

# Theoretical Concept or Management Fashion?

## Examining the Significance of IMC



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Particularly throughout the last decade Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) appeared to have found increasing acceptance as a theoretical concept, idea, technique, or simple rhetoric with advertising agency executives, marketing, and advertising practitioners, as well as with writers in the popular and academic marketing and management press. Despite its pervasive penetration in the marketing and communication management world, little has been said, however, about IMC's theoretical robustness as well as its *actual* significance for marketing and advertising thought and practice. In an attempt to help remedy this situation, this article examines IMC as a body of theory and hypothesizes its influence upon practice—as a theoretical concept, general idea, management technique, or simple rhetoric. The analysis and argument presented in this article suggests that IMC is a management fashion, apparent in its lack of definition and transient influence, and that its influence upon practice should be conceived accordingly.

Few topics have received more attention in the marketing literature of recent years than that of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). As researchers, students, and practitioners in the field of marketing communications, it is hard not to have been confronted yet influenced by the riches of writings on IMC. It seems particularly difficult here not to be in any way appealed to by these writings, when reflecting upon the “potentialities” associated with IMC or the simple solutions that it offers for the complexity of managing marketing communications across organizations. Not surprisingly, and perhaps as a consequence of these appealing features, it appears that IMC has found a perpetual and widespread acceptance among marketers (e.g., Schultz, 1996b) and advertising agency executives (e.g., Kitchen and Schultz, 1999), as well as marketing academics fostering an “integrated” approach to marketing communications in their articles and books (e.g., Kitchen, 1999).

Nonetheless, despite this broad endorsement of the idea of IMC, there has been little work examining what each of these audiences understand IMC to be and how the concept of or term IMC is actually employed in each of these contexts—as a theoretical concept, general idea, management technique, or mere rhetoric. This article looks at the status of IMC as a theory within the academic study and discipline of marketing communications and its relationships with and influence upon its practice.

In the course of examining this topic, the authors touched upon significant evidence and arguments—such as the lack of academic rigor and the ahistorical concentration of practitioners and academics on the relatively recent idea of IMC—which allege that IMC is a management fashion. The results of the analysis and arguments presented in this article carry clear practical implications, as both advertisers and marketers will be interested in knowing whether and how IMC has any practical significance. From a conceptual standpoint, our analysis suggests that although IMC due to its lack of definition cannot clearly be inferred from practice, that is, we cannot say what IMC is and what it is not, its influence as a management fashion can be profound in the general and popular ideas that it disseminates and the rhetoric that it provides to practicing managers. Because of our specific focus on the effect of IMC theory on practice, we begin by briefly discussing the emergence and appeal of IMC theory.

### THE EMERGENCE AND APPEAL OF IMC

Although tracing the origins of a new management theory is essential in establishing its emergence, appeal, and ultimate significance in theory and practice, it appears that there have been difficulties in the case of IMC. Whereas a number of authors, considering IMC as the combined use of multiple marketing communication techniques linked in their planning and execution, contend that the idea behind IMC goes back at least to the

early 1970s (Knecht, 1989; Petrison and Wang, 1996; Van Riel, 1995) other writers have argued that the concept emerged or at least gained increased salience and significance in the early 1980s (Smith, 1996; Pickton and Hartley, 1998).

At that time, the apparent move away from the Fordist model of mass communications inaugurated an era characterized by increasing pressures on mass media advertising, heightened competition, and increasing fragmentation with more individualistically oriented consumer audiences (Tedlow, 1990). Also, with new media and technological advances in marketing abounding, writers have ever since deliberated upon the drastic changes that are (and will be) appearing in communication practices as well as in the marketing and advertising industry as a whole (e.g., Zinkhan and Watson, 1996). These writers subsequently see the concept of IMC as a manifest outcome of this transformation of marketing communications in the 1980s (e.g., Schultz, 1996a, 1999).

IMC is, in much of this work, perhaps based on a somewhat teleological argument, seen as a drastic change, yet even as the opposite, to traditional mass marketing communications. For example, writers have argued to move away from talking about and practicing the traditional distinction between "below-the-line" and "above-the-line" communication techniques to talking about "through-the-line" and "zero-based" communications—where rather than prefixed choices for particular communication techniques, the most appropriate technique for a communication problem can be chosen (see Dilenschneider, 1991; Schultz et al., 1993; Schultz, 1996a, 1999; Deighton, 1996, 1999; Prensky et al., 1996; Sirgy, 1998).

#### IMC'S STATUS AS A THEORY

This difference of opinion about the historical context and emergence of IMC

hangs closely together with the lack of a definition of the concept (Nowak and Phelps, 1994; Phelps and Johnson, 1996; Kitchen, 1999). While writers appear to agree on the domains to be covered by IMC—concerned with both the organizational processes of structuring and coordinating working practices of marketing communication professionals, as well as the execution and content of communication programs (Nowak and Phelps, 1994; Prensky et al., 1996; Petrison and Wang, 1996)—there has, nonetheless, been little formal theory construction and research.

While there is considerable debate and discussion of the subject, i.e., who does it, how it is done, etc., the formal presentation of research, theory development, and other materials by either practitioners or academics has been slow in coming (Schultz and Kitchen, 1997).

In effect, having no clearly defined definition contributes to the lack of operational measures of IMC (Phelps et al., 1996), which makes it difficult to identify or evaluate specific organizational processes or campaigns in marketing communications disciplines as quintessentially IMC. That is, the theoretical concept of IMC has to be inferred from observed aspects of marketing communications practice which, by definition, have been designated as exemplars of the concept. Such exemplars implied to a concept thus need to be made *explicit* into *defined* constructs and, for empirical measurement, operational definitions. Unless we arrive at a widespread belief in constructs (e.g., consistency in messages or organizational alignment of marketing strategies and tactics) or a technique of measurement as evidence of existence, then the theoretical concept of IMC remains on shaky ground.

As with any other theoretical concept, the objective should be to specify the ob-

servable phenomena, or constructs, to which the concept of IMC refers—clearly delineating a number of exemplars or properties that constitute the concept and that distinguish it from other concepts. Although the importance of the formal statement of definitions, constructs, and operational definitions of IMC has been repeatedly recognized by academic writers (e.g., Kitchen, 1999), little has been done, however, to remedy this situation that, as a consequence, the theoretical concept of IMC is still ambiguous (Nowak and Phelps, 1994; Phelps et al., 1996; Kitchen and Schultz, 1999; Kitchen, 1999).

This apparent ambiguity has allowed for various interpretations and the loose use of the term IMC and has allowed researchers to choose whichever conceptualization best fits their research agendas at any given time. As a result, definitions and measurement scales have been peculiar to individual research studies. Phelps et al. (1996), for instance, examined whether companies have individual or consensus decision-making styles in marketing communications strategy. They found that the use of a consensus approach, where the heads of various communications functions work together to develop communication strategies, is on the increase. Although Phelps et al. (1996) asserted that this increase in the use of a consensus planning style *could* indicate the reassignment of responsibilities in an effort to integrate communications strategy better among the various communication disciplines, at the same time they argued that "using a simple consensus measure as the sole indicator of IMC is inadequate—just as Duncan and Everett (1993) reported that the use of multiple responsibilities as a sole indicator of integration is inadequate."

Their remark expresses the concern of many academic writers that, first, much work, rather than working from a clear set

of defined constructs and operational definitions, consists of an a posteriori rationalization that a particular aspect observed in marketing communications practice, for example, an increase in the use of promotions and marketing public relations at the expense of advertising (Kitchen and Schultz, 1999), *reflects* the acceptance and implementation of IMC. Second, Phelps et al.'s (1996) remark also evokes the widely shared belief that IMC is a sort of overall, inclusive approach to marketing communications rather than being refined to singular aspects of marketing communications, e.g., a consensus style in decision making or a form of "seamless communication," i.e., a consistency in marketing messages (e.g., Haytko, 1996; Schultz, 1996a, 1999). In doing so, however, IMC defies definition and perhaps becomes a too generic view, leading some to proclaim that the term has become meaningless.

It died because we never could decide if it was a tool to help sell advertising and public relations agency services or if it was a true, concrete communications discipline" (Drobis, 1997, cited in Wightman, 1999).

#### DEBATES ON THE THEORETICAL ROBUSTNESS OF IMC

The criticism of IMC as a theoretical concept stretched even further with the argument that IMC, in referring to a basic cooperation between communication disciplines and a blending or alignment of activities, is nothing new and merely a management fad. Miller and Rose (1994), Wolter (1993), and Hutton (1996), among others, contend that marketing, advertising, and public relations practitioners had been adept at coordinating their efforts long before the term IMC came into vogue. Given that the importance of using multiple media, coordinating them, and having them consistent in their appeals

and signifiers of the company or brand is indeed fairly undisputed, the criticism and challenge raised by these authors is thus whether IMC is just nominal, representing no significant change in difference to traditional thought and practices. This debate over the boundaries and actual significance of IMC theory is still extant, adding to and illustrating the importance of drawing out the significance of IMC in practice.

Devotees of IMC have espoused a number of counterarguments to the above criticism, each of which does not appear to fully counteract it. First, IMC devotees have argued that IMC is directly related to the changes in marketing communications, i.e., the logical outcome of these changes: a historicist argument that would implicate that the IMC concept is not a management fad. Schultz (1999), for example, argued that IMC is the natural evolution of mass-market media advertising to targeted direct marketing—from so-called "inside-out" to "outside-in" communication planning and execution. In his view, IMC is seen as a logical and historical progression in marketing communications: "... it appears to be the natural evolution of traditional mass-media advertising, which has been changed, adjusted and refined as a result of new technology" (Schultz, 1999).

Equally, other authors have picked up on this argument and have considered IMC as a transitory *period* between the old, historical, product-driven, outbound marketing systems and the new, informative-driven, interactive, consumer-focused marketplaces of the 21st century (Eagle et al., 1999; Kitchen, 1999; Kitchen and Schultz, 1999). The difficulty with this historicist argument is, however, that conceptualizing and equating IMC with a particular periodization is not at all self-evident and is even problematic where a view of IMC as an omnipresent change is

again too generic to be meaningful. That is, it cannot logically be proclaimed that the entire period, from the 1980s up to the current day and beyond, through which the advertising and marketing enterprise is going, can properly be called IMC.

Perhaps recognizing the weakness of this argument, Kitchen and Schultz (1999) put forward that although IMC cannot be equated with a particular period, it has still been a considerable time since its inception to make it more than just a management fad. They argued here that there has been a considerable "gestation period" of IMC: since the initial study of Caywood et al. (1991), Kitchen and Schultz (1999) argue, there have not been any signs of a "straight-up/straight-down" nature of a fad cycle countenanced by the "research evidence" from their own and other studies.

Again, this argument does not appear to hold. First, management fads and fashions do not necessarily show signs of a "straight-up/straight-down" cycle but rather of a "life cycle" (Gill and Whittle, 1992; Kieser, 1997) (see below). Second, the "research evidence" collected in Kitchen and Schultz' (1999) studies (see Schultz and Kitchen, 1997; Kitchen and Schultz, 1998; Eagle et al., 1999) does not provide any full-fledged support for the theoretical concept of IMC. Kitchen and Schultz' (1999) studies asked for agency executives' perceptions of IMC and did not measure actual marketing communications practices, which through definition and inference could be counted for as IMC.

What, thus, is not being measured here is the concept described but instead the subjects' perceptions of that concept. The obvious backlash is that these studies have not progressed from concept to construct and as a result face difficulties in terms of legitimizing the validity of their research findings (see Chaffee, 1991). That

is, these studies might at best have measured perceptions of IMC, although this is even disputable as respondents might have answered with their own concept of IMC in mind (see Duncan and Everett, 1993; Drobis, 1997). It follows that the positive responses toward IMC among agency executives in the Kitchen and Schultz (1999) studies was not a support for IMC as a theoretical concept, nor did it reveal whether aspects associated with IMC were actually present in practice. Rather, it just expressed the positive attitude among executives toward the jargon of IMC and the "potentialities" associated with the term.

#### **EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE AND UTILITY OF IMC THEORY IN PRACTICE: IS IMC A MANAGEMENT FASHION?**

On the basis of the observation that IMC as a theory is quite shallow through its lack of definition, formal theory construction, and research, the hypothesis emerges that IMC is a management fashion. Suggestions here are the relatively recent emergence of IMC in the 1980s, its lack of academic rigor and content as a theory, and the recent criticism (e.g., Miller and Rose, 1994; Drobis, 1997; Wightman, 1999) that it has endured. As a management fashion, however, IMC can still be found to have an influence on practice. That is, while due to its lack of definition IMC cannot be seen to exist as a theoretical concept, it might still have real consequences in terms of the general ideas (some in the form of prescriptions) and rhetoric that it provides. In the remainder of this article, this hypothesis is pursued further. In the next sections, the authors discuss the key arguments for viewing IMC as a management fashion.

The claim that IMC is a management fashion is based on five arguments (see below), some of which are derived from management research on management

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fashions (e.g., Abrahamson, 1991, 1996; Gill and Whittle, 1992; Sperber, 1990). Before delving into these arguments it needs to be noted, however, that fashions and fads, although both transient in influence, are not similar. A fad can be seen as a popular technique or idea, which has no positive impact at all on management practice in the longer term, and should on that basis be discarded from further thought by academics and practicing managers alike. A management fashion, in comparison, can be seen to have an effect on practice, albeit transitory, in the general ideas and rhetoric that it provides. Abrahamson (1996) defines a management fashion as "... a relatively transitory collective belief, disseminated by management fashion setters, that a management technique leads to rational management process." Our arguments here concern IMC as a management fashion.

#### **(1) IMC theory: Lack of academic content and rigor**

The first argument is that IMC theory can be recognized as a field lacking academic rigor (Gill and Whittle, 1992). We have already addressed the theoretical robustness of IMC and found that, as a theory, IMC lacks adequate theoretical assumptions and background. The point to note here is that although IMC defies definition, the concept has nonetheless been widely endorsed in writings on marketing communications.

This lack of academic rigor may be the result of IMC's fashionable status as a so-called "pop management" theory (Gill and Whittle, 1992). It has been argued that the ideas put forward within varieties of

"pop management" theories have little academic underpinning (Sperber, 1990). This is seen as a conscious policy, since it makes the ideas more acceptable to practicing managers. However, as we have already mentioned, the benefits of such an approach are hard to define theoretically, with the result that their influence cannot be confirmed or denied (Eccles and Nohria, 1992).

#### **(2) IMC theory: Oversimplification and prescription**

Because of the removal of academic content, IMC theory offers little more than simplistic and prescriptive "turnkey" solutions to organizational problems of marketing communications. These panaceas frequently consist of checklists detailing the actions seen as essential for organizational success. In order to attract the attention of managers, these panaceas have to offer quick, simple solutions. In addition, much work on IMC is rather prescriptive and does not take into account how marketing communications is actually managed across companies.

The problem with the proliferation of management fashions, thus, is that they may cause the diffusion of inefficient techniques and ideas at the expense of efficient ones (Abrahamson, 1991) and may be overtly selective in addressing only one aspect of the problems faced by managers. The recommendations (or panacea) they offer thus appear to be attractively simple but will not provide long-term solutions because of their failure to account for the complex nature of organizations. This leads potentially to the most damaging aspect of management fashions—that their

failure to achieve what they promise causes practicing managers to dismiss marketing and management research as irrelevant (Eccles and Nohria, 1992). In the context of marketing communications, such failure has led Drobis (1997) to conclude that the existing IMC literature is theoretically ill founded and of no direct use to practicing managers and has come to a dead end.

### **(3) Reasons for adoption of IMC:**

#### **The norm of rationality**

Abrahamson (1991) argues that, under conditions of uncertainty (i.e., the move away from the mass communication model toward new marketing communications practices), organizations and managers will imitate techniques employed by influentials seen to be "fashionable" (e.g., advertising and consulting firms, business media, and prominent marketing researchers). The difference between management fashions and other perhaps more-efficient and grounded perspectives in Abrahamson's (1991) analysis lies in the reasons for adoption by managers and organizations. When a particular idea or technique is applied for technological or economic reasons, the decision to do so is based upon perceived performance gaps. In contrast, where techniques or ideas are adopted by managers as a result of psychological needs and/or social pressures, these can be typified as management fashions.

As discussed earlier, fashionable management techniques offer security and novelty, both of which are sought by managers. They also offer an appearance of rationality to methods employed by managers, satisfying the social pressures from organizational stakeholders that managers will operate on a rational basis. Prior research indicates the acceptance of the term IMC among marketers and advertising agency executives (e.g., Caywood et

al., 1991; Phelps et al., 1996; Schultz and Kitchen, 1997; Kitchen and Schultz, 1998, 1999; Eagle et al., 1999), which indeed seems to suggest that IMC has come to be seen as the rational *norm*. The explanation suggested here is that the acceptance of a fashion such as IMC also hinges on the expectation toward marketers and advertising managers that they act in a rational manner. It is argued here that marketing and advertising managers, when confronted with complex management problems, are expected by organizational stakeholders to act in a rational manner. Hence, there exists a norm of rationality to which managers must conform, as well as a norm of progress (Thomas, 1999). There exists no mechanism, however, through which these ideals can be evaluated in a universal manner, nor is it realistic to presume that they can be fully attained. The way in which this situation is then alleviated is through the employment of fashionable ideas such as IMC and the management rhetorics associated with these ideas.

### **(4) Reasons for adoption of IMC:**

#### **The use of rhetorics**

The prevalence of rhetorics in marketing and management research (Abrahamson, 1996) thus generally indicates that an atheoretical debate is prevalent in a particular field or discipline. IMC has, with its associated terms of "synergy," "holism," and "integration," been heavily premised on a rhetorical presentation and appeal of its ideas. These rhetorics, together with the already-mentioned lack of theoretical debate on IMC can thus, *pace* Sperber (1990), be seen as symptomatic of a management fashion.

Rhetorics are spoken and written discourses that justify the application of particular techniques or ideas. Rhetorics are often based upon the construction of anecdotes and myths around the organiza-

tions that have adopted them (Duncan and Everett, 1993) and are generally regarded as a powerful discourse, which may be employed by managers to justify their adoption of particular ideas or techniques.

As mentioned, managers, including marketers and advertising managers, simply have to appear to be acting in a rational and progressive manner (Eccles and Nohria, 1992). Fashionable management techniques and rhetorics offer a tool for these managers to achieve this apparent rationality, since they provide a recognized technique that managers can employ as a justification for their actions. In effect, IMC might, as rhetoric, even have effectuated changes in the ways managers think and act. The utility of the term lies then in its effect of either legitimizing or producing action. By using the verbiage of "IMC," "integration," "holism," and "synergy" practitioners might have rationalized their behavior or effectuated change in strategies, or might even have brought expertise and credibility to their discipline within organizations (see Boden, 1994).

### **(5) IMC's influence upon the subject:**

#### **A transient pattern of influence**

As discussed earlier, the influence of management fashions manifests itself in a lack of academic rigor in the analysis of new ideas and in a tendency toward ahistorical thought. We have argued that the wide acceptance and endorsement of IMC is due to the ahistorical bias in marketing communications research and practice leading to a concentration upon those ideas that have recently been developed. Because of this ahistorical bias, ideas such as IMC are thus simply accepted because they are regarded as being novel and up-to-date. Abrahamson (1996) points to the need for managers to appear to be using the latest management techniques and ideas. Thus, there is no attempt to evalu-

ate the content or validity of new ideas. The corollary of this is that ideas or techniques such as IMC are only influential in the short term, due to the constantly changing interests and demands of the audience. The extent to which a transient pattern of influence can be associated with management theories may thus offer a guide to the existence of ahistorical thought within marketing and management research. A number of writers (Miller and Rose, 1994; Hutton, 1996; Kitchen, 1999) have indeed described IMC as transient in its influence.

Such a transient pattern of influence can be described as "bell shaped" (Kieser, 1997) or as a "lifecycle model" (Gill and Whittle, 1992) in that these fashions are popularized and discarded within a relatively short time period (approximately 10 to 15 years). Alternatively, techniques offering lasting improvements to organizational performance will be influential over a longer period.

We analyzed the content of the extant articles that discuss or reference the concept of IMC—to see whether their influence follows a transient pattern—where we considered the tone and content of articles as a surrogate for IMC's period of influence. The following lifecycle model has been derived from this analysis:

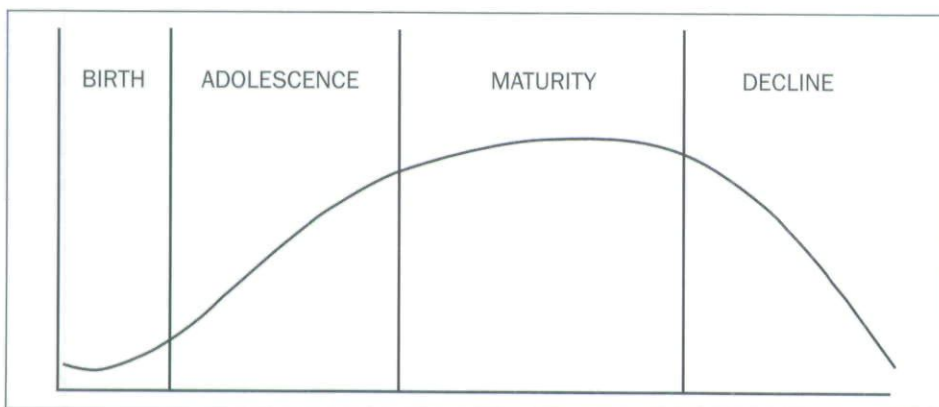
1. *Birth*: After some initial discussion of IMC mainly in the professional and business media, the seminal work is written by Schultz et al. (1993). Although this text can hardly be seen as the originator of the approach, its popularizing appeal clearly set the agenda for the academic and business communities in marketing communications.
2. *Adolescence*: IMC is promoted by consultants and researchers. They have discussed normative models and ideas to make IMC accessible and attractive to managers (Schultz, 1996b). During this stage, myths and anecdotes have been generated concerning the success of IMC in certain organizations (Duncan and Everett, 1993).
3. *Maturity*: This stage involves the routinization and widespread endorsement of IMC in marketing communications thought and practice (see Kitchen, 1999). Special editions on IMC have appeared in the *Journal of Business Research* (1996), the *Journal of Marketing Communications* (1996), and the *Journal of Advertising Research* (1999).
4. *Decline*: Gradually a storm of criticism on IMC has arisen and endured (e.g., Wolter, 1993; Miller and Rose, 1994; Hutton, 1996; Grunig and Grunig, 1998;

Wightman, 1999). As a result, interest in IMC might gradually decline over the next years as the novelty wears off and problems with implementing IMC (in the form of general ideas or more elaborate management models) arise (Drobis, 1997).

Particular attention is given to the stages in the cycle concerned with adolescence and maturity. During adolescence, consultants and agencies are seen to produce packaged versions or management models of IMC. As discussed earlier, in order to attract the attention of managers, these packages often have little academic content and rely upon simplistic prescriptions. Inevitably, such a package will fail to take into account the individual characteristics of each organization, thus reducing its ability to effect significant organizational improvements. The reasons for the eventual decline of IMC, as any other managerial approach, may thus be rooted in the manner in which it is popularized (Wightman, 1999).

The decline may also be influenced by the way in which IMC as a particular technique or management model (derived from and linked to IMC theory) is implemented (as part of the maturity phase in the lifecycle model). If such a technique or management model fails in its implementation as raised expectations are unfulfilled, as difficulties arise with implementation, and as the costs of implementation are unmatched by the promised returns (Drobis, 1997), it will inevitably be discarded. A decline in the interest in a particular technique or management model will set in where the problems associated with implementation are experienced by a large number of organizations.

A final, and perhaps the most significant, source in ultimately leading to IMC's decline is its ill-founded theoretical foundation, which has led to continuing hard-



**Figure 1** Lifecycle Model of Management Panaceas (Gill and Whittle, 1992)

ship in promoting its theoretical and practical significance and to rival voices dismissing IMC as an impoverished enterprise unworthy of serious attention (e.g., Grunig and Grunig, 1998; Wightman, 1999). Although at this point it is perhaps too premature to elude the overall decline of IMC (as we are still in the maturity phase), we hypothesize that the enduring criticism of IMC will culminate in a disenchantment with the concept among academics and practicing managers alike.

### GENERAL DISCUSSION

The five arguments presented in this article indeed support the claim that IMC can be seen as a management fashion and provides interesting clues about how the widespread endorsement of IMC within practice should be perceived and explained. These arguments involve IMC's status as a theory (its lack of academic content and rigor), the reasons for practitioners to profess having adopted IMC (as an idea or rhetoric in light of social expectations placed upon managers to be acting in a seemingly rational and progressive manner), and IMC's transient influence in the literature. From a practical perspective, our arguments carry interesting implications for practicing advertising and marketing managers in drawing out the influence of IMC as a management fashion. Our study helps managers identify what they mean when they profess to use IMC.

The findings, based upon an analysis of theory and literature, suggest further research to test our theoretical conjectures. A first avenue to undertake this is one already suggested in the article: to enumerate all articles as well as citations of articles on IMC, together with a study of the tone and content of these articles. Second, a broad research agenda following up from this article is concerned with conver-

sational analysis (Boden, 1994), where the utterance and meaning of IMC in each context—marketing academics, executives of consultancy firms and advertising agencies, practicing marketers and advertising managers—is elicited and analyzed. Doing so might reveal whether and how utterances of IMC take on a local and provisional (i.e., conditional upon the purpose for using the term) meaning across these contexts; how diversely the concept is understood and used; and to what purpose it is used—as a theoretical concept, general idea, management technique, or just as rhetoric. From a conceptual standpoint, we thus consider many more uses of IMC in research and practice than a formal definition, or attempts thereto, can provide for in theory. The ideas and arguments presented in this article might be useful to marketing and advertising researchers who explore and examine the current state of the art in marketing and advertising practice. Useful insights may be gained from our argument that IMC might have practical bearing in the general ideas and rhetoric that it provides to practicing managers, in addition, or perhaps alternatively, to an inference of the concept from particular aspects of marketing communications or the view that IMC can be directly applied as a management technique. **JAR**

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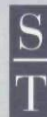
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