The adoption or adaptation of integrated marketing communications for a regional promotional campaign of a State Government Office

Anthony Warren Hall  
*Edith Cowan University*

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The adoption or adaptation of integrated marketing communications for a regional promotional campaign of a State Government office

By

Anthony Warren Hall
Bachelor of Communications (Education and Arts)
Supervised by Dr Guan Cheng Quek

School of Communications and Contemporary Arts
Faculty of Education and Arts
Edith Cowan University

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Abstract

This study investigates how an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy could be adopted or adapted for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. As in-depth understanding of the process of adoption or adaptation of IMC was needed, qualitative research methodology was used. The study utilised Foucault’s concepts of discourse, knowledge and power to develop the knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework. In this study, five one-to-one structured interviews were conducted with IMC practitioners who had previous experience in IMC and State Government regional promotional campaigns, and were residents of the State where they practised IMC.

Using the knowledge part of the framework the study found that the theoretical knowledge of IMC practitioners was based on theoretical holism. Using the practice part of the framework the study found that the previous practice of participants from the context of marketing situations was based on pragmatic holism. Using the recommended practice part of the framework the study found that recommended practices of participants based on the context of the regional brief was based on involvement holism. Collated, these key findings showed that the knowledge, practice and recommended practice of participants were based on theoretic holism, pragmatic holism, and involvement holism. Thus, the model of holistic involvement describes how an IMC strategy can be adopted or adapted for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. These findings are significant as they will enhance the theoretical rigour of the IMC discipline and offer a theoretical model for other IMC researchers to use when investigating the IMC discipline. The theoretical model will also assist IMC practitioners to develop a model to adapt or adopt IMC. The implications of the findings suggest change to IMC policies and practices of the State Government office. These are presented in the study as a set of guidelines for implementing IMC.
There are three benefits from this study. Firstly, this research provides IMC practitioners of the State an opportunity to voice opinions regarding an IMC campaign by a State Government office. Secondly, this research contributes to the body of knowledge with the development of the model of holistic involvement. Thirdly, it provides a foundation for public IMC campaigns targeting regional areas. These benefits are of great importance to both the IMC discipline and State Government offices.
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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Research area

This chapter outlines the background and explains the research aim and significance of this study. This study concerns the practice of IMC by a State Government office. Schultz and Kitchen (2000, p.3) defined IMC as “a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and, evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences”. This definition describes IMC as a ‘strategic’ process. During my four years of working as a web administrator for a State Government office, I have observed the implementation of several marketing efforts containing IMC tactics without the strategic process propagated by Schultz and Kitchen. This discrepancy between the recommended disciplinary practices and the applied practice of State Government intrigued me. By not applying a strategic IMC process, the State Government office does not comply with Schultz and Kitchen’s definition of IMC.

To understand how an IMC strategy could be adopted or adapted by a State Government office, one needs to know the possible impediments. Firstly, it could be the lack of fundamental knowledge pertaining to IMC or disagreement with concepts and theories related to strategic IMC integration. Secondly, previous practice of IMC might have had an impact on the current tactical rather than strategic use of IMC. Thirdly, it could be a preference for using tried and trusted traditional advertising and public relations methods or it could be the contexts of their marketing scenarios. These speculations helped form the research questions for this study.

To assist with this study, a State Government office provided a regional promotional campaign brief. This documentary brief is distinctively a State Government campaign and focuses on changing the behaviour of residents in regional areas. The State Government office selected this
brief to obtain insights into how an IMC strategy can be adopted or adapted to regional promotional campaigns.

All identifying information pertaining to the participants and State Government office had been removed to maintain their anonymity. For this reason, the regional brief is not included with this thesis.

1.2 Research aim and questions

The aim of the study was to investigate how an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy could be adopted or adapted for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. The guiding research questions were:

1. What was the current understanding of integrated marketing communications by IMC practitioners of the State?
2. How had IMC practitioners of the State adopted or adapted IMC components in previous promotional campaigns?
3. What were the opinions and suggestions of IMC practitioners of the State regarding the adoption or adaptation of IMC components and strategies for an effective regional promotional campaign by a State Government office?

1.3 Significance of study

There are three benefits from this study. Firstly, this research provides IMC practitioners of the State an opportunity to voice opinions regarding an IMC campaign by a State Government office. Secondly, this research contributes to the body of knowledge with the development of the model of holistic involvement. Thirdly, the model and resultant guidelines could provide a foundation for public IMC campaigns targeting regional areas. These benefits are of significance to both the IMC discipline and State Government offices using IMC.
Chapter 2
Literature review

2.1 Introduction
This chapter provides an overview of the history, concept, theory and empirical literature pertaining to integrated marketing communications (IMC). The focus of this literature review is to investigate the understanding of IMC by IMC scholars. It seeks to find gaps of knowledge pertaining to IMC that this study might fill. It investigates the historical, conceptual, theoretical and empirical knowledge and practice of IMC scholars.

2.2 History of IMC
Towards the end of the 1970s, advertisers and marketers within capitalist consumer society fell victim to their own undertakings. It was quickly recognised that advertising and marketing strategies were losing impact due to message clutter, decreased credibility, media fragmentation and media cost. As described by Caywood and Duncan (1996, p. 13), "many agencies went on a merger and acquisition binge in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s in an attempt to offer their clients more than just advertising." The merging or buying out of multi-task organisations helped incorporate public relations, sales promotion and direct response into one agency package. Hence the selling point for larger advertising agencies was based on financial incentive rather than the benefit of having internalised coordinated communication skills. The core problem of media saturation remained untouched and the cycle of solving all problems with bigger and better advertising continued. Caywood and Duncan (1996, p. 13) further argued, "the advertising agencies were either unwilling or unable to fully assimilate their newly acquired communication functions, in most cases allowing the newly acquired agencies to remain independent profit centres."
One of the early adapters of IMC was Don Edward Schultz who is generally recognised as the godfather of integrated marketing communication. He recognised the value of merging communication and marketing disciplines, and pioneered in this field. He debatably defined IMC, but prior to this in the late 1980s the American Association of Advertising Agencies preferred to call IMC ‘new advertising’. Unsurprisingly the new gambit did not take-off, as clients could not see the connection between the term and the benefits behind it. They dismissed it as just another advertising fad. Furthermore, the term ‘new advertising’ made many of the sub-agencies which were the key IMC “players feel disenfranchised” (Caywood & Duncan, 1996, p. 14).

Schultz (cited in Cornelissen & Lock, 2000) argued that IMC was a logical progression of advertising into the 21st century, as a result of new technology. The benefits of using IMC became more relevant after consumers began to use online technologies. The use of web technologies in IMC provided an avenue for relationship building and direct marketing with consumers online.

One of the discoveries of IMC was its ability to create synergy when IMC components worked in unison. The effects of IMC synergy had better returns than expensive traditional advertising methods. IMC synergy was also better at cutting through the media saturation to reach consumers. Unfortunately there was no known way to measure IMC synergy.

2.3 The concept of IMC

IMC has been conceptually defined as a strategic business process. Its emergence has impacted on traditional advertising. As an emerging concept, IMC has developed and continued to develop with technology. The concept of IMC offers exciting prospects but also sets challenges and has unique maintenance requirements. One of the major challenges is organisational structure.
The propagators of IMC have advocated IMC as a strategic business process. Over the last decade, Don Schultz has pioneered the study of IMC. Throughout his career he promoted full strategic integration of IMC by organisations. In 2000, Kitchen and Schultz (2000) redefined the concept of IMC:

Integrated marketing communication is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and, evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences. (p. 3)

Han, Kim, Kitchen, Li, and Schultz (2004, p. 1419) explain that, “this new definition forecasts the trend of the development of IMC in the future .... This new definition indicates that IMC has moved from (or has the potential to move from) a ‘marketing planning process’ to a ‘strategic business process’”. Don Schultz and Heidi Schultz (2003) explain that the above definition has four key elements:

First, it clearly elevates marcom from its traditional role as a tactical activity to a strategic management tool .... In short, IMC is promoted from marketing tactic to business strategy.

Second, this definition expands the scope of marketing communication .... the new IMC involves the whole organisation. It spans the entire spectrum of brand, customer, product, and service contacts the firm has with all stakeholders at all levels.

Third, ... IMC requires ongoing measurement and evaluation. Stewardship and evidence of return on the IMC investment are integral to the process ....

Fourth, the fact that IMC achieves desired results “over time” separates it from traditional communication programs .... IMC is an ongoing process that boosts performance in the long term as well as the short term. While individual promotion activities or events may have an immediate impact, IMC requires evaluating these activities ... as part of an overall and ongoing program that continues to results—and to build longterm relationships with customers—over time. (pp. 43 – 44)
Schultz and Schultz (2003) explained that IMC has been promoted from tactic to strategy; involves the whole organisation; requires ongoing measurement and accountability; and boosts performance and builds relationships. This definition seemed to be a key facet of Schultz's concept of IMC and was a deliberate effort by Schultz to evolve the IMC discipline to move from a marketing planning process to a strategic business process. This study used the IMC four key elements to obtain the perspectives of IMC practitioners of the State.

Schultz has defended IMC's role in relation to advertising. In response to criticisms from traditional advertising enthusiasts, Schultz (1995) voiced his views on the impact that IMC had on traditional advertising:

I am not recommending against mass-media advertising, and I am not demeaning the role of traditional image advertising in IMC. An integrated approach to communication planning and implementation does not necessarily reduce the role or value of traditional mass-media advertising. But IMC does put general advertising in a new light which requires a different view. (p. 18)

In his defence of IMC, Schultz illustrated that traditional mass media advertising had a large part to play in marketing. He affirmed that IMC had impacted on traditional advertising. However, he claimed traditional advertising should be reassessed as part of IMC. The regional promotional brief provided for this study showed a strong emphasis towards using traditional advertising media. Thus, the research of this study would need to evaluate the use of traditional mass media advertising in a regional IMC promotional campaign of a State Government office.

Along with traditional media, literature pertaining to IMC showed there was also the use of new technologies such as the internet. Internet technology played a large part in IMC's initial success. However, Belch and Belch (2004, p. 485) stated that "part of the problem regarding how best to use the Internet can be attributed to the infancy of this medium and to differing
opinions as to what role the Internet should assume”. Thus, this research investigated the role of emergent technologies within IMC and how they could be used to benefit a regional promotional campaign by a State Government office.

The use of new technology is an exciting prospect for State Government offices but a leading concern of incorporating new technologies and implanting a full IMC strategy is the overture of new maintenance requirements and challenges. Eagle and Kitchen (2000, pp. 667-689) related that there were four key impediments contributing towards the failure of an IMC campaign:

- client skills, centralization and organisational issues;
- cultural issues; agency skills and talents;
- time and resources issues; and
- flexibility and modification issues.

These impediments required investigation to successfully implement an IMC campaign. Thus, this study inquired into maintenance and challenges associated with the adaption and adoption of IMC for a regional promotional campaign by a State Government office.

Eagle and Kitchen (2000) listed organisational issues as one of the core impediments in creating and maintaining a strategic IMC campaign. This impediment is especially difficult for a State Government office to overcome, as the office is made up of independent departments. Each of the departments is dedicated to specific tasks. Usually, the communications department is led by a communications coordinator who works under higher management. Higher management personnel may not have IMC or marketing experience and this poses a problem for IMC implementation. Schultz (1993) explained:

Integration cannot be accomplished by middle managers or from those in the lower levels of the organization. It must come from the top, and it can't be just a memo or a directive. Integration must be lived and demonstrated by the top person or persons in the organization. There must be a commitment from top
management to integrate and to remove the barriers which prevent integration.

(p. 5)

According to Schultz, integration can only be achieved if it is supported, directed and understood by the top level of a State Government office hierarchy. Thus, organisational structure remains an issue relevant to this study.

Conceptually, IMC is defined as a strategic business process with four key elements. Investigation of literature has found the concepts of traditional advertising in IMC and the use of new technology in IMC. It has also found the issues of IMC challenges, maintenance requirements and organisational structure.

Investigation of these concepts and issues have found several gaps of knowledge pertaining to the IMC discipline that relate to this study. Schultz and Schultz (2003) defined the concept of IMC as a strategic business process and wished to evolve the IMC discipline to move from a marketing planning process to a strategic business process. Before a State Government office can adapt or adopt the IMC strategy that Schultz proposes they must first understand and agree with his current definition of IMC. According to Schultz (1995) traditional advertising's role needs to be reassessed for use in IMC. This means that the use of traditional advertising also needs to be assessed for its use within a regional IMC campaign. The use of new technologies is an exciting prospect for a State Government office, but its use must first be assessed. IMC poses many challenges and maintenance requirements that also need to be assessed before its implementation. The challenge of organisational structure is of particular concern to government offices due to management hierarchy. Knowledge is required to circumvent this issue.
2.4 Theories of IMC

Stephen Gould (2004, p. 68) believes there will never be a definitive theory to explain IMC. Instead he insisted that “IMC should be considered as a set of practices and discourses”. From a poststructuralist perspective, one could say that IMC practice also produces knowledge and discourse. Gould (2004, p. 67) explained that poststructuralism “suggests that people construct their views of things in their practices in particular situations at particular times”. He explained that IMC interpretations by practitioners are important to the development of IMC theory. Gould (2004) explained:

Here, we consider the impact of IMC in terms of both discursive and analytic approaches and suggest that the concept provides a robust perspective for framing and making prescriptive interventions in the managerial and consumer-communications processes involved. This viewpoint is informed by a poststructural perspective, which suggests that various practitioners of IMC are themselves creators of specific meaning who define and apply IMC from their own particular experience, knowledge, and understanding. (p. 67)

Hence, IMC practice is determined by practitioners’ knowledge and previous practice. As a result of practice, existing practices and knowledge may be changed or reinforced. Stephen Gould (2004) argued that there was an inherent difficulty in defining a theory for IMC as it transcended a range of disciplines. He stated:

disciplines ... have their own sets of practices and discourses. They generally view phenomena in their domain in their own terms and act accordingly. Thus, when researchers attempt to formulate a coherent theory of IMC, they are faced with a virtual Tower of Babel in describing it and the practices associated with it. (p. 69)

Yet some scholars attempted to explain how IMC functioned theoretically. Christensen and Cheney (2005) explained that IMC set out to characterise an organisation as a holistic body or identity through the active coordination of communication and practice. The holistic identity is made up of discourses which are continually and synergistically reinforced through the use of...
media and outgoing communications for external disciplining of stakeholders and the management of practice and procedure for internal disciplining of employees. Christensen and Cheney (2005) stated:

**Although the corporeality of organisations varies across organisational arrangements and organising practices, we find attempts to integrate organisational functions into one disciplining and disciplined body** [italics added] in most organisations today – at the assembly line, in business process re-engineering programs, in total quality management, in relationship marketing, in value chain management, in knowledge management, etc. (p. 4)

All employees, departments/offices and functions of the organisation are merged into one succinct identity via maintaining a coordinated discourse. Hence the organisation is both an expression of unified power and a vessel of parameter to all concerned.

Synergised IMC creates a unified identity and body that is disciplined by discourse and practice. Hence, there is the notion of a body linking to power and knowledge. Foucault described the body in terms of “regulation and subordination” (Christensen & Cheney 2005, p. 4). IMC ensures that this bodily characterisation remains in place, even though deviation from this characterisation is allowed. However, the deviation is only allowed on the assumption that it does not weaken the overall disciplining effect. Christensen and Cheney (2005) expanded:

**Accordingly, integrated communications can tentatively be thought of as the bringing together of different forms of communications into some unity or shared whole, within which differences are allowed to coexist to the extent that they do not challenge the identity of the integrating unit.** (p. 4)

By utilizing the holistic body created in the course of creating synergistic IMC, an organisation like a State Government office could easily condition/discipline its stakeholders through the power of unified communication (unified discourse).
Theoretically, IMC is defined as a set of practices and discourses that can be changed by the practice of IMC practitioners. Theoretically, IMC is also able to characterise an organisation as a holistic body or identity through the active coordination of communication and practice. Gould (2004) suggested that IMC practitioners were themselves creators of specific meanings of IMC from their experience, knowledge and understanding. He did not provide any empirical findings or evidence to support this hypothesis. Nor does he provide any framework or theoretical model to show how his hypothesis works. Christensen and Cheney (2005) proposed the theory of unified organisations with disciplinary power. However, they did not provide any model to show how a holistic identity of IMC could be achieved. Therefore, research is required to develop a framework to show how IMC practitioners define and apply IMC from their own particular experience, knowledge, and understanding, and to develop a model to show how a holistic identity of IMC can be achieved.

2.5 Empirical studies of IMC

The following includes two empirical studies on the knowledge of IMC practitioners.

2.5.1 A multi-country comparison of the drive for IMC

Kitchen and Schultz (1999) carried out an explorative study investigating the rapid growth of IMC by agencies across the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and India. The research objectives were to:

- compare and contrast the ways in which IMC concept had developed in the countries concerned;
- explore the international development or diffusion of the IMC concept;
- understand the extent how a group of leading advertising agency executives were developing, practising, or utilizing IMC on behalf of clients; and
• investigate a more succinct definition of IMC and indicate ways in which IMC could be deployed by firms in the 21st century.

The empirical research consisted of a convenience sample from five countries of 243 respondents in senior management positions. Kitchen and Schultz (1999, p. 23) explained, "the national studies were based upon the 'construct explication' approach. IMC was defined, conceptually and operationally, and 'real world' measurements were then developed through a series of scaled questions". The research instrument was a self-administrated 30-minute questionnaire organised into three topic areas:

• reaction to Schultz IMC definition;
• personal and organisational demographics; and
• agreement or otherwise with contingent statements using a Likert scale.

The findings showed that most respondents supported Schultz (cited in Kitchen & Schultz, 1999) definition of IMC:

IMC is a concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines (e.g., general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations).... and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact (Schultz, 1993). (p. 26)

On reflection, Kitchen and Schultz (1999, p.26) believed that the above definition might have been "potentially biased or leading", but it was used in the study as they felt it had the "widest currency" at that time. Many respondents suggested changes which implicated that IMC's strength was in "target market focus and in executional terms, not just as a planning framework". There was a belief amongst all respondents that IMC made "evaluation of marketing communications more effective", but none mentioned how. There was "no strong agreement" on the effectiveness of current devices used to measure IMC programs and
comments from respondents showed they seemed to be “searching for additional input about measurability and implementation” (Kitchen & Schultz, p. 26). Kitchen and Schultz saw this as a major issue.

Kitchen and Schultz (1999) stated that respondents recommended measurement on each individual IMC component:

measurement of say advertising and marketing public relations has never been easy. The overall response was that each element needs to be measured in its own right; the objectives of each campaign, its communication, and the integrated outcomes will all have to be measured. (p. 28)

Despite negative issues regarding evaluation, many respondents agreed that IMC is the “face of the future” and is “growing rapidly in importance”. This, in effect, is changing the role of traditional advertising. Respondents also foresaw higher expenditure towards their IMC budgets over the next three years. Kitchen and Schultz (1999) stated:

The main drive for IMC is stemming from marketing and corporate management, followed by advertising and sales. It is therefore not surprising that advertising agency respondents favor the concept of IMC on the grounds that it seemingly provides greater consistency, increases the impact of marcom programs, and eliminates miscommunication that can occur when several suppliers are used. (p. 29)

In relation to IMC’s conceptual development across five countries, Kitchen and Schultz (1999, p. 33) have found that “based on the empirical findings, there is a widespread development of IMC approaches [sic] across the five countries concerned, irrespective of the levels of understanding of what IMC means, or conceptually represents.” But in regards to the progression of its conceptual understanding “there is little evidence to support the view that IMC has progressed beyond the ‘one-sight’ ‘one sound’ mentality, except perhaps in the United States. The definition we used found acquiescence but not necessarily widespread acceptance”.

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Regarding the development, practising, and utilization of IMC, Kitchen and Schultz (1999) explained:

The research instrument did not allow us to analyze standardization of practice. ... we cannot claim that standardization of practice is prevalent. The research instrument was insufficiently sensitive to allow this claim. However, although not covered in terms of the empirical work, it is our view that practice is driven by primary application, which in turn is driven by understanding [Italics added]. (p. 33)

Kitchen and Schultz believed that IMC practice was informed by learned knowledge of IMC. Kitchen and Schultz (1999, p. 35) state that, "IMC has grown to be a vibrant and new approach to marketing communication activities, particularly when viewed from a strategic and tactical planning perspective" since its initial conception in the 1990s. They conclude by highlighting that IMC still has many "issues to be raised, notably from a definitional and program evaluation perspective" but are optimistic towards prospective solutions for these in the near future. This shows that there is a gap of information pertaining to the IMC definition and the practice of evaluating IMC efforts.

2.5.2 Perception and diffusion of integrated marketing communications

Kim, Han and Schultz (2004) carried out an explorative study in South Korea investigating the perceptions of South Korean IMC practitioners. The purpose was to compare the study conducted by Kitchen and Schultz (1999) which involved IMC practitioners in the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and India. The research had three objectives were to:

- explore the perception and implementation of the IMC concept among South Korea's advertising agencies;
• compare and contrast the perception and implementation of IMC between the advertising agencies and their clients; and
• compare and contrast the results of the South Korean study with previous research results that were obtained from the English speaking countries.

The empirical research used the responses from 218 IMC practitioners working in Korea. Questions were organised into three major areas:

• perception of Schultz IMC definition (same definition as used by Schultz in the previous study) and understanding of IMC;
• expectation of changing trends in the advertising environment; and
• barriers to IMC implementation.

The findings of Kim, Han and Schultz (2004, p. 40) study showed that Korean IMC practitioners identified positively with the Schultz’s definition of IMC and “respondents said that they were either already implementing IMC or they would implement it within the next three years”. The majority of the respondents believed that there was a “positive outlook for IMC financially in the coming years”. Respondents who had more knowledge of IMC preferred to “implement it earlier then those who“ knew less.

Barriers to IMC implementation identified by respondents were:

• lack of staff with appropriate skills;
• business culture; and
• current decision making procedures.

Overall, the study found no significant difference with the results of the previous study other than a difference in the dynamics of relationships between Korean agencies and client companies. The results did show that there is a gap of information pertaining to locating the
appropriate staff for IMC, overcoming business culture and current decision making procedures.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided historical, conceptual, theoretical and empirical context to literature related to knowledge and practice of IMC. IMC's conception was the result of advertising and marketing losing impact due to message clutter, decreased credibility, media fragmentation and media cost.

Schultz wished to evolve the IMC discipline to move it from a marketing planning process to a strategic business process and for this reason Schultz and Schultz (2003) extended definition of IMC was used in this study. The review of conceptual IMC literature, has found several concepts and issues relating to the knowledge and practice of IMC. The concepts were: the use of traditional advertising in IMC and the use of new technology in IMC. The issues were: IMC challenges, maintenance requirements and organisational structure. As these concepts and issues relate to the adaptation or adoption of IMC they were included in the research as questions for participants.

There were gaps in theoretical IMC literature. Gould (2004) did not provide empirical findings or evidence to support his hypothesis that IMC practitioners are themselves creators of specific meanings of IMC from their experience, knowledge and understanding of IMC. This study attempted to fill this gap by developing a framework to access IMC practitioners' knowledge and experience of IMC. Christensen and Cheney (2005) proposed a theory of unified organisations with disciplinary power but they did not show how a holistic identity of IMC could be achieved. This study attempted to fill this gap by providing a model to create a holistic identity of IMC through the adaption or adoption of IMC for a regional campaign by a State Government office.

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There was a research gap in empirical IMC literature. The empirical study of Kitchen and Shultz (1999) cited the need for an evaluation of the effects of IMC. As their study did not provide a possible solution, this study attempted to identify an evaluation method from IMC practitioners.
Chapter 3
Research design

3.1 Introduction
This chapter provides the theoretical framework to guide the study and the methodology to collect and analyse data. As stated in Chapter 1, the main aim of this study was to investigate how an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy could be adopted or adapted for an effective regional campaign of a State Government office. As in-depth understanding of the process of adoption or adaptation of IMC was needed, qualitative research was used. The chapter examines Foucault’s concepts of discourse, power and knowledge. These concepts aid in the development of the theoretical framework in this study. The chapter also looks at sampling, interview and coding procedures that were used to collect and analyse the interview data.

3.2 Theoretical Framework
This section covers discourse, knowledge, power and the knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework. Foucault’s concepts of discourse, knowledge and practice are explained. They are related to the development of the theoretical framework.

3.2.1 Discourse
Foucault’s concept of discourse includes context, disciplinary knowledge, practice and power interactions. IMC encompasses these and can be regarded as a discourse. According to Hartley (2002, p. 74) “discourses are the product of social, historical and institutional formations”. IMC, a product of these contextual formations, qualifies as a discourse.

According to McHoul and Grace (1998):
Foucault thinks of discourse (or discourses) in terms of bodies of knowledge. His use of the concept moves it away from something to do with language (in the sense of a linguistic system or grammar) and closer towards the concept of discipline. We use the word ‘discipline’ here in two senses: as referring to scholarly disciplines ... and as referring to disciplinary institutions of social control [italics added] .... Fundamentally, then, Foucault’s idea of discourse shows the historically specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge [italics added]) and disciplinary practices [italics added] (forms of social control and social possibility). (p. 26)

Foucault explained that a discourse has a body of knowledge related to a scholarly discipline. The discourse also embodies forms of ‘social control’ which are disciplinary practices. As IMC is a scholarly discipline with its body of knowledge and its ‘disciplinary practices’, it can be regarded as a discourse in the way that Foucault defines it. Foucault (1972) cited in Mills (1997, p. 17) explained that a discourse has, “practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak”. Hence it may be said that the practices of IMC systematically form the discourse of IMC.

O'Shaughnessy and Stadler (2002, p. 190) state that “discourses do, of course, result in material practices – the kind of prison that a society builds depends on its discourse of crime and criminality.” Hence there are resultant IMC practices that form an IMC discourse. Kitchen, Schultz, Kim, Han and Li (2004, p. 1418) argued that IMC “remains in the paradox of conceptualization”. This suggests that there are power relations in the conceptualisation of IMC knowledge in the IMC discourse. Therefore, the discourse of IMC fits into Foucault’s notion of discourse. IMC has contexts, disciplinary knowledge, disciplinary practice and power interactions.
3.2.2 Knowledge and power

Foucault explained the relationship between knowledge and power and the resultant power relations. Foucault (quoted in Barker, 1998, p. 28) asserted, "knowledge and power are integrated with one another .... It is not possible for power to be exercised without knowledge, it is impossible for knowledge not to engender power". Foucault (1977) explained that knowledge and power are entwined:

Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of 'the truth' but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, 'becomes true' [italics added]. Knowledge, once used to regulate conduct [italics added] of others, entails constraint, regulation and disciplining of practice [italics added]. Thus, 'there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations. (p. 27)

Hence, knowledge has the power of disciplining practice. When IMC practitioners regulate their practice in accordance with IMC knowledge, it becomes disciplining of IMC practice. Disciplining practice explains the reinforcement power of the IMC disciplinary knowledge. Foucault explained this with Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon. According to Foucault (1975/2004) the efficacy of the Panopticon as a disciplinary system relied on subjects’ knowledge. First, the subjects needed to know the behaviour and norm expected of them. Second, they needed to know that if they deviated from the norm they would be punished. Because the subjects could not see the surveyor watching them, they assumed that they were being watched constantly. Foucault (1975/2004) explained:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles [italics added]; he becomes the principle of his own subjection. (pp. 555-556)
Thus, IMC practitioners would be reinforcing the IMC power if they practice according to what is required from the IMC discipline. The other effects of power included resistance and productive power. In regards to resistance Foucault (1980a) stated:

> Power must be analysed as something that circulates .... there are no relations of power without resistance; the latter are all the more real and effective because they are formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised ... hence, like power, resistance is multiple and can be integrated in global strategies. (p. 142)

In regards to productive power Foucault (1980b) stated:

> Power is not simply repressive; it is also productive ...power subjects bodies not to render them passive, but to render them active. The forces of the body are trained and developed with a view to making them productive. The power of the body corresponds to the exercise of power over it. Hence the possibility of a reversal of that power. (p. 217)

As this study is about the adaptation or adoption of IMC strategy, reinforcement and productive strategies were applicable.

This study encompassed adapting and adopting IMC strategy from IMC practitioners. The practitioners’ recommendations would be dependent on their IMC disciplinary knowledge and the knowledge gained from their previous practice. Hence, there were three sections in the framework: knowledge, practice and recommended practice. Knowledge represented the IMC discipline knowledge. Practice included previous practice of IMC practitioners. In this case their practices reinforced the productive power effects of IMC discourse. The recommended practice section included the regional IMC promotional campaign. In this case their recommendations for the promotional campaign are formed from both IMC knowledge and practices. Their recommendations could reflect the disciplinary, reinforcement and productive power effects of the IMC discourse. For this reason, this research utilized the knowledge-
practice-recommended practice framework to guide this study. The framework is shown in Figure 3.1

![Figure 3.1: The knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework](image)

Figure 3.1: The knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework
3.3 Methodology

This section covers the collection and analysis of data.

3.3.1 Collection of data

This research used purposive and snowball sampling methods to find interview participants. "A purposive sample includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria" (Wimmer & Dominik, 2006, pp. 91-92). In this study, participants had previous experience in IMC and State Government regional promotional campaigns and were residents of the State where they practiced IMC. The snowball sampling procedure was used so that participants could refer the researcher to others who met the purposive sampling criteria. According to Wimmer and Dominik (2006, pp. 99-100), "a researcher ... randomly contacts a few qualified respondents and then asks these people for the names of friends, relatives, or acquaintances they know who may also qualify for the research study".

Participants were assigned identity codes to protect their anonymity. Their identity codes were P1, P2, P3, P4 and P5. P stands for practitioner. Generally they were senior IMC coordinators who had worked in State Government offices and had 15 to 20 years of IMC experience. One participant had less than ten years of IMC experience.

Interviews with participants commenced in April 2007 and concluded in June 2007. Participants consenting to interviews were provided with the interview questions and promotional brief two weeks before the interviews. Two audio recording devices were used to record the interviews in case one of the devices failed. Participants were informed of these recording devices prior to the interviews. Interview duration ranged from 45 to 60 minutes. There was no perceivable physical or mental danger to participants during the interviews. Each
interview was held independently with the participants selecting the interview location. Participants could choose to be anonymous if they preferred and were free to withdraw from the study at any time. Each participant was emailed a copy of the interview transcript to ensure that it did not contain any identifying elements and to approve its use for this study.

The regional promotional campaign brief was provided by a State Government office for this research. This documentary brief provided the participants with a typical State Government campaign focused on changing the behaviour of residents in regional Australia. With this document, the participants were able to provide their IMC recommendations on a real regional campaign created by the State Government office. A risk assessment was made by the State Government office on the use of this regional promotional campaign brief. It was found that the perceivable level of risk to the State Government office was low. However, the State Government office requested to remain anonymous. Citations identifying the State Government office have been removed to protect the State’s and participants’ anonymity.

This research used a structured interview methodology to collect data. “One of the main advantages of the structured interview is that it provides uniform information, which assures the comparability of data” (Kumar, 2005, p. 126). All interviews were guided by the same set of prewritten open-ended questions. The regional promotional campaign brief provided participants with an example campaign to help them focus on a particular setting and scenario. This structure helped keep the interviews manageable and rigid.

3.3.2 Analysis of data

The transcripts collected from interviews were analysed using data reduction by searching for key words. According to Miles and Huberman (1984, p. 21), “Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards, and organizes data in such a way that ‘final’ conclusions can be drawn and verified”. Data reduction also “refers to the process of selecting,
focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the 'raw' data that appear in written-up field notes" (Miles & Huberman, 1984, p. 21). Data reduction and conclusion drawing are similar to initial, thematic and general coding procedures propagated by Creswell (2005).

This research used initial, thematic and general coding of data. According to Creswell (2005, p. 241) “this process involves examining the data in detail to describe what you learned and developing themes on broad categories of ideas from the data”. Initial coding involves looking for keywords. Thematic coding involves “describing and developing themes” (Creswell, 2005, p. 241) from the keywords. General coding included categorising the themes into concepts. Verification of findings was via triangulation as recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 234). “Stripped to its basics, triangulation is supposed to support a finding by showing that independent measures of it agree with or, at least don’t contradict it” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 234). In this study, triangulation of data from different participants was implemented.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the research design for this study. The study utilised Foucault’s concepts of discourse, knowledge and power to develop the knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework. Interview data were collected via purposive and snowball sampling methods. The data were analysed through coding and triangulation. The next chapter utilises this research design to present the findings.
Chapter 4
Knowledge

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter set out the theoretical framework for chapters 4, 5 and 6. This chapter utilises the knowledge part of the framework. It provides the participants' understanding of integrated marketing communications (IMC) and their response to the IMC definition propagated by Schultz and Schultz (2003).

As the focus of this qualitative research study is an in-depth understanding of issues, numbers are used as guides to compare similar and differing opinions. Quotes of participants are utilised to provide the feel of the original experience of participants. Chapters 5 and 6 will follow the same structure as this chapter.

4.2 Theoretical/conceptual

Each participant had different theoretical understandings of IMC. Two participants connected IMC with marketing and integration of media:

IMC is a new way of seeing the marketing activities [italics added] that we do. It is the integration [italics added] of multiple mediums [sic] to reach an objective which entails the marketing strategies and advertising theories [italics added] used within the agency, public relations and corporate affairs [italics added] department. (P5)

IMC is linked to the point that consumers will be more favourable towards a brand when they have been subjected to a range of different mediums [italics added] .... The genesis of IMC was really to package the accountability [italics added] message. (P3)

In addition to this connection with marketing and integration of media, there was also the connection with accountability.
Two participants connected IMC with public relations and advertising:

Integrated marketing communication is a distinct management tool [italics added] that integrates both direct marketing, public relations, advertising [italics added] and promotional campaigns. (P1)

I understand IMC as being an essential public relations [italics added] strategy. (P2)

One participant saw IMC as resource intensive and cited that there were more cost effective approaches to a campaign. He said, “I think IMC is relevant to some campaigns but not all. I believe there are more cost effective approaches as IMC is resource intensive [italics added] and rather difficult to manage in comparison to a standard campaign” (P4).

Five participants perceived IMC to be a management tool for marketing purpose. According to them, IMC used direct marketing, advertising and public relations to achieve a firm’s marketing objective. It is also about integration of media to achieve this objective. However, there is accountability of all these components in terms of objective attainment and cost effective management of resources.

4.3 Responses to IMC definition

Schultz and Schultz (2003) defined IMC as:

“a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.” This definition has four key elements. First, it clearly elevates marcom from its traditional role as a tactical activity to a strategic management tool .... In short, IMC is promoted from marketing tactic to business strategy.
Second, this definition expands the scope of marketing communication .... the new IMC involves the whole organisation. It spans the entire spectrum of brand, customer, product, and service contacts the firm has with all stakeholders at all levels.

Third, ... IMC requires ongoing measurement and evaluation. Stewardship and evidence of return on the IMC investment are integral to the process ....

Fourth, the fact that IMC achieves desired results "over time" separates it from traditional communication programs .... IMC is an ongoing process that boosts performance in the long term as well as the short term. While individual promotion activities or events may have an immediate impact, IMC requires evaluating these activities ... as part of an overall and ongoing program that continues to results—and to build longterm relationships with customers—over time. (pp. 43-44)

4.3.1 Strategy to tactic

Four participants disagreed with the statement, "IMC is promoted from marketing tactic to business strategy" (Schultz and Schultz 2003, p. 43). Below are their perspectives:

IMC is integrated from business strategy [italics added] first. So I would reverse the order he has presented in this statement because a strategy comes before a tactic. (P1)

I believe this should be reversed so that business strategy [italics added] comes first, as the best marketing tactics are the ones contained with a business strategy [italics added] themselves. (P3)

I would disagree with this statement as IMC is brought in from the business strategy to marketing tactics [italics added]. (P5)

I concur with this statement although all business strategy may not necessarily develop from a marketing tactic [italics added] within IMC. (P2)

The participants felt that business strategy preceded marketing tactic. Hence, IMC is a business strategy first and then a marketing tactic.
4.3.2 Whole organisation control

Four participants agreed with the statement, “IMC involves the whole organization. It spans the entire spectrum of brand, customer, product and service contacts the firm has with all stakeholders at all levels” (Schultz and Schultz 2003, p. 44). Here are their perspectives:

It is possible to have a small group managing the IMC but I do believe that the whole organisation [italics added] needs at least an idea of what is going on regarding the IMC effort. (P2)

In all IMC, the brand is imperative. The integrity of the brand needs to be maintained and promoted. Customer focus is a definite, so the service needs to be maintained with the customer in mind. This attitude towards IMC should be reflected by all parts of the promoting organisation. (P1)

IMC, fundamentally, is ensuring that the organisations are marketing led in their philosophy. If you don’t have that belief at the higher end or through the support units the IMC will inevitably fail. (P3)

In my opinion, this is correct. (P5)

The participants concurred that there was a need for the involvement of the whole organisation on IMC because of the need for brand, customer and marketing support.

One participant disagreed with the definition:

No, I strongly disagree. I can see situations when an IMC campaign may be rolled out without any involvement or implications to the vast percentage of an organisation. I may also argue that it may not necessarily be involved with brand promotion but rather an outcome separate from the brand. (P4)

This participant disagreed because IMC did not have to involve the whole organisation. To this participant, the definition depended on the nature of the IMC campaign. Another condition stated that the IMC campaign might not be about promoting a brand. As such, the whole organisation did not have to be involved within the IMC.
4.3.3 Accountability

All participants agreed with the statement, “IMC requires ongoing measurement and evaluation. Stewardship and evidence of return on the IMC investment are integral to the process and must be built into all communication plans” (Schultz and Schultz 2003, p. 44). Below were the perspectives of three participants:

With any type of promotion, evaluation and the tools to measure it is [sic] necessary and this should be factored in at the outset of any *investment towards promotion* [italics added]. (P1)

Absolutely, otherwise the organisation has no idea on what to *improve* [italics added] and its staff won’t know about recent developments. (P2)

I agree with this and for the most part the organisation needs to believe in the value of the brand and the equity that their building before attempting IMC as it is a longer term process, and with that said each of the individual mediums or channels that are part of the IMC platform should be accountable and have their own measures. (P3)

The participants advocated measurement, evaluation and accountability of IMC in organisations because:

- IMC was an investment into promotion;
- organisations needed to measure IMC to know if they had improved;
- IMC was related to brand value and equity investment; and
- there was investment on IMC media.

Although agreeing with the statement, two participants cited complexities in the measurement of IMC:

Any prudent business that is rolling out an IMC would only want to adopt an ongoing measurement system and accountability for return. But I believe there would be somewhat of a question mark over the accountability aspect of IMC considering it can encompass so many components. It would be difficult to
judge weather one aspect of the IMC campaign contributed to a positive effect result or if it was the IMC effort working as a whole. (P4)

Definitely, but IMC can be quite difficult to measure [italics added] especially when calculating its equity value. (P5)

There were difficulties in measuring and accounting for IMC in an organisation. Firstly, it was difficult to attribute the success of IMC to any component of IMC as it had multiple components to provide synergistic effects. Secondly, there was an inherent difficulty in measuring brand equity value. This complicated the process of measuring IMC to increase the brand equity value of an organisation.

All participants agreed that IMC required ongoing evaluation and accountability and one suggested that each media and channel be independently monitored. Two participants cited difficulties in IMC measurement and accountability due to having no method of measuring IMC’s synergistically effect or equity value.

4.3.4 IMC Builds relationships

All participants had different perspectives on the statement, “IMC is an ongoing process that boosts performance in the long term as well as the short term .... and ongoing program that continues to contribute to results—and to build long-term relationships with customers—over time” (Schultz and Schultz 2003, p. 44). One participant agreed with this statement but suggested a minor amendment to relate it to government application of IMC, “This is a fair statement, but I would add or replace customers with stakeholders [italics added] and I generally believe that they need to be an integral part of any IMC strategy” (P2). This participant advocated the inclusion of building long-term relationship with all stakeholders and not just clients. Two participants believed the statement to be an idealistic view of IMC:
Perhaps, but there are many strategies and exteriors that can effect this in the long run. IMC is a coordinated effort but not all influences can be controlled [italics added] in a mercantile environment. (P1)

I would amend this statement to say ‘IMC is an ongoing process that should boost performance and in the long term should aim to build relationships with customers over time’ as I think to say that IMC will do that as an absolute is incorrect as a poorly managed IMC program [italics added] could devalue a brand. (P3)

These participants felt that it was idealistic to maintain ‘long-term relationships’ with clients to improve business through IMC, as there were extraneous factors where control was difficult. One participant held a more critical view of this definition:

IMC does not boost the performance [italics added] of a business, but there is potential for building relationships with customers over time. In real terms, the relationship that an organisation has with its customers may be quite defined and the IMC may not have building relationships as its objectives and therefore won’t build relationships. For example an IMC effort to change behaviours has no reason to change the consumers existing relationship with the organisation. (P4)

This participant explained that an IMC effort usually only achieves the objectives it set out to achieve. This participant felt that IMC performance depended on the objective of an IMC program. The aim of an IMC program might not require building relationships with clients as there was already an existing relationship. Arguably, the program could maintain or strengthen the relationship. One participant felt that the definition provided by Schultz and Schultz (2003) would be applicable if the organisation had created a consistent message. The participant said, “It is important for a company to create a consistent message, but a lot of companies tend to adapt a segmented marketing approach where the message is different and this can lead to an incongruent brand message” (P5).
Most of the participants felt that it was a "tall order" to expect IMC to improve performance of a business and yet build long-term relationships with clients. The reasons were:

- IMC required coordination of many areas where full control was not necessarily attainable;
- when an IMC campaign was not properly handled;
- where an IMC objective was related to building relationships; and
- where there are different messages emitting from different marketing needs.

Schultz and Schultz's statement that IMC would boost performance was mostly seen idealistically. There could be a number of influences affecting the success of an IMC campaign and not all of these influences could be controlled. IMC had the potential to build relationships with customers but only if this was part of the objective. An ununified marketing approach can devalue a brand, due to an incongruent brand message.

4.4 Conclusion

The specific themes of integration, macro to micro/strategy to tactic, whole organisation, and accountability were extracted from the theoretical understanding of IMC and response to the IMC definition of Schultz and Schultz (2003). These specific themes form the general conceptual holism.

In terms of theoretical understanding of IMC, the integration theme was derived. The integration theme was obtained from:

- integrating different IMC mix like direct marketing, advertising, public relations;
- integrating different media; and
- integrating relevant components according to specific needs of a campaign.

Hence, integrative holism is necessary in IMC.
The themes of strategy to tactic, whole organisation control, accountability and builds relationships were derived from the responses to the IMC definition by Schultz and Schultz (2003). The IMC approach ought to have the macro to micro route as IMC strategy should precede IMC tactic. IMC required the involvement of the whole organisation as IMC needed the support of the whole organisation to provide synergistic effect. The theme of accountability, which included measurement and evaluation of IMC, was imperative because of the extent of investment towards IMC. The extent of investment ranged from IMC as a promotional investment, investments towards IMC’s role in building brand value and equity to media investments related to IMC. IMC could boost a company’s performance and build long term relationship with stakeholders if there was full control of IMC. The need to have IMC strategy before tactic, whole organisation control, accountability of IMC, and building relationships of IMC provides a holistic approach to IMC.

Table 4.1: IMC strategy based on discipline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Reinforcement (Adoption) Strategies</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMC discipline (Current understanding)</td>
<td>Integrating IMC media and component mix</td>
<td>Integration</td>
<td>Theoretical holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC discipline (Schultz definition)</td>
<td>Strategy and tactics</td>
<td>Strategy to tactic (macro to micro)</td>
<td>Theoretical holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC discipline (Schultz definition)</td>
<td>Organisational support</td>
<td>Whole organisation control</td>
<td>Theoretical holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC discipline (Schultz definition)</td>
<td>Measurement and evaluation</td>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Theoretical holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMC discipline (Schultz definition)</td>
<td>Builds relationship with customers</td>
<td>Builds Relationships</td>
<td>Theoretical holism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The integrative holism in IMC, and the holistic IMC approach resulted in the theoretical holism concept. This chapter showed that the theoretical understanding of IMC by IMC practitioners of the State were based on holism. This chapter answers the specific research question: What is
the current understanding of IMC by IMC practitioners of the state? The next chapter will provide the findings related to the practice of the IMC practitioners.
Chapter 5
Practice

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter used the knowledge part of the theoretical framework and provided the participants' perspectives on integrated marketing communications (IMC) and their response to the IMC definition propagated by Schultz and Schultz (2003). This chapter utilises the practice part of the framework. It provides the participants' practice of IMC in previous government campaigns. It includes their perspectives of IMC implementation, challenges and maintenance.

5.2 IMC implementation

Participants were asked to explain how they had previously adopted or adapted IMC components in IMC for State Government promotional campaigns. This section includes selective integration of IMC mix, and full and selective integration of media mix.

5.2.1 Selective integration of IMC mix

Three participants cited the use of public relations as part of their IMC mix in public service campaigns:

"I have worked with a number of programs utilizing IMC specifically for public relations [italics added] or on initiatives [italics added] relating to a particular matter for example tariff increases or the announcements of using a single supplier rather then two. (P2)"

"I have overseen campaign quite similar to IMC .... This was supported by a ministerial launch [italics added] and a series of press releases and interviews. (P4)"
We worked with our sales team to create the campaign as we knew the sales team needed to be highly involved as they would be charged with selling the product and services during the road shows. The campaign also utilized public relations and was promoted through our local partners within each area. (P5)

The public relations component of the IMC mix seemed dominant. The reasons could be that their campaigns were mostly public service campaigns. Their public service nature was suggested from their public relations programmes which were related to initiatives or required ministerial launches. Further, the participants were referring to their previous experience of using IMC for government related campaigns.

5.2.2 Multiple and selective integration of media mix

Three participants cited multiple integration of media mix for their IMC campaigns. Below are their perspectives:

we used re-branding to build them a more contemporary brand and feel, and the process of doing that was to look at the way consumers were connecting, investigation of new target audiences and then rebuilding the brands communication strategy. The ... case was also a revitalization of the brand but without the use of broadcast media and mainly below-the-line media which goes back to the point of using discerning media [sic] to target consumers. This approach was used after research found broadcast mediums not to be appropriate for this brand’s circumstance. (P3)

I have overseen campaign quite similar to IMC involving television, radio, print and an integrated website. (P4)

the ... campaign had six regional shows and this involved setting up a large marquee with an interactive experience showcasing the features of our new products and services. This was promoted and integrated with the awareness campaign using mainstream media such as television, radio and press which preceded the arrival of the road show. We selected media based on local knowledge of local media use [italics added]. We worked with our sales team to create the campaign as we knew the sales team needed to be highly involved as
they would be charged with selling the product and services during the road shows. The campaign also utilized public relations [italics added] and was promoted through our local partners within each area. (P5)

There was integration of multiple media in executing IMC programmes. Media included broadcast, below-the-line, print and ambient. However, there was also selected use of media to reach the target audience.

5.3 Challenges in IMC adoption and adaptation

IMC practitioners were asked to explain challenges they found from past adaptations or adoptions of IMC. This section includes message consistency control, whole organisational control and investment control.

5.3.1 Message consistency control

Two participants cited implementing IMC as time consuming, resource intensive and described difficulties in maintaining message consistency across media. They said:

I don't believe IMC to be challenging but rather resource intensive and time consuming. They take a significant amount of attention to maintain consistency [italics added] across media and promotional messages. (P4)

Definitely the workload. In the past advertising was simply a matter of selecting one media and working with it, but IMC requires message consistency [italics added] across a range of media directed at the target market. For example you may have television, radio, press and letterbox drops as well as ambient and online all in one IMC campaign and juggling all this work under a strict deadline [italics added] can be quite difficult. With so many media, IMC is difficult to monitor and we cannot measure the effectiveness of each medium. Also its history is somewhat short when referring to case studies for examples. (P5)
All participants expressed a need to control message consistency across media. However, it was "resource intensive" and "time consuming" to ensure message consistency across media. IMC is resource intensive and time consuming because it involves the integration of a large range of media. Further, IMC practitioners tended to work within tight deadlines.

5.3.2 Specific organisational control

Two participants shared the view that lack of unity and agreement within an organisation might not achieve the synergistic effect that IMC was supposed to achieve. They explained:

Higher management may have 

overriding control [italics added] of the general promotion and this means a modular approach may be necessary where only some components of a campaign can be integrated synergistically with the whole organisations integrated effort. By implication of this a campaign may not be as unifying [italics added] or effective as it could be. (P1)

The ... case resulted in an inquest and IMC was used to help prepare the organisation for the inquest and the inevitable public scrutiny that followed. There were challenges of getting agreement [italics added] across the organisation regarding standpoint, election of spokespersons, what type of mediums [sic] to use and the overall type of message sent, the resulting experience from such scenarios have led to the use of crisis management plans. (P2)

Both participants expressed that it was not contextually possible to have overall control over IMC to achieve a synergistic effect. The reasons were, first, that there was higher management control and second, that there were too many components in an IMC campaign to seek agreement across the organisation. However, there were practices to handle these problems so as to have some control over IMC in an organisation. One participant mentioned modular approach to fit into the overall organisational scheme of things. Another mentioned crisis management plan practice.

Another participant explained how they had exerted control over IMC:
I try to thread it through all the campaigns that have been developed from the outset or that I have control over [italics added]. But as I do not always have total control this is not always the case and there may also be other conflicting complexities within a running campaign. (P1)

This participant suggested developing campaigns which could be controlled. However, the participant was aware that he might not have full control of running the IMC campaign.

5.3.3 Budget

Two participants cited budget as a challenging part of IMC:

As always budget [italics added] is also a key concern and challenge being that we need the best result for the budget [italics added] allocated. (P2)

There is a direct correlation between how effective the IMC platform will be and how much of a budget [italics added] it has because in the end for effective communication you need to maintain the financial part of the equation. It is impossible to run a full scale IMC platform for a reasonable sized brand across a range of media with a small budget [italics added]. (P3)

Both participants were aware of accountability to the success of an IMC campaign. As such, they associated the size of a budget with the effectiveness of an IMC campaign. In the context of their practice, they seemed to have inadequate IMC budgets. They had to ensure that their budgets were maximised to achieve their IMC objectives.

5.4 Maintenance requirements of IMC

Participants were asked to describe maintenance requirements of IMC learned from past adoptions and adaptations. This section includes organisational support and accountability control.
5.4.2 Organisational support

Two participants explained the need for organisational support and unity to trust and maintain consistent communications:

A lot of IMC campaigns run into the problem of beginning strong but failing to maintain ongoing communications. So the IMC campaign needs to be something believed in and supported [italics added] by the organisation as a whole. (P3)

IMC requires endless informing of everyone caught up in the IMC process and this can become extremely tedious as it invites everyone to contribute thus conflicting the intended consistency. So IMC requires an efficient way of informing and is usually dependent on the organisation's trust of the communications department. (P4)

Both participants expressed contextual difficulties in maintaining consistent communications for IMC campaigns in organisations. One told the problem of having initial support that waned later on. Another told the experience of having to involve many people in an organisation that resulted in inconsistencies in IMC programmes. They suggested organisations could support IMC practitioners by trusting their judgments.

5.4.3 Accountability control

Two participants expressed difficulties in exercising control of IMC:

It is preferable if all the parts work together and desirable if you can control [italics added] or monitor those various parts individually [italics added]. This means you can control what the messages are and who it's going to. When you get the results back on how effective or otherwise it's been, you should look at what parts worked or need improving so next time those parts go out you can do it differently. (P2)
The effectiveness of being able to measure each media can be a maintenance problem. When putting a business case together you cannot state how effective each individual medium will be unless you have a dedicated measurement [italics added] on each one and even then you cannot measure its synergistic effect. (P5)

One participant explained the need to control each aspect of the IMC mix so that one would know what improvements were needed. Another participant explained that it was almost impossible to measure the synergistic effect of IMC. This was compounded by the fact that there was no agreed method of measuring the effectiveness of each medium.

One participant offered a way to have accountability control:

The IMC program needs to be structured around a business’s goals [italics added] and objectives [italics added]. Measurement and accountability needs to link very closely to the objectives of the business, for example ...[company name omitted] did not have a brand imperative rather a concern in client retention and client value, so the IMC that was structured for them did not involve awareness driven metrics. (P3)

This participant suggested tailoring the IMC program to meet objectives. Hence, “measurement and accountability” could be designed.

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, the general conceptual theme of pragmatic holism was formed. It emerged from the specific themes of selective integration of IMC mix, full and selective integration of media mix, message consistency control, specific organisational control, investment control, organisational support and accountability control of IMC against objectives. These themes emerged from the IMC reinforcement and productive strategies to handle the contextual IMC situations.
In the context of practitioners being heavily involved in public service campaigns, their practice showed a dominance of using the public relations component in their IMC implementation. Productive strategy was suggested from their practice of using IMC mix according to the needs of campaigns. Productive practices refer to practices that do not totally conform to the theoretical discipline of IMC. Hence the theme of selective integration of IMC mix was derived.

In the context of connecting with new and specific target audience, there were reinforcement strategy of full integration of media mix and the productive strategy of selective integration of the media mix. Reinforcement strategies refer to strategies advocated by the theoretical discipline of IMC. Therefore, the theme of multiple and selective integration of media mix was obtained.

The context of difficulty to control message consistency across media was due to the resource intensive and time consuming process, as IMC involved the integration of a large range of media, and practitioners tended to work within tight deadlines. Maintaining message consistency is a reinforcement strategy as it is advocated by the theoretical discipline of IMC.

There was the context of participants not always having complete control of IMC. The reasons were higher management control on IMC and difficulties in seeking agreement across an organisation. These difficulties resulted in productive practices such as crisis management plans and modular approaches. Hence, the theme of specific organisational control was derived.

In the context that the size of budget was usually inadequate for IMC programs, there was the productive practice of budget maximisation. Participants identified that the size of the IMC budget was indicative of its effectiveness and they had to ensure their budgets were maximised to achieve objectives. Thus, the theme of budget control was obtained.
Initial IMC support might wane and getting the whole organisation to contribute might result in message inconsistencies in IMC programs. Productive strategy should involve trust towards judgements made by IMC practitioners. Hence, the theme of organisational support was obtained.

It was complex to measure the synergistic effect of IMC. This was complicated by the fact that there was no agreed method to measure the effectiveness of each medium. One productive strategy was to account for IMC’s success against the achievement of business objectives. Hence, the accountability control of IMC against objectives was obtained.

The general concept of pragmatic holism was derived from the themes of selective integration of IMC mix, full and selective integration of media mix, message consistency control, specific organisational control, budget control, organisational support, and accountability control of IMC against objectives. Table 5.1 on the next page shows the IMC strategies based on previous experience from IMC adaptation and adoption of promotional campaigns.
Table 5.1: IMC strategies based on experience of IMC practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Reinforcement (Adoption) Strategies</th>
<th>Productive (Adaptation) Practices</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<td>Public service campaigns, Involvement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selective integration of IMC mix</td>
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<td>Connecting with target audience</td>
<td>Full integration of media mix</td>
<td>Selective Integration of IMC mix</td>
<td>Full and selective integration of media</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resource intensiveness, Time consuming</td>
<td>Maintaining message consistency</td>
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<td>Message consistency control</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher management control, Difficulty with agreement across organisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Crisis management plans, Modular approaches</td>
<td>Specific organisational control</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate IMC budget</td>
<td>Budget maximisation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Budget control</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Too much contributions resulted in message inconsistencies</td>
<td>Organisational support</td>
<td></td>
<td>Organisational support</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty in measuring IMC synergy, Message effectiveness</td>
<td>Structure IMC against objectives</td>
<td></td>
<td>Accountability control</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This chapter answers the specific research question: How have IMC practitioners of the State adopted or adapted IMC components in previous promotional campaigns? The next chapter will provide findings related to the recommended practice part of the framework.
Chapter 6
Recommended practice

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter showed how integrated marketing communications (IMC) practitioners had adopted or adapted IMC components in their previous promotional campaigns. This chapter utilises the practice part of the framework. It provides the opinions and suggestions of IMC practitioners of the State regarding the adaption or adoption of IMC components and strategies for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. Quotes of participants are used. It utilises the recommended practice part of the framework.

6.2 Recommended IMC media

Participants were asked to provide recommendations on what they thought would be the best traditional and non-traditional media selection for the regional brief. This section includes connection and engagement.

6.2.1 Connection via media selection

Two participants suggested the use of research to find appropriate media selection to connect with the audience:

... [removed for de-identification purpose] is one of the most unique parts of the world and to communicate effectively with it requires virtually every media [sic] and touch point that the target demographic receives. To effectively do this would require an analysis of consumer behaviour in that area to find out where and when the population interacts with media. I generally wouldn't recommend media without the appropriate research [italics added]. (P4)

I would also recommend research [italics added] for an online component and ambient media as these can be cost effective and work well with most IMC campaigns. (P5)
One participant believed that the regional campaign would need to use every medium and touch point that the audience would connect with. The participant recommended researching consumer behaviour to use knowledge of local media use. The other participant recommended research to investigate the possibility of using non-traditional media. The purpose of researching local media use is to find what media the audience connects with. Research for appropriate local media use is a productive practice that validates return on investment.

As well as researching media use, one participant also suggested that the use of media should connect with a specific target. Three other participants shared the view of connecting or reaching the target audience.

Both media should be considered or incorporated if possible as consumers approach different media from varying sources in varying ways. If the campaign needs to be more focused then a target of various age groups should be considered. Then selection of media can be catered for a demographic. (P1)

The media types selected should be those most likely to attract the target audiences' attention, such as something situated at retail outlets, articles in local newspapers or anything you can do to get the word out via social marketing. (P2)

The mainstream media selection already contained within the brief provides for a large amount of exposure, but this campaign needs to be mindful of its audience's involvement and should perhaps generate programs that will target segments. (P5)

One participant suggested the use of both traditional and non traditional media as well as recommending the targeting of age groups to connect with specific demographics. Another suggested that media selection should attract its target audience and be located in places they frequently visit. The strategy of connecting with target audience was via the selection of media
to reach/attract specific age group. As it is about connecting with audience rather than the integration of media mix, I consider this IMC strategy as productive.

6.2.2 Engagement with target audience

Two participants suggested the use of public relations as the main IMC component for the regional campaign:

I believe this campaign would require briefings to the organisations partners, networks and stakeholders followed by a media launch. (P2)

I believe this brief to have a fairly modest budget in regards to its ambitions and it's a classic example of telling the consumer what to do rather then providing a personal connection or supporting rational with the consumer. There is a wide range of medium [sic] used in this brief and some of which are more important then others but I believe the PR and the delivery of the PR to be a stronger driver of behavioural change. (P3)

One participant suggested the use of public relations in the form of briefings to organisation partners and stakeholders. The other suggested its use to drive behavioural change and critiqued that the brief's current budget was too small to achieve its aims or connect with audience. Hence, the use of public relations to engage with target audience is a productive strategy.

One participant also suggested several techniques such as rebates and partnerships to promote audience engagement:

The opportunities are things like rebates [italics added] as they can drive a lot of communication messages, also using partnerships [italics added] with media and local government and retailer activity which would then allow you to spend more money on appropriate media to get the message out as well as make it more potent as its being delivered in different ways. (P3)
The use of rebates would encourage communication with audience. This was because audience had to interact with an organisation to receive benefits. The use of rebates and partnerships with stakeholders stretched the IMC budget and engaged the regional audience. This strategy could be regarded as productive.

6.3 Recommended organisational model

Participants were asked to recommend the most effective organisational model for IMC to function with the provided regional brief. This section includes control and unity.

6.3.1 Whole organisation control

Three participants recommended hierarchical organisational model:

I am more familiar with the hierarchical model as the decentralized model to me appears to have quite a few downsides in that messages would become confused in their delivery and the feedback may not be as you would like. So my preference would be for hierarchical [italics added] but without any experience with other models it's a bit difficult to ascertain their value. I can see benefits in that the authority can be displaced in several locations and that each location can self customize for their own particular needs. (P2)

For this campaign to function through IMC there needs to be a designated unit who is responsible for driving this particular program as it is quite broad. Also IMC works best through a hierarchical [italics added] model from the viewpoint of a marketing philosophy. If the value of the brand is not understood at each of the organisations levels it can very easily fall apart. (P3)

I believe that IMC and advertising needs to be passed through a gateway or single communications department to maintain the consistency of outgoing messages. Most organisations will have a hierarchical [italics added] structure and for me an ideal organisation would have marketing and communications at the top end, but a gateway department will allow for outgoing messages to be refreshed or rebuffed even without a marketing driven hierarchical structure. (P4)
Hierarchical model allowed control over IMC needs of organisation, brand value and outgoing messages. Thus, using a hierarchical model would be a reinforcement strategy.

6.4 Recommended technologies

Participants were asked to recommend effective new technologies for IMC to function with the provided regional brief. This section includes accessibility and behavioural change.

6.4.1 Accessibility of media

Two participants recommended online technology and outdoor media:

I don’t think it’s classified as a new technology anymore but I believe the web to be fairly applicable to IMC as it is such a versatile medium. With this said any information given out via radio, television, print and press should also be available online [italics added]. Addshel and signs at bus stops and transport locations may also be an appropriate touch point. Once again media selection should come down to the appropriate research for the target demographic. (P4)

Definitely online [italics added] media as last year’s profit margin for online companies was around 43% and this seems to be growing rapidly. But one must also understand that online media only attracts certain demographics such as youths and businesses but is fairly exclusive of the baby boomer generation. I also believe that ambient media works well when building brand awareness, especially when targeting university students. (P5)

One participant recommended the combination of online media and mainstream media to reach target audience. The other participant also recommended online media but cautioned that it might attract certain demographics. One participant recommended Addshel. These are posters which are usually located at bus terminals. They qualify as ambient media which are generally classified as outdoor advertising. The combination of online and mainstream media was a reinforcement recommendation as it suggested an integrative media mix strategy.
One participant acknowledged the possibility of using online technology but recommended the use of traditional media:

I am aware of a few rising technologies, but I still believe that people within regional areas would prefer to use traditional media that they can pickup, hold and read. Proper research would need to be made before using technologies such as web to find out if the audience has access to such media, although I presume a fair few may. It’s a matter of selecting the right kind of media for the right audience. (P2)

This participant believed the use of traditional media to be more appropriate in regional areas and only recommended the use of online technology if research identified that the target audience had access to them. Therefore, the use of online media was dependent on accessibility of regional target audience. Hence the consideration of accessibility of media by regional target audience was regarded as productive strategy.

6.4.2 Behavioural change via social marketing

Two participants acknowledged the usefulness of online media, but did not recommend it for this regional campaign. They said:

Although it’s not quite necessarily new now, the web is almost an essential for IMC campaigns but as this is a regional campaign more emphasis should be put towards social marketing. Telecentres in regional areas could be a good start so as to provide a foundation for generating the social marketing movement within small communities. (P1)

Logically you can’t discount online technologies but in this case they may not be the best carriers of information. I do think there is a large opportunity for a more personalised approach as changing these kinds of behaviours won’t come about from a single burst. Preferably building a relationship marketing based approach to this campaign would work, for example leading with a particular
offer such as light globes which then provides a connection point that can be used to pass on more information. (P3)

Both participants acknowledged online technology as being essential to an IMC campaign. However, they cautioned that online medium might not provide effective reach in regional areas. They felt that this campaign was for making behavioural change. Hence productive strategies of social marketing and relationship building were more appropriate.

6.5 Other recommendations

Participants were asked to suggest any other recommendations they felt were appropriate for the regional brief. This section includes relationship and feedback.

6.5.1 Relationships and feedback

Three participants recommended communication with partners:

Liaising with influential or respected members of the community is a good way to get the ball rolling especially in small communities as sometimes things need to be translated to make them more apparent. (P1)

Communication with partners and key players within the industry is very important as IMC is synergistically focused. IMC can often take a modular approach where it does not encompass the entire organisation but internal communication between IMC and non-IMC departments should be considered. (P4)

I would suggest getting involved with sales stakeholders and sponsorship partners but only if there is a clear connection between identities. Both brands will reap the benefits if they can synergise their events. (P5)

One participant recommended involving community leaders to act as mediators when communicating with regional population. One participant recommended partnering with key
players of relevant industries to help achieve the synergistically effect of IMC. One participant suggested involvement with relevant stakeholders and sponsorship partners to reinforce the brand message. Relationship building with external partners is a reinforcement strategy as it coincides with the IMC discipline of achieving a synergistic effect through the integration of the IMC mix.

One participant recommended communication with partners but connected on this with social marketing via rebates:

I believe the messages provided in the brief need to be delivered on a more personal level. This could be achieved by linking in social marketing with the rebate through partnering with suppliers and retailers. Also what an organisation should strive to do is make each of the individual components of the IMC as measurable as possible. The other component of that is good value should be built around the brand, as the brand equity is the brand minus the commodity. (P3)

Rebates provide a connection with partners as rebates require them to interact with organisations to receive benefits. Rebates are a productive strategy as they are part of producing synergistic effect from IMC media mix.

One participant recommended the screening of local media or partner’s feedback to identify information pertaining to the organisation:

A good method of screening [italics added] IMC results is by looking at the type of responses to feedback radio, what kind of responses have been from MPs, how many letters have been sent to the editor and what are the discussions like in parliament and if it’s a critical issue have community action groups been warned. (P2)
Obtaining feedback from local media and members of parliament might provide feedback on IMC implementation. This is considered a reinforcement strategy as it is part of accountability of IMC.

6.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, the general concept of involvement holism was formed. It emerged from the specific themes of connection, via media selection, engagement with target audience, whole organisation control, accessibility of media, behavioural change via social marketing, and relationships and feedback. These themes emerged from the IMC reinforcement and productive strategies to handle the contextual IMC situations. To follow are how individual themes were obtained.

In the context of connecting with regional target audience, there was the productive strategy of connecting with target audience via research for appropriate media. Hence the theme of connecting via media selection was derived.

There was the context of the need to engage with regional audience and adequate IMC budget. Hence there were the productive strategies of utilising public relations, rebates, and partnerships with media, local government and retailers. Thus, the theme of engagement with audience emerged.

It was necessary to control the IMC needs of the State Government office, brand value and outgoing messages. Therefore, there was the reinforcement recommendation of a hierarchical organisational model. Hence the theme of whole organisation control was derived.

While it was necessary to combine the online with mainstream media, it was recommended to consider the accessibility of media by regional target audience. This was regarded as
productive strategy as it was not an integration of media mix. It was about accessibility of media by regional audience. Thus the theme of accessibility to media was obtained.

In the context of the aim of encouraging behavioural change, there were recommended productive strategies of introducing social and relationship marketing. Social marketing requires activities to encourage local interactions with the organisation relationship marketing uses incentive-based programs to encourage audience to interact with an organisation. Hence the theme of behavioural change through social relationship was arrived at.

In the context of reaching small regional communities, establishing social relationships with community leaders, stakeholders and sponsorship partners was recommended. The productive strategy was an extension of the reinforcement strategy of establishing relationship with customers.

The general concept of involvement holism was gained from the themes of connection via media selection, engagement with target audience, whole organisation control, accessibility of media, behavioural change via social marketing and relationship and feedback. Table 6.1 on the next page shows the IMC strategies based on recommended practice for an effective State Government regional IMC promotional campaign.
Table 6.1: IMC strategies based on recommendations of IMC practitioners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Context</th>
<th>Reinforcement (Adoption) Strategies</th>
<th>Productive (Adaptation) Practices</th>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Connection with regional audience</td>
<td>Research, Targeting audience, Local media</td>
<td></td>
<td>Connection via media selection</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engagement with regional audience</td>
<td>Public relations, Rebates</td>
<td></td>
<td>Engagement with target audience</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control of IMC, Brand value, Outgoing messages</td>
<td>Hierarchical model</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whole organisational control</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online and mainstream media combination</td>
<td>Mainstream media, Online, Outdoor</td>
<td></td>
<td>Media accessibility</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural change</td>
<td>Social marketing, Relationship marketing</td>
<td></td>
<td>Behavioural change via social marketing</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reach small regional communities</td>
<td>Community leaders</td>
<td>Sales people, Stakeholders, Sponsors</td>
<td>Relationship &amp; feedback</td>
<td>Involvement holism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This chapter answers the specific research question: What are the opinions and suggestions of IMC practitioners of the State regarding the adaption or adoption of IMC components and strategies for an effective regional promotional campaign by the State Government office? The next chapter will discuss the findings of chapters 4, 5 and 6.
Chapter 7
Discussion

7.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters utilised the knowledge-practice-recommended practice theoretical framework to answer the guiding research questions. This chapter will summarise the major findings, provide the implications of findings and limitations of the research, and recommend future research.

7.2 Major findings

The findings from the theoretical knowledge of integrated marketing communications (IMC) practitioners were based on theoretical holism. The integrative holism in IMC, and the holistic IMC approach resulted in the theoretical holism concept. The disciplinary IMC strategy to be adopted for an effective regional campaign of a State Government office were integration, strategy to tactic (macro to micro), whole organisation control, accountability and building relationships.

The findings from the previous practice of participants were based on pragmatic holism. The contexts of marketing situations explained by participants in previous practice resulted in reinforcement and productive strategies which did and did not conform fully with the IMC discipline respectfully. The pragmatic IMC strategies were selective integration of media mix, full and selective integration of media mix, message consistency control, specific organisational control, budget control, Organisational support and accountability control.

The findings from the recommended practice of participants were based on involvement holism. The contexts of marketing situations apparent in the regional campaign brief resulted in the recommended reinforcement and productive strategies which did and did not conform
fully with the IMC discipline respectively. The involvement IMC strategies were connection via media selection, engagement with target audiences, whole organisational control, media accessibility, behavioural change via social marketing, and relationship and feedback.

The major findings show that the knowledge, practice and recommended practice of IMC were based on theoretical holism, pragmatic holism, and involvement holism. Hence the holistic involvement model was formed. It describes how an IMC strategy could be adopted or adapted for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. Table 7.1 shows the model on the next page.
Table 7.1: Holistic involvement model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMC strategies</th>
<th>Model of holistic involvement</th>
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<tr>
<td>Integration,</td>
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<td>Strategy to tactic (macro to micro),</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole organisation control,</td>
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<td>Accountability,</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds relationships</td>
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<td>Selective integration of media mix,</td>
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<td>Full and selective integration of media mix,</td>
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<td>Message consistency control,</td>
<td>Pragmatic holism</td>
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<td>Specific organisational control,</td>
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<td>Budget control,</td>
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<td>Whole organisational control,</td>
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<td>Behavioural change via social marketing,</td>
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<td>Relationship and feedback</td>
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7.3 Significance of findings

From a review of scholarly literature, it appears that there has been little research in identifying the model of holistic involvement to adopt or adapt IMC components and strategies for a successful regional promotional campaign of a State Government office. Therefore, the model of holistic involvement is an original contribution to the IMC discipline.

Even though it is similar to Gould’s (2004) hypothesis and uses Foucault’s concepts of discourse, knowledge and power, the knowledge-practice-recommended practice theoretical framework developed in this study is still an original contribution to the IMC discipline.

7.4 Comparison of findings to current research

Despite a thorough investigation of the major academic research databases available, another empirical study with similar theoretical base in the topic area could not be located or obtained for comparison with this study. Thus, minor findings related to pragmatic application were compared in this section.

The response from all the participants had commonalities regarding their theoretical and conceptual views of IMC but there was not one distinctly shared perspective. One may regard IMC as a management tool where the other sees it as a strategy or philosophy. This shows that IMC in the State Government office is still an undefined territory. The study of Cornelissen and Lock, (2000, p. 9) described IMC as a rhetoric or management fad, “this apparent ambiguity has allowed for various interpretations and the loose use of the term IMC”. However, this also supported Gould’s (2004, p. 67) explanation of why practitioners might have differing perspectives, “people applying and/or studying IMC come from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines. It is no wonder then that they may have different perspectives on it”. Further
evidence that supported Gould’s claim were the minor findings that showed the perspectives of the IMC practitioners correlated with the focus of their profession.

According to Schultz (1995), traditional advertising’s role needed to be reassessed for use in IMC. The findings of this research found that traditional advertising still played a major role in promotions in regional areas. The use of traditional advertising with IMC was highly recommended with more concern going towards accessibility of the target audience to media.

Management and cost were the major challenges when adapting or adopting IMC. Other difficulties included measurement, consistency and control of IMC. These challenges cited were consistent and thus reinforced the four key impediments of IMC found by Eagle and Kitchen’s (2000, pp. 667-689). One participant explained that IMC required a range of skills and that outsourcing for these skills could have negative consequences to IMC unity. This contradicts with the Kitchen and Schultz’s (1999, p. 29) finding that IMC “provides greater consistency, increases the impact of marcom programs, and eliminates miscommunication that can occur when several suppliers are used”.

Eagle and Kitchen (2000) and Schultz (1993) cited organisational structure as an impediment to IMC. This study supported this. Schultz (1993, p. 5) states that “It must come from the top, and it can’t be just a memo or a directive. Integration must be lived and demonstrated by the top”. Thus, IMC needs to be governed by a marketing led philosophy. Intervention of IMC programs by higher management who are not marketing led in their philosophy will impede the effectiveness of IMC.

The findings of this study have provided a model for achieving a holistic identity for IMC as proposed by Christensen and Cheney’s (2005). The model of holistic involvement uses strategies to achieve a unified IMC.
The findings have provided the evidence, the theoretical framework and the model to support Gould’s (2004) hypothesis that practitioners are themselves creators of specific meanings, who define and apply IMC from their own particular experience, knowledge, and understanding. The knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework used in this study shows that knowledge and practice of IMC practitioners contribute towards the knowledge pertaining to the IMC discipline.

The findings of Kitchen and Schutz (1999, p. 27) indicate that there was a belief amongst all their respondents that IMC made “evaluation of marketing communications more effective. Just how this occurs was not mentioned.” One participant within this study suggested screening local media or partners’ feedback on IMC program.

Kitchen and Schultz (1999) stated that respondents suggested measurement of each individual IMC component. They stated, “the overall response was that each element needs to be measured in its own right” (Kitchen & Schultz, 1999, p. 28). This was consistent with the previous practice of participants of this study in advocating the use of dedicated measurements for IMC components. Thus, the commonality between the two studies suggests IMC should have dedicated measurements of its components.

In the study by Kitchen and Schultz (1999, p.26), many respondents suggested that IMC’s strength was in “target market focus”. The findings of this study also suggested targeting the IMC towards a particular audience/market as a recommended practice.
7.5 Implications of findings

There are implications of the findings on IMC policies and practice for regional promotional campaigns of State Government offices. The following section presents a set of potential guidelines for implementing IMC.

Before conducting the IMC campaign State Government offices need to identify IMC objectives and make them apparent to others working and engaging with the office. Most new campaigns need to be incorporated into existing organisational goals. Any new programs should also be valued and considered against existing objectives and operations. This guideline utilises the strategy of integration.

Before implementing the IMC, the office needs to research the demographic target. An investigation of demographics should be conducted to allow evaluation of media to reach targets optimally. Research should include behaviour, media use, touch points and social activities of the target audience. This guideline utilises the strategies of connection via media selection, engagement with target audiences, and media accessibility.

An investigation of what traditional and non-traditional media are available in regional area should be carried out. As regional areas have diverse demographics, there should be research to focus on shared preferences of each demographic cluster. This should help in better media selection. This guideline utilises the strategies of connection via media selection, media accessibility, and selective integration of media mix.

The State Government office will need to examine its organisational role to support its IMC campaign. The majority of participants suggested that IMC should work through a top-down hierarchical structure. If this cannot be achieved, using a single agency to coordinate IMC is also recommended. Outgoing communications need to be tied to the overall IMC strategy. This
guideline utilises the strategies of whole organisation control, and specific organisational control.

The IMC effort needs to be supported by all levels of the State Government office to have a synergistic impact. If the IMC is carried out by a communication department, the office needs to trust and cooperate with its IMC efforts. Higher management must allow their office's IMC practitioner freedom and trust their judgments to control promotional and communication coordination, especially if higher management personnel are not well versed in the marketing discipline. This guideline utilises the strategy of organisational support.

Building relationships with third parties and stakeholders is essential with regional campaigns. According to the advice of participants, public relations will be an essential component of IMC regional campaign. Partnering should be made with community leaders and stakeholders. These could be avenues for providing feedback to the State Government office. Once again, outgoing communications need to be tied to the overall IMC strategy. This guideline utilises the strategy of relationship and feedback.

All components of the IMC campaign should have some form of measure so as to eliminate or improve weakness found in the IMC strategy. Participants suggested tracking media and promotional material individually. This guideline utilises the strategies of accountability control, and message consistency control.

7.6 Limitations of study

Biased viewpoints might have been expressed during interviews. This might be due to personal belief, agenda, and influencing discourse. Therefore, the participants might see this research as a way of valuing or devaluing IMC rather then evaluating its relevance for a
government campaign. The snowball sampling might have also provided participants with an opportunity to selectively provide contacts that share their same bias.

Sourcing participants for this study was a difficult task as most State Government IMC practitioners had an extremely busy schedule. As a condition of ethics, participants could withdraw participation at any time during the study. Critique of government practices is often a sensitive area. As such, it was assumed that many potential participants preferred not to participate in this study.

7.7 Future research

All participants had difficulty measuring the synergising effect of IMC. The study by Schultz and Kitchen (2000) and Kim, Han and Schultz (2004) found similar results. This constitutes a research gap in the practice of IMC that requires investigation.

This research was focused on an IMC regional campaign of a State Government office. A research of a similar nature could also be carried out at a Federal level or in an urban setting.

The findings showed that the knowledge, practice and recommended practice of participants was based on the model of holistic involvement. A study that utilizes this model will further strengthen the credibility of this model. However, a future study could also seek to find a better model to explain the knowledge, practice and recommended practice of IMC practitioners.

There were also implications of the findings on IMC policies and practice of State Government. These were presented in the study as a set of guidelines for implementing IMC for a State Government office. A study utilizing these guidelines could trial their credibility for effectively adapting or adopting IMC for a State Government Office.
Researching government is a difficult and complicated process but its benefits manifest in creating transparency and better practice. More academic studies involving government should be conducted to develop a stronger bond between academia and government.

The IMC discipline requires further academic rigour and is a fertile area for research.
Chapter 8
Conclusion

This dissertation explored how an integrated marketing communications (IMC) strategy could be adopted or adapted for an effective regional campaign of a State Government office. This chapter provides a summary of the study.

The literature review showed that IMC is a frequently debated marketing communications process that was customer-orientated, data-driven, and technologically-entwined. Its conception was the result of advertising and marketing losing impact due to message clutter, decreased credibility, media fragmentation and media cost. It was pioneered by Don Schultz who promoted the definition of IMC being a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and, evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences. Scholarly literature showed that IMC functioned best through an organisational model focused towards a synergistic outcome. Its technological entwinement created both opportunities and problems. IMC’s core weakness was usually the result of organisational issues causing inconsistencies. IMC is a discipline comprising practices and discourses which can be reinforced or changed through practice. An empirical study has found IMC to be growing in acceptance and developing as a discipline. The literature review provided concepts and issues related to the adaption and adoption of IMC for use in this study. Theoretical gaps found related to how IMC practitioners contributed to the knowledge of IMC and the lack of a model to explain how IMC could create a holistic body.

The framework used in this study utilised Foucault’s concepts of discourse, knowledge and power to develop the knowledge-practice-recommended practice framework. Participants were recruited via purposive and snowball sampling methods. One-to-one structured interviews were conducted. Interview data were collected and analysed through coding procedures.
The major findings from the knowledge part of the framework found that the theoretical knowledge of IMC practitioners was based on theoretical holism. The key findings from the practice part of the framework found that the previous practice of participants was based on pragmatic holism. The key findings using the recommended practice part of the framework found that the recommended practices of participants were based on involvement holism. These findings show that the knowledge, practice and recommended practice of participants was based on the model of holistic involvement. Thus, the model of holistic involvement that can be used to describe the IMC strategy that can be adopted or adapted for an effective regional promotional campaign of a State Government office.

These findings are significant as they will enhance the theoretical rigour of the IMC discipline and offer a framework and model for other IMC researchers to use when investigating the IMC discipline. The theoretical model will also assist IMC practitioners in developing a model to adapt or adopt IMC. There were also implications of the findings on IMC policies and practice of State Government. These were presented in the study as a set of guidelines for implementing IMC for a State Government office.
References


