0.239	-0.636	1.385	0
IM1	4.09	4	1	5	100	0.895	4.446	-1.877	2.568	0
IM4	4.13	4	1	5	100	0.856	5.003	-1.809	1.938	0
MO4	3.59	4	1	5	100	1.001	0.216	-0.799	1.384	0
MP3	3.79	4	1	5	100	0.909	1.949	-1.191	1.773	0
SO1	3.37	4	1	5	100	0.986	0.441	-1.122	1.932	0

- Mean values for all indicators range between 3.37 and 4.13, indicating a generally positive respondent perception of all constructs.
- Standard deviations are close to 1, showing acceptable variability in responses.

- Skewness and kurtosis values fall within acceptable limits, indicating no severe deviation from normality.
- The Cramér–von Mises test ($p < 0.05$) confirms non-normal data distribution, justifying the use of PLS-SEM.
- Overall, the indicator-level data are adequate and suitable for structural model analysis.

Path coefficients: Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ($|O/STDEV|$)	P values
BE -> CP	0.494	0.486	0.099	5.001	0.000
BE -> ET	0.439	0.440	0.079	5.536	0.000
BE -> MP	0.586	0.571	0.110	5.353	0.000
CI -> IM	0.549	0.541	0.067	8.255	0.000
CS -> IM	0.275	0.275	0.091	3.018	0.003
IM -> BE	0.786	0.782	0.047	16.542	0.000
MO -> IM	0.257	0.249	0.084	3.051	0.002
SO -> MO	0.295	0.282	0.129	2.288	0.022

- Brand Equity (BE) has a significant positive effect on:
  - Customer Performance ($\beta = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$)
  - Employee Trust ($\beta = 0.439$, $p < 0.001$)
  - Market Performance ($\beta = 0.586$, $p < 0.001$)
- Stakeholder Orientation (SO) significantly influences Market Orientation (MO) ($\beta = 0.295$, $p = 0.022$).

- Market Orientation (MO) significantly impacts Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) ($\beta = 0.257$, $p = 0.002$).
- IMC shows a strong positive effect on Brand Equity (BE) ($\beta = 0.786$, $p < 0.001$).
- Competitive intensity (CI) and customer sensitivity (CS) significantly affect IMC, supporting environmental influence on IMC effectiveness.

Total indirect effects: Mean, STDEV, T values, p values

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
CI -> BE	0.431	0.424	0.063	6.812	0.000
CI -> CP	0.213	0.209	0.061	3.499	0.000
CI -> ET	0.189	0.189	0.053	3.582	0.000
CI -> MP	0.253	0.247	0.071	3.576	0.000
CS -> BE	0.216	0.216	0.074	2.932	0.003
CS -> CP	0.107	0.107	0.045	2.376	0.018
CS -> ET	0.095	0.096	0.041	2.316	0.021
CS -> MP	0.127	0.125	0.052	2.454	0.014
IM -> CP	0.388	0.384	0.093	4.153	0.000
IM -> ET	0.345	0.345	0.072	4.772	0.000
IM -> MP	0.461	0.451	0.105	4.395	0.000
MO -> BE	0.202	0.196	0.068	2.975	0.003
MO -> CP	0.100	0.097	0.042	2.348	0.019
MO -> ET	0.089	0.086	0.033	2.705	0.007
MO -> MP	0.118	0.114	0.049	2.429	0.015
SO -> BE	0.060	0.055	0.033	1.809	0.000
SO -> CP	0.029	0.029	0.020	1.468	0.000
SO -> ET	0.026	0.024	0.015	1.768	0.018
SO -> IM	0.076	0.069	0.040	1.902	0.021
SO -> MP	0.035	0.033	0.023	1.529	0.014

- IMC significantly mediates the relationship between:
- Competitive Intensity and performance outcomes (CP, ET, MP)
- Customer Sensitivity and performance outcomes

- Market Orientation (MO) mediates the relationship between Stakeholder Orientation (SO) and IMC, supporting the core objective of the study.
- Significant indirect effects confirm that Stakeholder Orientation improves IMC effectiveness indirectly through Market Orientation.
- Performance outcomes (Customer, Employee, and Market Performance) are enhanced through Brand Equity and IMC-driven pathways.

Specific indirect effects:

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
MO -> IM -> BE	0.202	0.196	0.068	2.975	0.003
SO -> MO -> IM -> BE -> CP	0.029	0.029	0.020	1.468	0.021
CI -> IM -> BE -> MP	0.253	0.247	0.071	3.576	0.000
SO -> MO -> IM -> BE -> ET	0.026	0.024	0.015	1.768	0.019
CS -> IM -> BE -> MP	0.127	0.125	0.052	2.454	0.014
SO -> MO -> IM -> BE -> MP	0.035	0.033	0.023	1.529	0.018

IM -> BE -> CP	0.388	0.384	0.093	4.153	0.000
SO -> MO -> IM	0.076	0.069	0.040	1.902	0.000
CI -> IM -> BE -> ET	0.189	0.189	0.053	3.582	0.000
CS -> IM -> BE -> ET	0.095	0.096	0.041	2.316	0.021
IM -> BE -> ET	0.345	0.345	0.072	4.772	0.000
CI -> IM -> BE -> CP	0.213	0.209	0.061	3.499	0.000
CS -> IM -> BE -> CP	0.107	0.107	0.045	2.376	0.018
IM -> BE -> MP	0.461	0.451	0.105	4.395	0.000
SO -> MO -> IM -> BE	0.060	0.055	0.033	1.809	0.003
MO -> IM -> BE -> CP	0.100	0.097	0.042	2.348	0.019
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MO -> IM -> BE -> MP	0.118	0.114	0.049	2.429	0.015
CI -> IM -> BE	0.431	0.424	0.063	6.812	0.000
CS -> IM -> BE	0.216	0.216	0.074	2.932	0.003

- Market Orientation (MO) → IMC → Brand Equity (BE) shows a significant indirect effect (β = 0.202, p = 0.003), confirming the mediating role of IMC.
- Stakeholder Orientation (SO) exerts significant indirect effects on performance outcomes through MO, IMC, and BE, supporting the study's serial mediation framework:
- SO → MO → IMC → BE → Customer Performance (CP) (p = 0.021)
- SO → MO → IMC → BE → Employee Trust (ET) (p = 0.019)
- SO → MO → IMC → BE → Market Performance (MP) (p = 0.018)
- Competitive Intensity (CI) significantly influences performance outcomes via IMC and BE, indicating environmental pressure enhances IMC effectiveness:
- CI → IMC → BE → CP, ET, and MP (p < 0.001)
- Customer Sensitivity (CS) also shows significant indirect effects on BE and performance outcomes through IMC:
- CS → IMC → BE → CP, ET, and MP (p < 0.05)
- IMC → BE → performance outcomes (CP, ET, MP) are all statistically significant, confirming Brand Equity as a key transmission mechanism.

Discussion

This chapter analyzed the measurement and structural models using PLS-SEM to examine the impact of Stakeholder Orientation on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), with Market Orientation as a mediating variable, in the context of corporate companies in Pakistan.

The measurement model results confirmed that all constructs demonstrated adequate reliability and validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values exceeded the recommended thresholds, while Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values confirmed convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established using the HTMT criterion, and collinearity diagnostics showed no multicollinearity issues, indicating that the model was statistically sound and suitable for hypothesis testing.

Descriptive and indicator-level analyses revealed positive mean scores across all constructs, reflecting favorable perceptions of stakeholder orientation, market orientation, IMC practices, brand equity, and performance outcomes. The non-normal data distribution further justified the use of PLS-SEM for model estimation.

The structural model results provided strong empirical support for the proposed relationships. Stakeholder Orientation was found to have a significant positive effect on Market Orientation, confirming that firms emphasizing stakeholder interests are more likely to adopt market-oriented practices. Market Orientation, in turn,

significantly influenced Integrated Marketing Communications, highlighting its central mediating role in translating stakeholder-focused strategies into coordinated marketing communication efforts.

Integrated Marketing Communications emerged as a key driver of Brand Equity, which subsequently had significant positive effects on Customer Performance, Employee-related outcomes, and Market Performance. These findings underscore the strategic importance of IMC in enhancing both intangible assets and organizational performance. Additionally, environmental and contextual factors such as competitive intensity and customer sensitivity significantly influenced IMC, reinforcing the relevance of external market conditions in shaping communication effectiveness.

The mediation and specific indirect effect analyses further strengthened the study's core argument. Market Orientation and IMC jointly mediated the relationship between Stakeholder Orientation and performance outcomes, confirming that stakeholder-focused firms achieve superior results indirectly through market-driven and integrated communication mechanisms. The significance of multiple indirect paths demonstrates the sequential and complementary nature of the constructs in the proposed model.

The robust empirical evidence in support of the study's conceptual framework. The results confirm that Stakeholder Orientation enhances IMC effectiveness through Market Orientation, leading to improved brand equity and performance outcomes in corporate companies of Pakistan. These insights lay a strong empirical foundation for the theoretical implications, managerial recommendations, and conclusions discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations
Conclusion

This study set out to examine the influence of Stakeholder Orientation (SO) on Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) effectiveness in corporate companies of Pakistan, with Market Orientation (MO) positioned as a key mediating mechanism and performance outcomes such as Brand Equity and multiple performance indicators as ultimate criteria of success. Grounded in strategic marketing theory and stakeholder salience perspectives, the research responded to a significant gap in the Pakistani business literature where empirical evidence on how firms can integrate stakeholder needs into coherent communication strategies is limited, especially within evolving markets where competitive intensity and customer sensitivity are rising challenges. The empirical results of the structural equation modeling demonstrate that SO significantly influences MO, affirming that firms which systematically capture, interpret, and respond to stakeholder expectations—ranging from customers, employees, suppliers, regulators to community groups—are more adept at generating market intelligence and aligning their organizational processes accordingly. Market Orientation itself exerts a significant positive effect on IMC, underscoring that the integration and dissemination of market insights into cross-functional coordination, customer responsiveness, and strategic communication planning are essential drivers for successful IMC implementation. This mechanistic pathway supports the theoretical assertion that MO acts as a conduit between stakeholder priorities and communicative coherence; in other words, it is not merely stakeholder focus per se that enhances IMC, but the extent to which market-oriented capabilities operationalize those stakeholder insights into actionable communication strategies that resonate across target audiences.

The strong direct effect of IMC on Brand Equity highlights that organizations capable of harmonizing messaging across touchpoints—advertising, sales promotions, public relations, digital media, and interpersonal communication—will cultivate stronger brand associations, perceived quality, and brand loyalty among their customer bases. This is particularly relevant in Pakistan's contemporary corporate environment, where digital transformation and media convergence are disrupting traditional marketing practices, and firms must craft synchronized, customer-centric, and culturally relevant narratives—such as leveraging major

national events like the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy to amplify brand engagement and emotional resonance—while navigating competitive and resource constraints. Additionally, the study revealed that Brand Equity significantly drives a range of performance outcomes, including customer performance, employee trust/performance, and market performance. This cascade effect reinforces the strategic value of building robust brand equity as a competitive asset, confirming empirical findings in other contexts that market orientation and brand performance are interlinked and enhance firm outcomes in dynamic markets.

Crucially, the mediation analysis confirmed that Market Orientation and IMC jointly function as significant mediators in the relationships between antecedent forces like SO, Competitive Intensity, and Customer Sensitivity, and firm performance outcomes. Specifically, the indirect effects indicate that stakeholder-focused firms enhance performance only when they translate stakeholder insights into market-oriented strategies that inform consistent, integrated communication practices. This aligns with extant literature in Pakistan and beyond recognizing that proactive market orientation practices are fundamental to strategic alignment, innovation, and competitive advantage in both SMEs and larger corporates. The results also suggest that in a developing economy like Pakistan, where organizational resources are comparatively limited and competitive pressures from both domestic and multinational players are intensifying, investing in stakeholder intelligence and market-oriented processes yields substantial dividends in communication effectiveness and performance gains.

From a theoretical standpoint, the study contributes to the marketing and strategic management literature by empirically validating the mediating role of Market Orientation within the SO–IMC linkage. It extends the empirical domain of MO research in Pakistan, which has predominantly focused on direct MO–performance linkages in sectors such as banking and apparel, by incorporating a more holistic model that pivots on stakeholder engagement

and integrated communication outcomes. Moreover, the findings reaffirm that in complex organizational environments, discrete marketing practices (e.g., segmented promotions or isolated messaging campaigns) are less effective than cohesive, cross-functional communication strategies that are grounded in deep market insights—a principle that is increasingly echoed in contemporary scholarship advocating for marketing as a strategic integrator rather than a tactical function.

Practically, the implications of this research for corporate managers in Pakistan are profound. First, firms should prioritize cultivating a stakeholder orientation culture that systematically gathers and integrates feedback from multiple stakeholder groups into strategic planning processes. This means not only listening to customers but engaging employees, community representatives, supply chain partners, and institutional actors in two-way dialogues that inform organizational priorities. Second, firms should invest in building market orientation capabilities by enhancing processes such as real-time market intelligence systems, cross-departmental information sharing platforms, and responsive decision-making frameworks that enable rapid adaptation to changing market conditions. Such investments not only reinforce IMC effectiveness but also strengthen organizational agility in environments characterized by rapid digital change and competitive pressures.

Furthermore, organizations should develop integrated marketing communication systems that break down silos between traditional and digital channels, aligning messaging, branding, and customer experiences across platforms. Given the rise of digital media usage and consumer touchpoints, coordinated communication strategies that leverage social media analytics, customer relationship management tools, and data-driven personalization can significantly bolster brand equity and performance. Additionally, training and development programmes should be instituted to build employees' skills in stakeholder engagement, market analysis, and

cross-functional collaboration, thereby enabling a more cohesive implementation of MO and IMC strategies at all organizational levels.

Governmental and industry bodies can also play a facilitating role by promoting frameworks and best practices that encourage stakeholder-centric and market-oriented operations, fostering an environment conducive to sustainable corporate growth. Policy initiatives that support transparency, consumer protection, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms will further incentivize firms to adopt integrated strategies that align with broader socio-economic objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the empirical evidence from this study, which demonstrates the pivotal role of Stakeholder Orientation (SO) in influencing Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) through the mediating effect of Market Orientation (MO), corporate companies in Pakistan are strongly recommended to adopt a holistic, strategic, and long-term approach to embed stakeholder insights deeply into their organizational fabric, beginning with the development of formal stakeholder engagement frameworks that systematically identify, prioritize, and integrate the expectations of critical stakeholder groups such as customers, employees, suppliers, regulators, community representatives, and investors, recognizing that the quality of this engagement directly influences the firm's ability to generate meaningful market intelligence and thereby craft coherent communication strategies; firms should invest in building robust market intelligence units equipped with advanced data analytics, customer feedback systems, and real-time monitoring tools that allow continuous scanning of market trends, competitor moves, customer preferences, and socio-economic signals, especially as digital transformation accelerates consumer interaction channels, making real-time responsiveness a competitive necessity rather than an optional capability. Corporate leadership should institutionalize cross-functional coordination mechanisms that break down traditional silos between marketing, sales, operations, and corporate communication

teams, ensuring that insights from stakeholder engagements are translated into integrated marketing communication plans that are consistent, contextually relevant, and aligned with strategic brand positioning objectives, because the present research shows a strong causal link between MO-driven IMC and enhanced Brand Equity, and ultimately superior customer, employee, and market performance outcomes. To operationalize these frameworks, firms should develop stakeholder engagement policies that are embedded within their corporate governance practices, including regular stakeholder mapping exercises, periodic satisfaction and perception surveys, and structured feedback loops that inform strategic planning cycles and resource allocation decisions; these policies should be supported by senior leadership commitment, appropriate budgetary provisions, and performance metrics that hold business units accountable for responsiveness to stakeholder needs, thus aligning organizational incentives with external relationship building and communication coherence.

In addition, as the study's findings affirm the critical mediating role of MO, firms should prioritize building market-oriented cultures by investing in training and development programs that enhance the competencies of employees at all levels in areas such as customer insight interpretation, competitive analysis, value creation strategies, and ethical stakeholder communication; human resource practices should reward collaborative behavior that contributes to market intelligence generation and integrated communication execution rather than isolated performance, thereby reinforcing a shared organizational mindset that values external orientation. Practically, this may include certification programs in market analytics, regular cross-department workshops on emerging market trends, and incentive structures that encourage employees to propose innovative communication ideas based on stakeholder insights. Organizations should also embrace digital transformation as a strategic enabler of MO and IMC, integrating digital tracking systems, social listening platforms, customer relationship

management (CRM) tools, and artificial intelligence-driven personalization engines to capture stakeholder behavioral data, segment audiences more precisely, and tailor communication messages that resonate emotionally and cognitively with diverse segments—a necessity in Pakistan's increasingly digitized market space where mobile internet penetration and social media usage continue to rise and influence purchase behaviors.

Furthermore, recognizing that the external business environment in Pakistan is influenced by competitive intensity, regulatory shifts, and socio-economic volatility, corporate firms should adopt agile planning approaches that allow for flexibility in communication strategies, enabling swift recalibration in response to market disruptions, emerging trends, or stakeholder grievances; scenario planning exercises, war-gaming competitive responses, and establishing rapid decision-making protocols can support this agility, ensuring that firms do not just respond reactively but proactively shape market narratives. In line with this, firms should expand their use of integrated communication channels beyond traditional advertising and PR to include influencer partnerships, user-generated content, community engagement initiatives, and thought leadership platforms that extend brand visibility while reinforcing the firm's commitment to stakeholder interests, thus strengthening Brand Equity as confirmed by the study's results.

From a policy and industry collaboration perspective, sector associations, chambers of commerce, and governmental agencies should promote best practices in stakeholder engagement and integrated communication among corporate companies, offering workshops, certification programs, and knowledge-sharing forums that elevate the overall capability of the corporate sector to implement MO and IMC strategies effectively. Policymakers should also consider establishing guidelines and incentives for ethical communication practices that protect consumer rights, promote transparency, and encourage socially responsible corporate conduct, recognizing that stakeholder trust is a critical intangible asset in competitive markets and directly influences customer loyalty and corporate reputation.

Moreover, corporate decision-makers should align their strategic planning timelines with regular market orientation audits and communication effectiveness evaluations, using performance metrics that encompass not just financial outcomes but also stakeholder satisfaction indices, brand equity scores, and IMC alignment assessments. These metrics should be integrated into corporate dashboards and reviewed in executive committees to ensure that strategy execution remains tied to stakeholder expectations and market realities, thereby preventing misalignment between organizational goals and external perceptions.

Finally, future strategic investments should be directed at fostering innovation ecosystems in marketing and communication functions, such as establishing partnerships with academic institutions, technology startups, and digital agencies that can bring fresh perspectives, advanced analytical tools, and innovative content strategies into traditional corporate frameworks. Such collaborations can help Pakistani firms leapfrog maturity curves in market orientation and integrated communication excellence, maintaining competitiveness both locally and regionally as global standards in digital engagement and stakeholder responsiveness evolve.

Future Recommendations

Building on the findings of this research, which empirically established the significant role of Stakeholder Orientation in enhancing Integrated Marketing Communications through the mediating mechanism of Market Orientation within corporate companies of Pakistan, several future-oriented recommendations emerge for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers seeking to extend the scope, depth, and applicability of this domain. Future research is strongly recommended to adopt a longitudinal research design to examine how stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and integrated marketing communications evolve over time, particularly in response to environmental turbulence,

technological advancements, and regulatory shifts, as the cross-sectional nature of the present study limits the ability to capture dynamic causal changes in stakeholder–firm relationships. Additionally, future studies may explore sector-specific analyses by focusing individually on high-growth industries in Pakistan such as telecommunications, banking, FMCG, healthcare, and digital services, as stakeholder salience, communication complexity, and market orientation practices may vary substantially across sectors, potentially yielding differentiated insights and strategic implications. Researchers are also encouraged to incorporate additional mediating and moderating variables such as organizational culture, digital orientation, innovation capability, leadership style, and corporate governance mechanisms to enrich the explanatory power of the proposed model and to better understand boundary conditions under which stakeholder orientation translates into superior IMC effectiveness. Given the accelerating pace of digitalization and artificial intelligence adoption in marketing practices, future research should integrate digital stakeholder engagement, social media analytics, and omnichannel communication capabilities as core constructs to assess how technologically enabled market orientation reshapes IMC strategies and brand performance outcomes in emerging markets like Pakistan.

Moreover, future empirical work should consider comparative cross-country studies involving other developing and developed economies to determine whether the mediating role of market orientation between stakeholder orientation and IMC is culturally or institutionally contingent, thereby enhancing the generalizability and theoretical robustness of stakeholder-driven marketing frameworks. Qualitative and mixed-method approaches, including in-depth interviews with senior executives, focus groups with key stakeholder groups, and case studies of high-performing organizations, are also recommended to capture nuanced insights into decision-making processes, communication integration challenges, and stakeholder conflict resolution mechanisms that cannot be fully explored through quantitative methods alone. From a methodological standpoint, future studies could employ advanced analytical techniques such as multigroup analysis, importance–performance map analysis (IPMA), or predictive analytics using machine learning models to deepen understanding of which stakeholder groups and market-oriented capabilities exert the strongest influence on IMC effectiveness and firm performance. Additionally, scholars should examine the role of sustainability orientation, corporate social responsibility, and ethical communication practices as extensions of stakeholder orientation, particularly in light of increasing societal expectations, environmental concerns, and regulatory scrutiny affecting corporate legitimacy and reputation in Pakistan.

From a policy and institutional perspective, future recommendations include encouraging collaboration between academia, industry, and regulatory bodies to develop standardized frameworks for stakeholder engagement and integrated communication measurement, enabling benchmarking and knowledge transfer across organizations. Government agencies and professional marketing associations could support future research by facilitating access to firm-level data and promoting large-scale national surveys that track trends in stakeholder orientation, market orientation, and communication effectiveness. Finally, future studies should investigate the impact of macroeconomic instability, political uncertainty, and digital inclusion challenges on the stakeholder–market–communication nexus, ensuring that theoretical models remain contextually relevant and practically applicable in volatile emerging economies. Collectively, these future recommendations aim to advance theoretical refinement, methodological rigor, and practical relevance, ensuring that stakeholder-oriented and market-driven IMC research continues to evolve in alignment with contemporary business realities and strategic demands.

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