IN SEARCH OF ALIGNMENT:

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION,

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR POSTGRADUATE CURRICULA -

A THAI CASE

By

RAVEENA SINGH

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Author: Raveena Singh

Thesis Principal Supervisor: Dr. Ousa Biggins

Thesis Supervisor: Dr. Charunya Parncharoen

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the alignment of integrated marketing communication (IMC), strategic management, managerial skills and coursework postgraduate curricula in IMC. In the pursuit for the alignment of theory, professional practice, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula, three models are presented.

Heuristically, one model on the IMC-strategic management paradigm is developed and presented. As applied value, managerial skills for professional practice in IMC in Thailand and considerations for postgraduate English medium coursework curricula IMC are presented.

A conceptual frame is developed in the literature review linking IMC, strategic management, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula. First, the underlying reality of the milieu in which organizations operate are exemplified in the systems and complexity theories illustrating a continuum of thought from the classical

to the contemporary. Second, approaches to IMC and strategic management are presented with the purpose of demonstrating that both are synchronous. Third, a set of managerial skills is presented against which current managerial skills in IMC professional practice are considered and fourth, literature is presented on IMC curricula. This assessment identifies the gap in the literature and underpins the research issues for the alignment of the IMC-strategic management function, managerial skills in IMC and postgraduate coursework curricula.

The issues were investigated among middle-management level IMC professionals, agency executives, professional body executives, academics and policy makers in Thai higher education. The research was conducted in two phases; in the first phase quantitative research was undertaken through an electronic survey among twenty middle-management level IMC professionals to ascertain their view on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, on the managerial skills required in professional practice and knowledge considerations for inclusion in English medium master's level coursework curricula. In the second phase, focus interviews were conducted with the twenty participants to investigate the responses and to verify the findings in the survey. In addition to the twenty participants, five agency executives, four professional body executives, five academics and three policy-makers in Thai higher education were interviewed. The research findings validate that IMC is a strategic management function and that the identified managerial skills and the curriculum requisite align with the IMC-strategic management model.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This study explores three issues; firstly, the paradigm of integrated marketing communication (IMC) as a strategic management function; secondly, the managerial skills required in professional practice in IMC; and thirdly, considerations for curricula in English-medium coursework master's programs in IMC. The study traces the epistemological development of IMC from earlier discourse to its current status as a business process. The research builds on the premise of the business process by proposing that IMC has further developed and can now be regarded as a strategic management function. The investigation also explores the impact of this new paradigm on postgraduate curriculum. The study is undertaken in Thailand.

The aim of the study is to establish whether IMC is a strategic management function, and if so, what managerial skills are required and whether postgraduate coursework curricula exemplify this milieu?

This chapter is presented in nine sections, illustrated in Figure 1.1, the chapter structure map. The literature review is presented in two chapters; Chapter two presents the literature review on management theories, IMC, strategic management and managerial skills, and, chapter three on postgraduate curricula.

Figure 1.1 Structure map of chapter 1

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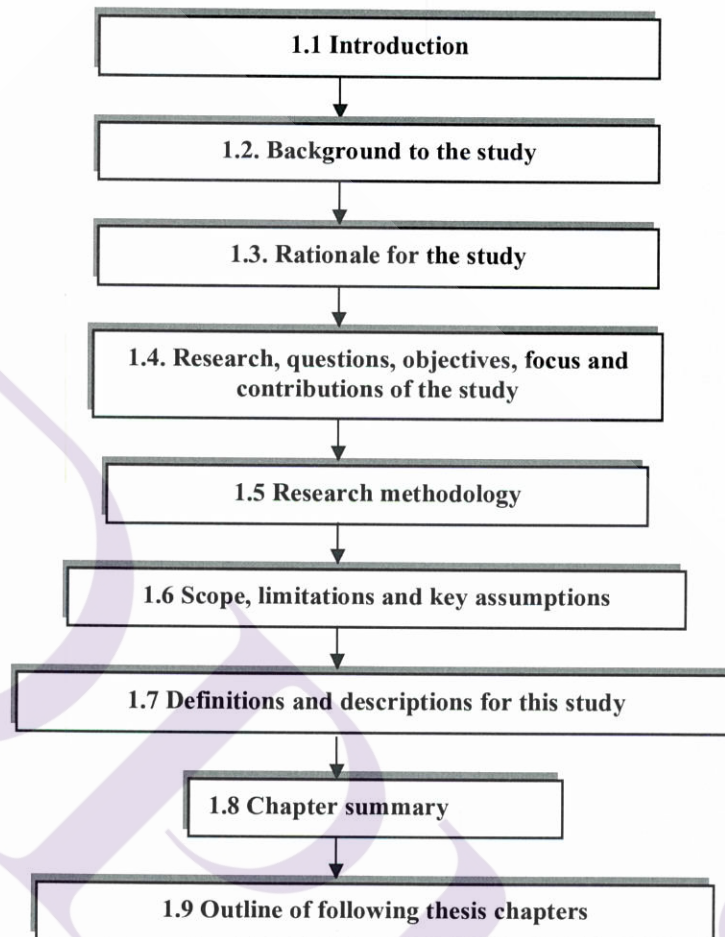
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1.2 Background to the study

As new challenges face private, public and non-profit organisations, models of IMC change. IMC is a developing profession focusing on analysis, planning, strategy development and implementation through a mix of direct marketing, advertising, public relations, sales promotion and/or personal selling.

Scholars have espoused the importance of IMC to organisational success, describing IMC as the centrality, or the lynchpin of communication across the organisation. Schultz (1993) substantiates his view on the role of IMC by describing it as an outside-in paradigm for dynamic, energetic and open organisations. Kitchen and Schultz (2000) affirmed this view maintaining that the challenge for marketing communicators is to adjust and adapt established functions and practices to the developing and changing marketplace.

Mazur and Miles (2007) explain that communication contributes to a balanced, organic growth which is central to business especially with the growth of discerning consumers. In discussing the definition of IMC, Kliatchko (2008), reiterated the definition presented by Schultz and Schultz (1998), that the "central contribution of this definition is the emphasis on the strategic aspects of IMC, regarding IMC as a business process, rather than its initial conceptualisation as the mere coordination of marketing communication tools" (p. 134-135). This brief chronology illustrates the development of the definition of IMC to today's positioning as a strategic rather than tactical contribution to organisational success.

Contrary to the optimistic views on IMC, Cornelissen (2001) reiterated the work of (O'Driscoll and Murray, 1998, p. 398) and documented that

"(t)here has been little theory building concerning these occurrences other than a call for a more 'integrated' approach to managing a more complex communications mix. The detail of such prescription remains poorly articulated and while this might be excused on the grounds of the size and rapidity of change in practice (direct response marketing, loyalty scheme

marketing, electronic commerce, the controversy over the effectiveness of mass advertising), it also shows signs of intellectual failure in the academy."

On the other hand, with its brief discursive history and current professional posture, IMC is growing and continuously evolving towards occupational specialization with growing recognition both by academia and industry for its contribution as a strategic management function. Kliatchko (2005 p. 31) maintains that "IMC literature suggests that definitional issues surrounding the IMC concept continue to be debated by academics and practitioners in industry. Further research on the conceptualisation and principles of the IMC construct is needed before a more solid theoretical foundation of the concept can be reached." Based on the Wheelan and Hunger's (2008) model of strategic management, IMC also gathers information, develops long range plans, implements strategy into action and monitors performance. These issues have influenced this study in exploring the IMC-strategic management function and the study is viewed as a necessary next step in advancing the inquiry on the positioning of IMC. Concomitant is the relevance of postgraduate studies where training should focus on managerial skills, such as conceptual, analytical, decision making and people skills. The concern is whether postgraduate academic studies convert to these skills needed at managerial levels? If IMC is shifting from a set of tactical functions to a strategic role then the traditional set of tactical skills taught at undergraduate levels for early career employees, who rarely have much strategic responsibility, will not suffice at the strategic level. This means that postgraduate studies that are supposedly training higher level managers will need to become more strategic in focus.

1.3 Rationale for the study

This study builds on the work of Schultz and Schultz (2003), Kliatchko (2005 and 2008), Anantachart (2001, 2003, 2004 and 2007), Wheelan and Hunger (2008), Kreitner (1998), Certo (2003), Ivancevich et al.,(1994) and Hubbard (2000).

1.3.1 Integrated marketing communication

A substantial body of research on IMC has been conducted since the 1980-s. These studies have focused on IMC as a concept, as strategy, as a business process and to the status of a management process. It is evident that IMC is at a decisive juncture; a stage at which to examine, review, evaluate and assess direction.

The following discussion focuses on selected research that underpins this study and was undertaken mainly in the United States, in Asia and in Thailand. Building on this body of knowledge, the study explores the next level of development of IMC as a strategic management function.

IMC Internationally

Globally many studies inform observations and theories in the development of IMC and its application in professional practice. IMC has received the attention of scholars in many parts of the world and is being investigated across countries. For example in the United States of America studies have been undertaken by Duncan and Everett (1993), McArthur and Griffin (1997) and Schultz and Kitchen, (1997). A study based on a three country comparison, the US, Japan and Chile was undertaken by Griffin, McArthur, Yamaki and Hidalgo (2000). Kitchen and Li undertook a study on IMC in China (2005). Kallmeyer and Abratt focused their IMC study in South Africa (2001), Reid on IMC in Australia (2003) and Eagle et al., in

New Zealand (1999). Seminal work was undertaken in the Philippines by Kliatchko (2002) and Anantachart in Thailand (2001, 2003, 2004 and 2007).

While "international" literature from the United States and the United Kingdom more broadly directed this study, more specific literature on Asia and Thailand informed the study. All three areas of literature are presented to contextualise the study and to benchmark the development of IMC. Firstly, a snapshot of "international" literature is outlined chronologically in Table 1.1 tracing the evolution of IMC thinking from tactical (Duncan & Everett, 1993) to strategic (Kliatchko, 2008). Secondly, a discussion follows more broadly on Asian literature and , thirdly, concentrated discussion on IMC in Thailand follows.

Table 1.1 "International" literature informing this study

Author	IMC Focus
Duncan & Everett (1993)	Driven by mergers in private, public and non-profit sectors. Growth driven by increasing market competition, advertising costs, pressure on organisation's profit bottom line and decreasing cost of data base use
Schultz & Schultz (2003)	Enhanced by the explosion in internet technology and e-commerce facilitating the possibility of one-on one interaction and two-way communication between sellers and buyers
Madhavaram et al., (2005)	Widely accepted; operating at various levels within the organisation and integral to brand management and strategy
Mazur & Mills (2007)	Emphasises in-depth understanding through research and strategy development. Business success dependent upon communication strategy
Kliatchko (2005; 2008)	Driven by changes in the market place, media and communications and growing consumer sophistication IMC positioned as strategic management process

Source: Developed for this research

IMC in Asia

Scholars and practitioners have written on the Asian market and the Asian consumer, for example, Bhosale and Gupta (2006), Dobson and Morris (1998) and Zeller and Passingham-Hughes (2000) who discuss product and brand success in Asia based on sound research, analysis, decision making , planning and communication.

Medh and Makhijani (2007), based on a longitudinal study report that while their findings may not be new, the implications for these evolving markets change constantly and rapidly. They recommend that evolving consumer sophistication and buying habits require brand profiling on a key attribute or dimension rather than attempting to present a level of superiority on all or many attributes. They also suggest that with the many choices consumers have, brand flirting and brand switching will grow and that "marketing mixes" must be customised, which is a basic tenet of IMC. Based on the proposition that IMC is a strategic management function, this is an important consideration for IMC as it contributes to the business strategy where the focus is on improving the competitive position of services or products.

Hahn et al., (2006) discuss the growth of the Asian market and emphasise the importance of these markets in grounding the Asian economy. They make the point that sensitive and experienced companies realize that Asia is not a single market and, in an increasing number of markets and cases of companies, tailor their products to suit local markets. They indicate that global companies known for their consistent global marketing approach, such as Nestle, Coca-Cola and P&G take a much more customised strategy in Asia. This supports the precept in IMC that successful business

strategies are based on a sound knowledge of the customer, and where communication campaigns are customer-centric or customised.

Kitchen and Li (2005), notes that international companies in China have implemented the IMC approach whereas few Chinese-owned companies have adopted this new function indicating that IMC is taken seriously by some marketers and agencies. Their findings propose that IMC is not a management craze but is being taken seriously by practitioners and agencies. Perhaps, multinational and transnational agencies take IMC seriously because foreign brands may prefer integrated communication strategies and local agencies may focus on public relations and event promotion rather than integrated strategies with advertising (Speece et al., 2003).

Table 1.2 portrays the "Asian" focused literature that has informed this study and is followed by discussion on the influencing literature in Thailand.

Table 1.2 Asian literature influencing this study

Author/s	IMC Focus
Kitchen & Li (2005)	Adopted by a number of large companies with operations in China Few Chinese companies have implemented IMC In China IMC is neither "management fad" nor "simple rhetoric;" it is taken seriously by marketers and agency practitioners
Hahn et al., (2006)	Asian market important in grounding the Asian economy Asia consists of multiple markets Global companies in Asia adopt customized strategies in Asia
Medh & Makhijani (2007)	Consumer needs continuously evolving. "Brands must differentiate on one key attribute/dimension rather than trying to be superior or different on all dimensions." Consumers flirting with different brands a reality. Brand loyalty a challenge.

Source: Developed for this research

IMC in Thailand

While Thailand is a part of Asia, concentrated discussion is warranted on Thailand as it is the focus of the study. Gale (2002, p. 3) identified four what he terms 'key market dynamic'; these are "speed of modern trade development; the introduction of modern retail formats, an improved retail offer and increased competition." He notes that from the nineties shopping habits in Bangkok have changed as a result of trade developments and the growth of convenience stores. The new shopping habits in Bangkok revealed that shoppers prefer hypermarkets and convenience stores, not supermarkets, and that "wet markets" were still a favourite and used more than any other store type. Of interest to IMC were the high satisfaction levels of hypermarket shopping, private labels and fresh food. Retail outlets face rapidly increasing competition (see Shannon, 2009; Burt and Davies 2010; Gorton et al., 2011). Whether the competition is on production, retailer or organisational positioning or branding, IMC is crucial in addressing the impact of these developments in Thailand. More recent research recorded how and where branding is used; initially branding focused on corporate, product and services, whereas now the elements of branding is used for store and organisational branding (Burt and Davies (2010). Contemporary branding is also used in leadership, for example, in the Virgin group of companies, in terms of visibility Sir Richard Branson may be more the brand than the Virgin name itself. These developments have application in Thailand and IMC could contribute.

Based on established IMC models, the doyen of IMC in Thailand, Anantachart (2001 and 2003) undertook two studies in Thailand to ascertain the views of practitioners on IMC and to determine the uptake of IMC practice in Thailand. His studies created seminal works on IMC in Thailand. His 2001 study titled "To integrate or not to integrate: Exploring how Thai Marketers perceive integrated marketing communication" was aimed to "explore how the IMC concept was perceived by marketers in Thailand, one of the fastest growing countries in Asia [at the time], and understand the thoughts of Thai marketers on the development of IMC practices" (2001, p. 66).

Anantachart's rationale for the adoption of IMC in Thailand was post the Asian financial crisis where he posited that "companies, with the rebounding economic situation should efficiently and effectively utilise resources to rebuild their companies... hence, the idea of integrating all marketing communication tools might be one option in doing so" (p. 66). His study was undertaken among "management at marketing companies listed in two comprehensive business source books." Other points of importance from the Anantachart studies that relate to this study include the high level of positions (designation) of his sample in the organisation: Of the sample, "56% were marketing managers/directors who were responsible for their companies' marketing communications programs." This means these respondents were of a high level in the organisation and their opinions were informed and credible. They were also well educated with an average of 6.8 years in their company, indicating valuable knowledge and experience. This study took cognisance of the sample choice in the Anantachart study (2001). By 2001, Thailand was well on its way with the recognition and adoption of IMC, evident in the following (Anantachart 2001, p. 68):

- "82% recognised the IMC concept in the organisation-agency relationship

- almost 40% believed that a company alone should determine strategies and subsequently assign each communications function to its agencies, who work closely together

- 36% agreed that a company and its communications agencies should jointly define strategies and each function would be later executed by different agencies

- 80% declared that their companies were already integrating, and excitingly, 89 and 76 companies were already integrated more than 3 years ago and 1-3 years, respectively

- 20% had not yet integrated, but 69% of this group had planned to integrate within the next 2-3 years with another 22 percent in the next 4-5 years."

While much of the world was still arguing definitions Thailand had adopted IMC. The study also found that there was a fairly positive predisposition to IMC in organisations that had already integrated their communications. They used services offered by their agencies and agreed with the importance of the 'one voice' and 'one brand personality'. They were of the opinion that creativity and messages would have stronger impact when marketing communication is integrated. A cornerstone of IMC established in the Anantachart's studies was that organisations that had integrated "expected their different marketing communication agencies to work together. They also believed that they had an integrated strategy which delivered the same, clear and consistent message" (ibid).

On agency management, respondents from companies which had already integrated felt that it was still better to use different agencies instead of a "one-stop shop" agency. There were positive findings on the number of organisations that were adopting IMC with good levels of integration and a healthy respect for the results. This result was encouraging for Thai companies and the Thai marketing communication industry.

In a further study titled " In the eyes of the beholder: A comparison of Thai marketers' and advertising practitioners' perceptions on integrated marketing communication" (2003), Anantachart, examined client-agency relationships in IMC, advertising and marketing subjects of interest and also compared marketers and advertising practitioner's opinion on IMC. While there were positive results overall, in relation to marketing and advertising practitioner's views on IMC "it was generally found that the marketers had less positive feelings towards IMC than the advertising practitioner." (p. 46). The results also re-confirmed the opinion that marketers focus on increasing sales whereas advertising practitioners understood the broader contribution of IMC, perhaps such as creating awareness and impact. In concluding, Anantachart suggested that "both groups seemed to see that the market was changing and [that] the samples from [the] advertising agencies better reflected such changes" (p.46). Anantachart concluded that the study revealed positive, empirical evidence that IMC was widely accepted among Thai marketers and advertising practitioners. A benchmark of this study is that while different sets of managers had slightly different views on IMC, most importantly they had knowledge of the concept and function of IMC. Table 1.3 summarises the research in Thailand that underpins this study. **Table 1.3 Thai studies influencing this study**

IMC IN THAILAND

Author	IMC Focus
Anantachart (2001)	IMC was a recognised concept among practitioners The study amongst agencies and organizations revealed that • 82% recognised the IMC concept • almost 40% believed that a company alone should determine strategies • 36% "agreed that a company and its communications agencies • 80% declared that their companies were already integrating • 20% had not yet integrated, but 69% of this group had planned to integrate • the importance of the "one voice" and "one brand personality" • creative ideas have stronger impact • all marketing communication tools work together • integrated strategy which delivered "the same, clear and consistent message
Gale (2002)	4 "key market dynamics": • speed development • modern retail formats and improved retail • Shopping habits in Bangkok had changed • Shoppers prefer hypermarkets and convenience stores
Anantachart (2003, 2004, & 2007)	• Marketers and advertising practitioners have a positive view • Marketers had a less positive feeling towards IMC than advertising practitioners • Advertising practitioners were more likely to understand the IMC principles • IMC was widely accepted among Thai marketers and advertising practitioners.

Source: Developed for this research

On managerial skills

The objective of analysing the skills required in IMC was based on the premise that if IMC is a strategic management function, then managerial skills should be implicit in the skills base. The study explores this argument with the purpose of aligning the triad, IMC-strategic management paradigm, managerial skills and postgraduate coursework curriculum. Managerial skills include conceptual skills to view situations holistically, analytical skills for problem solving, decision making skills for assessment of options and alternatives, technical skills for understanding control, measurement and evaluation, people skills for leadership and effective communication and computer skills for software knowledge and application.

Academe to praxis: IMC postgraduate curricula

Based on the importance of IMC to organisational success, an alignment in the triad was mutually beneficial. The study frames these issues and presents a deeper understanding of the needs of professional practice and its relationship with curricula.

Academic programs, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels have been launched in the last two decades. A literature review indicates that only one study on undergraduate IMC curricula was undertaken (Kerr et al., 2008). However the study did not explore the association of curricula to professional practice. Currently there is no in-depth study on postgraduate curricula, or formal inquiry on the relationship between IMC, strategic management and postgraduate curricula. Postgraduate courses have been offered since the early 1990's but there is no published research on the alignment of the triad.

Other challenges facing IMC curricula include:

Nomenclature: As with most developing professions, IMC literature still focuses on issues of nomenclature. Whether the area of study and practice should be entitled IMC or marketing communication, is still a question to be conclusively answered (Kliatchco 2005 and 2008).

IMC-strategic management: The question on whether this area of professional practice is in reality a strategic management function and whether professional practice is indeed adopting IMC as a strategic management function (Pettigrew 2000; Cornelissen and Lock 2000) continues to be debated in academic circles.

Fragmented views of IMC: As a developing body of knowledge, academia draws its content mainly from the areas of market research and metrics, business strategy, consumer behaviour, consumer psychology, communication theory and related communication disciplines, such as advertising, direct marketing, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. With this comes a somewhat fragmented view of IMC. At this point in its development, IMC does not substantially draw on the strategic management domain.

While these developmental obstacles exist, IMC has grown in stature as a strategic business function, where the three sectors have created more demand for IMC, appreciating its contribution to organisational success. This implies a growing need for more trained practitioners in IMC, which in turn impacts education and training. In this study, curricula will be assessed against IMC as a strategic management function, with the required managerial skills with the aim of aligning practice and curricula.

1.3.2 Locating the research - Why Thailand?

Recommendations from previous studies, the World Bank Development indicators, economic imperatives, international competition, university access to the only English medium postgraduate master's program in Thailand and access to IMC professional practitioners stimulated and encouraged this study.

In the last two decades the World Bank Development Indicators (1997) recorded that Bangkok, the Thai capital has become the centre of development and consequently the most prosperous part of the country. Economic activities in Bangkok and the metropolitan area accounted for almost 60% of the national gross domestic product, though it has less than 20 % of the nation's population. Bangkok's basic infrastructure is impressive and almost 80% of people who live and work there speak English. As this study is based on English-medium postgraduate study, the demographic profile of the sample was deemed excellent.

In 2008 the World Bank documented that Thai companies must keep up with their international competitors and that foreign companies could bring with them technology and training necessary to productivity growth. It is the view of this study that IMC could play a major role in productivity growth through sound communication and leadership. In addition, Bangkok has a strong informal network of highly qualified professional practitioners (master's level graduates) working in IMC and related areas who were prepared to participate in the study. This addressed a more practical issue of access to the fraternity. Srijumpa et al., (2004) note that "… in Asia, with its strong traditions of business secrecy, judgment frequently includes an assessment of access. Working through connections and introductions is frequently the only way to gain good access at any level of companies in Asia" (p. 69).

Figure 1.2 illustrates the reasons for choosing Thailand as the destination for this study.

Figure 1.2 Reasons for choosing Thailand
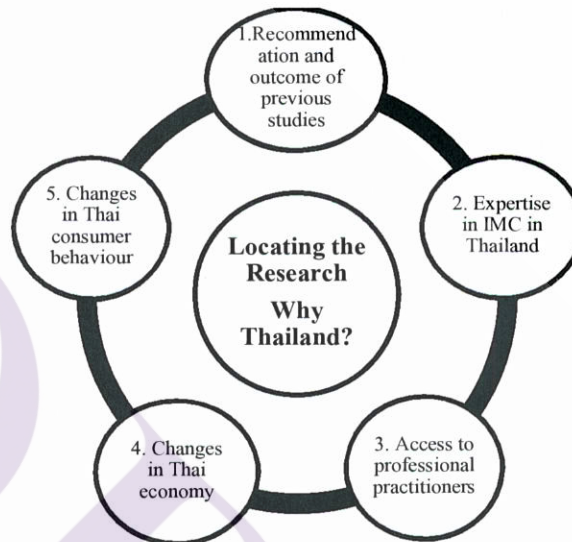
Source: Developed for this research

1.4 Research questions, objectives, foci and contributions of the study

Literature is sparse on the three aspects focused on in this study;

- firstly, on IMC as a strategic management function;

- secondly, on managerial skills such as conceptual, human, decision making, people, computer and technical skills required at a management level in IMC, and

- thirdly, on the design of English medium coursework curricula at the postgraduate (master's) level.

To explore the above issues, three research questions and three related research objectives were set, both directing the foci of the research. Table 1.4 presents the research questions, objectives and foci of this study:

Table 1.4   : Research questions, research objectives and research foci

Research questions	Research objectives	Research foci
Is IMC a strategic management function?	To advance a model for IMC as a strategic management function	Establish whether IMC is practised as a strategic management function
What are the managerial skills required for "management" level IMC professional practice?	To build a framework of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice	Identify the managerial skills expected of a professional to work at a management level in IMC
What are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curriculum in IMC?	To propose considerations for a managerial level skills based curriculum for postgraduate English medium curriculum in IMC	Analyse curriculum against expected managerial skills in strategic management focused professional practice.

Source: Developed for this research

The foci of the study explore the alignment of the IMC-strategic management function, managerial skills needed in IMC and postgraduate curriculum requisites. Figure 1.3 represents the foci of the study.

Figure 1.3 Foci of the study
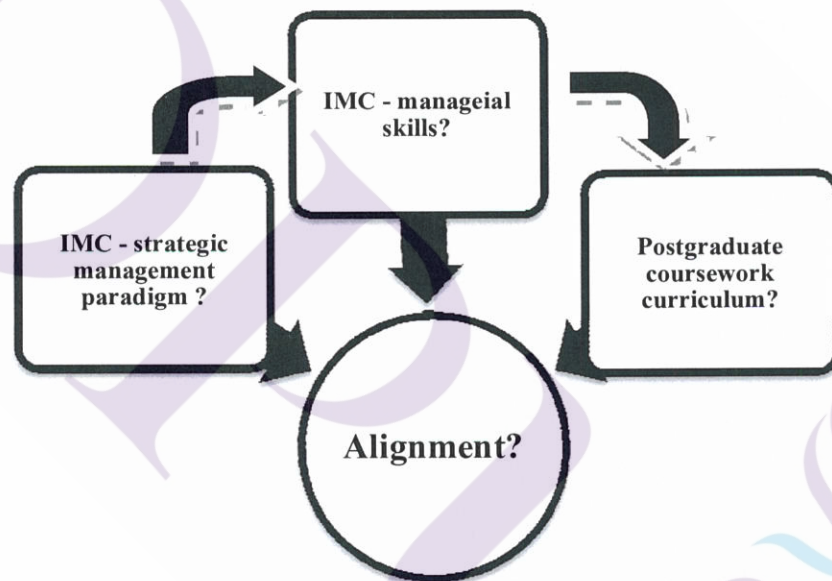
Source: Developed for this research

The objective of this research is to fill three major gaps in the literature by addressing three interlinked questions. These are:

1. Is IMC a strategic management function?
2. What are the managerial skills required for management level IMC professional practice?

3. What are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC?

In answering these questions, this study contributes to the following three gaps in the literature:

IMC as a strategic management function: Literature in IMC describes IMC only as a strategic management process. The premise of this study is that implicit in its practice, IMC is a strategic management function. It is anticipated that the outcome of this study will fill the gap in the literature in positioning IMC as a strategic management function.

Managerial skills required in IMC "management" level professional practice: There is no literature on managerial skills for IMC. Linking with point above, the study expects to fill a second gap by identifying the managerial skills to work at the management level in IMC.

Considerations for postgraduate coursework curriculum: There is no literature on considerations for coursework master's programs. It is anticipated that the study will fill a gap by identifying considerations for an IMC-strategic management aligned curriculum in English medium postgraduate course work master's program.

1.5 Research methodology

Little research is available on the link in the triad in this study. Consequently, questions on the alignment of IMC-strategic management, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula still exist. The components of this study are presented in Figure 1.4.

Figure 1.4 Components of the research study

Future trends and direction

Curriculum and education policy

Management skills

IMC

Strategic management
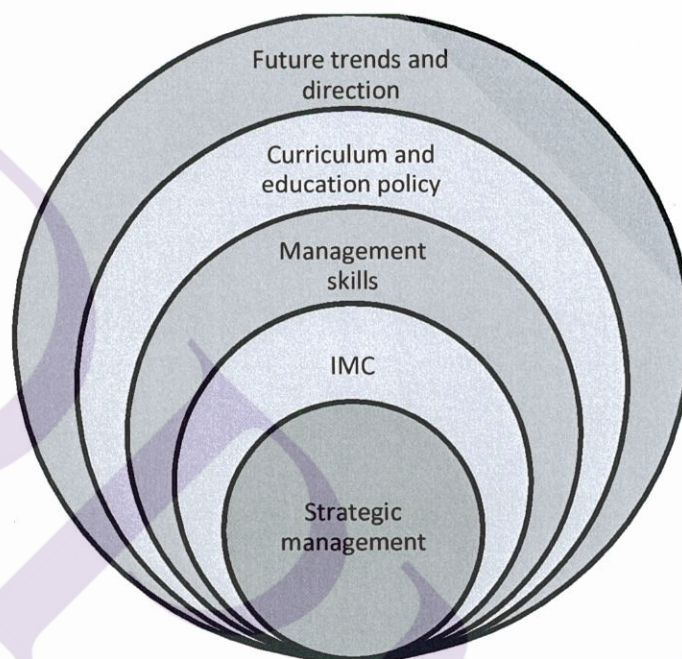
Source: Developed for this research

The epistemological approach adopted in this study will be constructivists, and the theoretical perspective will be an interpretive paradigm. A constructivist approach is adopted as the aim to understand the link between IMC professional practice, managerial skills and curricula from the point of view of those who experience it firsthand (Schwandt, 1998). Through this method, the researcher aims to provide a holistic perspective.

The ontological basis of interpretive research is the acceptance of multiple realities. The research will be conducted empirically in order to develop explanations of the phenomena. The aim is to understand the meaning of social phenomena and will require the researcher to actively enter the worlds of people being studied in order to see the situation as it is by the actor (Schwandt, 1998). To understand the relationship of professional practice, managerial skills and curricula, it will be necessary to gather information from the perspective of the participants; for this study the participants have been identified from the following categories: middle management level IMC professionals, IMC or related agency executives, professional body executives, academics and education policy-makers. The use of the interpretative paradigm will allow the researcher to acquire an in-depth knowledge of professional practice that is empirically grounded.

A mixed methodology of quantitative and qualitative research will be used in this study. Initially, electronic questionnaires will be sent to the respondents and the completed questionnaires will be analysed. Based on the findings from these questionnaires, questions will be designed for the focus interviews. The focus interview questions will be open- ended and unstructured.

The research will be undertaken in Thailand and due to the relatively small population size of the selected respondents, sampling will be based on a purposive sample. Purposive sampling was identified for this study for the following reasons: firstly, participants of a specified and predefined group is being sought for their views on the topic of this study; secondly, through purposive sampling, where relatively small population sizes are available, access to the targeted participants reduces the risk of non-responses; thirdly, this study explores issues on IMC that

require a deeper understanding which it is anticipated will be achieved through focus interviews, and where sampling for proportionality is not the primary concern. Perry (1999) suggests that 35-50 interviews are suitable for a doctoral thesis.

Within the sampling frame, it is anticipated that interviews will be undertaken either as face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews or through Skype, where respondents have access to these facilities. All interviews will be recorded, transcribed and analysed. It is planned that the respondent groups will comprise five sets of professionals who will be invited to participate, eventuating in thirty eight interviews. The five sets of professionals comprise:

- twenty middle management professionals with postgraduate (master's level) IMC or related qualifications to respond to the electronic questionnaire
- For focus interviews
  - the twenty middle management professionals who answered the electronic questionnaires
  - five IMC or related area agency management
  - five executives of professional bodies
  - five academics, and
  - three policy makers in Thai higher education

1.6 Scope, limitations and key assumptions

Within the scope of the study, research will be undertaken based on selected literature in IMC, management and strategic management. With the support of the literature review this thesis argues that IMC is a strategic management function.

Building on this premise that IMC is a strategic management function, managerial skills and its influence on IMC English-medium postgraduate curriculum (Master's level study) will be assessed.

This study will be undertaken in Bangkok, Thailand amongst a purposive sample of account executive level practitioners, agency and professional body executives and policy-makers in Thai higher education. In terms of stipulated demographics for this study, the account executive level practitioners will have successfully completed postgraduate study (master's degree) in IMC or a related area and will be working in an IMC related position. The primary focus of the study within this group will be on the link between professional practice, required managerial skills and curriculum. As the sample comprises professionals with formal academic qualifications in the field, it is assumed they would possess an adequate understanding of technology to complete an electronic survey. Since members of the sample are now in practice and not currently undertaking a master's program, the study will depend on the recall method to reflect and to answer the questions both in the questionnaire and the in-depth interviews. It is assumed that the answers will be based on their memory.

A second group (agency executives, professional body executives, academics and education policy-makers) will inform the study at a broader level of the challenges, the demands and the issues that face the profession and the industry.

There are several English programs in the Master of Arts in Communications in Thailand comprising tracks in IMC, but a very specific Master of Arts in Integrated Marketing Communication is offered at Dhurakij Pundit University International College (DPUIC). Since this program is focused specifically on IMC, it

will comprise more aspects of IMC for curriculum analysis. However, a limitation of the study is that only one Thai academic institution offers a Master's program in IMC through the English medium.

1.7 Definitions and descriptions for this study

The theoretical framework in this study revolves around the concepts of strategic management, IMC, managerial skills, professional practice, postgraduate study and curriculum. The definitions adopted in this study follows:

Strategic management

Strategic management involves comprehensive planning for the organization as a whole (corporate, business and functional levels) based on information gathered and upon which managerial decisions are made. Strategies are formulated and implemented for both the short and long-term performance of the organization. It focuses on both internal and external environments, uses available resources through integration and synergy to maximize value for customers and other stakeholders and to ensure business competitiveness in a changing environment. It gives the organization direction and through evaluation is able to amend and change strategies based on internal or external circumstances. Communication is a two-way neural system that facilitates the conveying of a strategic management plan through the organization, enabling feedback, control and evaluation. It more contemporary practice it also organizes strategies to launch, maintain or reposition brands and plays an important role in brand management.

Integrated marketing communication (IMC)

IMC is a strategic management function that manages complex internal and external communication systems. It takes a holistic view of the organization and is integral to customized corporate, business and functional management strategies and involves short and long-term planning and strategies. IMC operates most effectively in open systems and interacts with both the internal and external environments through environmental scanning and boundary spanning. It requires the knowledge and managerial skills of strategic thinking and business management and its focus on integration encourages cost efficiencies and cost containment.

It is the custodian of reputation, image, perception and issues management, which contributes to proactive and sensitive planning and problem resolution. Through research, analysis, decision-making, integration, creative communication, implementation and evaluation of communication strategies, IMC contributes to the success and viability of the organisation.

Central to IMC is creating value for the organisation and its stakeholders. It nurtures strong customer orientation and focuses on customer relationship management (CRM) and other stakeholder management programs. IMC is competition sensitive. It drives branding and brand management. IMC is practised both internally among employees and for system integration and externally among all the organisation's external stakeholders.

Managerial skills

Managerial skills set include conceptual, analytical, decision-making, people, technical, and computer skills. Managerial skills takes into account the ability to holistically and analytically solve problems; decision making includes proficiencies in assessing options and alternatives, technical competencies for effective control and administration and evaluation, people skills for leadership, direction and effective communication and computer skills for software knowledge and application.

Professional practice

Refers to IMC professional practice in either the private, public or non-profit sector and operates at the corporate, business and functional levels. Types of practice could include research, analysis, planning, environmental scanning, issues management, reputation management, brand management, direct marketing, advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling or any combination of these.

Postgraduate study

Postgraduate study refers to English-medium master's level coursework study in IMC.

Curriculum

Curriculum includes the total experience, through learning content, practice, academic support, socialisation and other experiences at a higher education institution.

1.8 Chapter summary

This chapter contextualised the study, explained the rationale for the study and presented the research questions, objectives and foci of the study. The research methodology was identified and the scope and limitations of the study discussed. The location of the study was substantiated and the definitions adopted in this study were presented. The chapter concludes with a summary of the thesis chapters. Chapters two and three present the literature review.

1.9 Outline of following thesis chapters

There are six chapters in this study. A brief description of each chapter follows:

Chapter 2: Literature Review: IMC- strategic management: the convergence

Chapter two provides the literature review on the systems and complexity theories of management, the approaches to IMC and strategic management and frameworks on managerial skills with the objective of developing a theoretical framework for the study. An assessment of contemporary literature on IMC and strategic management highlight significant themes in IMC and strategic management indicating both are synchronous.

Chapter 3: Considerations in curriculum development

Chapter three discusses the scholarship in IMC and elucidates what informed this inquiry. Discussion ensues on issues in curriculum design with the

purpose of developing a conceptual map for curriculum design in this study. Curriculum challenges in Thai higher education are also discussed. Considerations are presented for both curriculum and course (subject) development and an analysis of worldwide English medium IMC curricula is discussed. The chapter concludes with considerations for the theoretical framework on curriculum development.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Discussions include the phases of the study and the need for a mixed methodology; quantitative and qualitative. A description of the methodology used for data collection is explained and substantiated and is followed by the discussion of the sample and the ethical considerations for the study.

Chapter 5: Findings

This chapter discusses the results obtained both through the electronic survey and focus interviews. Part I discusses the findings of the electronic survey and Part II, the focus interviews. Data gathered from both will be analysed to establish the alignment of the IMC-strategic management paradigm, managerial skills and English medium postgraduate coursework programs.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, discussion and recommendations

Chapter six concludes with a discussion on the outcomes to the research question, accomplishment of the research objectives and the foci of the study. Recommendation for further research, limitations of the study and concluding remarks complete the thesis.

CHAPTER 2

INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION – STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: THE CONVERGENCE

2.1 Introduction

There are two separate but interrelated sets of literature reviews presented in Chapters two and three for the four constructs underpinning this study; IMC, strategic management, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula.

This chapter positions IMC through literature reviews on its definitions, taxonomy, evolving epistemology, basic tenets, emerging professional demands and its standing in the IMC-strategic management genre. This is presented with the objective of substantiating the propositions in the study. An in-depth discussion on the systems and complexity theories illustrates that communication is the link between an organisation and its stakeholders and other facets, and that the organisation does not operate in a vacuum. Organisations that operate as open systems are in equifinality, a stage at which communication is integral to its survival and status quo. The complexity theory illustrates the dynamism of organisations with the intention of making a case for the strategic position of communication (IMC) in contemporary organisations. Discourse on strategic management is presented to justify and substantiate the IMC-strategic management proposition that IMC and strategic management are synchronous.

The chapter concludes with an evidence-based argument that IMC and strategic management are synchronous; supporting the claim that IMC is a strategic management function, and from this position deduces the requisite managerial skills for IMC professional practice. Chapter three discusses the concepts for this study from the literature review on postgraduate coursework curricula in IMC. Figure 2.1 illustrates the content structure of this chapter.

Figure 2.1 Chapter structure map of Chapter2


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┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│        2.1 Introduction         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│    2.2 Theories of management    │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2.3 Integrated marketing communication (IMC) │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2.4 Management, managerial skills and strategic management │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2.5 Critique on strategic management discourse │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2.6 IMC-strategic management: Juxtaposition, convergence and inter-disciplinarity │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│ 2.7 Concepts from literature review for this study │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
                │
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│      2.8 Chapter summary         │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
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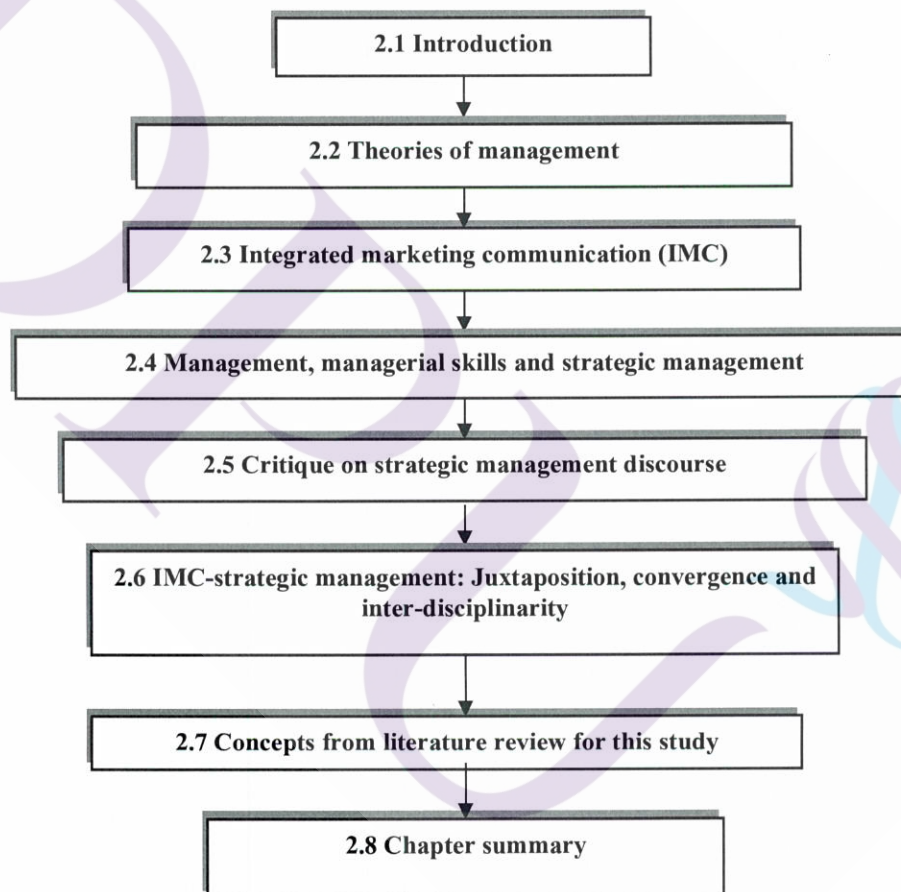
Source: Developed for this research

Since its inception IMC has developed in professional posture from a tactical function to a strategic management function and responsibility. In expanding the inquiry, concepts based on the systems and complexity theories, and selected approaches to IMC and strategic management are presented. The objective is to illustrate the development, and dichotomy, of organisational behaviour from simpler to more dynamic and complex systems and the role of IMC as a strategic management function within this milieu. In this chapter, the concepts from the literature review address two research questions and two research objectives, which are identified in Table 2. 1. The considerations for the third research question and objective is addressed in chapter three.

Table 2.1 Research questions, objectives and foci addressed in the framework of Chapter 2

Research questions	Research objectives	Research foci
Is IMC a strategic management function?	To advance a model for IMC as a strategic management function	Establish whether IMC is practised as a strategic management function
What are the managerial skills required for "management" level IMC professional practice?	To build a framework of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice	Identify the managerial skills expected of a professional to work at a management level in IMC

Source: Developed for this research

2.2. Theories of management: Systems and Complexity Theories

The systems and complexity theories of management are discussed to contextualise and explain the phenomenon of organisational behaviour and its impact on the IMC-strategic management paradigm. Both theories offer reasons and logical connections of how organisations interact with their internal and external environments. The systems theory explicitly discusses the role of communication in the organisation referring to it as the neural system while in the complexity theory communication is implicit and therefore suggests that communication is fundamental. These theories confirm and contextualise the role of communication in organisations and explain distinct observations and assumptions on the underlying reality of organisational behaviour.

While seminal theories of management such as Mintzburg (1979; 1983), Fayol (1949) and Van Gigch (1974) have informed the study, the systems and complexity theories have specific reference to this study illustrating a continuum of thought from the classical to the contemporary. This in turn exemplifies the role and flexibility of communication, in this case IMC, for its contribution to organisational management.

2.2.1 The systems theory

The systems theory, a more traditional theory of management, and the complexity theory, an emerging theory of management, illustrate the dynamism of organisations. The systems theory contextualises the study in terms of the need for integration, but seems to lack the perceptiveness of the multifaceted and vibrant nature of organisations today, while the complexity theory is sensitive to and

observant of the challenges, intricacies and complex demands placed on organisations today.

The study suggests that IMC is integral to business success and is a strategic management function and that both areas (IMC and strategic management) have similar goals and practices in business and are inextricably linked and synchronous. The relationship between the systems theory and IMC is that organisations are subsystems embedded in larger systems and the organisation (subsystem) interacts with other parts of the system to achieve identified goals. These interactions manifest as inputs, such as information, throughputs, such as processing or evaluating the situation and outputs such as new products. Within IMC, there is continuous environmental scanning (input), evaluation (throughput) and communication to address the situation (output).

In contextualising current and emerging organisational behaviour, Robbins and Barnwell (2006, p. 325-328) suggests that the major source of change over the last twenty five years was influenced by deregulation, globalisation, technological innovations and the emphasis on profitability. Most scholars agree that these changes will continue to call into question operating business principles, practices, cultures and structures (Anould & Zinkhan 2002; Schultz, 1993, 2003; Wells et al., 2006; Kotler and Armstrong, 2006). The systems theory and the complexity theories of management posit that organisations are dynamic and to survive they must be open to the changes in the environment. A premise of this study is that IMC is a strategic management function facilitating active engagement with an organisation's internal and external environment. IMC is characterised by the continuous assessment of both

the internal and external environments to ensure the survival of the organisation in its environment.

How does the system theory support the framework of this study?

An organisation that operates as an open system "interacts with its environment, but successful interaction is necessary for the organisation's viability and survival. This environment is rarely static; it is constantly changing in unpredictable and uncertain ways" (Robbins & Barnwell, 2006, p. 353).

In relating the systems perspective to organisational behaviour and communication, systems generally exist for the accomplishment of an objective or objectives through coordinated activity. In organisational communication, Koehler, Anatol and Applbaum (1981), opine that an organisation could be described as a structured system comprising relationships which coordinate the effort in the group toward the accomplishment of specific goals and objectives. However, they maintain that "it is only with the effective use of communication that coordination could be achieved" (1981, p. 11). IMC postulates that organisations are complex and must consider both their internal and external environments for the accomplishment of their goals.

Rogers and Rogers (1976) support this view and maintain that a necessary component of a system is the communication process, which jointly contributes to the interdependence of the parts. Within the concept of the system, environments and organisations are conceptualised as an order of interrelated components, and stresses the orchestration of these parts as the key to maximising performance and function. This approach proceeds from the premise that organisations and institutions are

systems and are composed of subsystems within a suprasystem, linked by communication. According to Cummings et al., (1988) system theories imply that systems are linked to each other through communication. The survival of all open systems and subsystems depends on the process of communication; this process is the link and has the vital function of transmitting and receiving messages for feedback. In any "organised" effort the process of communication maintains the effort within its system. The process of communication is characterised as the essential link and function for the deliberate, planned and sustained survival of any open system, and for mutual understanding, through feedback, within and between other systems and the suprasystem. The process of communication is complex and creates the infrastructure for dynamic interaction.

Discourse on organisational behaviour maintains that systems function in an environment of dynamic change, rather than in static conditions or sets of relations usually graphically illustrated in management structures. Roberts and Barnwell (2006, p. 11) claim that "there is wide agreement among organisational theorist that a systems perspective offers important insight into the workings of an organisation." Systems could be open or closed. An open system recognises the interaction between itself and its environment. A premise of the study is that IMC contributes to internal and external environmental scanning and contributes to strategy development to address or redress issues facing the organisation.

Systems theory and communication

Systems are interdependent and interrelated and can be influenced by any other part. Katz and Kahn (1966) view organisations as open systems, ingesting

energy from the environment, transforming that energy, and then expending energy back into the environment relating it to the "input-throughput-output cycle."

Within this paradigm, the process of communication plays a critical role in the maintenance of subsystems, systems and the suprasystem. In the role as catalyst, communication is an important contributor to information exchange. Rogers and Kincaid (1981, p. 63) state that "the primary purpose of human communication is to define and to understand reality so that other human purposes can be achieved. The primary purpose of communication as mutual understanding is crucial: the success of all other human endeavours depend upon it." People must act together and exchange information. Communication acts as a stimulus and the springboard for shared meaning and is the method for social actions (Katz and Kahn, 1966).

On managing communication in an organisation, Cummings et al., (1988, p. 3) maintain that "organisations have long recognised the importance of effective communication; in fact, many organisational problems are attributed to communication breakdown." Within the systems approach, organisational intelligence is the outcome of communication and represents consensual meaning among the recipients that communicate with the organisation for its purpose. The reciprocal relationship creates the feedback or the functional survival of the sub-system within the system and the system within the suprasystem.

Systems: Open or closed

Exponents of the systems theory accept the existence of two types of systems: open and closed systems. Littlejohn (1989) described an open system as that which interacts with its environment and which accepts and returns force or energy

into its surroundings and is always in an equifinal stage of growing and being alive. Anderson (1999, p. 216) affirms this view by noting that "open systems are open because they exchange resources with the environment, and they are systems because they consist of interconnected components that work together." A closed system on the other hand is one that does not interact with its environment and may reach finality (Littlejohn, 1989).

Open systems best facilitates IMC practice.

Attributes of systems

The attributes of systems identified by Littlejohn (1989) and Hall and Fagen (1975) are:

Wholeness and interdependence: Katz and Kahn (1966) believed that the interdependence allows "input" where the system extracts energy from its environment and converts this to some form of output, back to the environment.

Hierarchy*:* Systems may be viewed as a number of systems interacting in a larger system, the suprasystem, or smaller subsystems interacting with a larger system.

Self-regulation and control: Systems may align themselves by information input and a coding process. Information is used for self-regulation and control.

Interchange with the environment: Systems operate within the framework of an environment. It is where exchange process for input takes place for adoption.

Balance: Environmental interchange creates a balance between the system and suprasystem facilitating the system to remain active and operational. If there is no balance, the system may encounter entropy and final disintegration.

Change and adaptability: Change and adaptability are integral to the existence of open systems. A system may maintain homeostasis for coherence but must change over time as environmental conditions change (Katz and Kahn, 1978).

Equifinality: Open systems are goal oriented and adapt to change. When a goal state is achieved the system reaches equifinality. As open systems are in constant interplay with a dynamic environment, it does not reach a stage of finality.

These attributes support the IMC-strategic management paradigm and contributes to the conceptual framework in this study.

Contribution and criticisms of the systems theory of management

The system thinking has contributed to a higher level or order of thinking about organisations as integrated, cohesive and interdependent "units". It also introduced what Evered (1980, p. 8) terms "a new language for describing organizational phenomena. Such notions as boundary spanning, interface, feedback, homeostasis, network, control system, organizational goals, input, throughput, output, differentiation and integration" were introduced in organisational analysis. Stemming from this notion, the systems school of thought is more holistic; it acknowledges both the internal and external environments of the organisation and both logical and synthesised participative phenomena. These strong notions in systems thinking provide a theoretical and dialectic framework for the central focus of this study.

While the systems perspective to organisational behaviour and management

explains the interdependence and coordination of systems (organisations) and subsystems within the supra system, "it is an abstract concept; because it has the tendency to consider that everything depends on everything else… it makes it difficult to isolate specific problems and to offer management suggestions as to what precisely will change and to what degree, if a certain action is taken. It also has poor explanatory power as to how and why organisations change over time" (Robbins & Barnwell, 2006, p. 16). The systems perspective tends to postulate that organisations and conditions in organisations are simple, effortless, uncomplicated and straightforward. While the systems theory suggests that communication is central to core organisational success and also emphasises integration, it does not consider the dynamism and intrinsically complex nature of organisations. Organisations that adopt the systems approach of integration are sensitive to how decisions and implementation of decisions may affect other operations in the organisation. While outputs are possible, the total dependence of subsystems on each other may create problems that are difficult to isolate within subsystems. In addition, effective systems management requires information systems that provide managers at every level with updated and in-depth data for correct decision making. The extent to which information integration across the organisation is recommended may not be possible within time constraints. In this way the systems approach is somewhat abstract and has been difficult to operationalise on practical levels in the organisation.

These shortcomings of the systems theory are underscored in the emerging approaches in management which include diversity management processes, emotion in the workplace, technological processes, complexity theory and other changing landscapes such as globalisation. The complexity theory is more perceptive to the

vigour, dynamism, robustness and vitality of organisations and is presented to demonstrate the challenge that organisations are faced with today. For this study the application of concepts from the systems theory are presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Systems Theory: Contribution to concepts for this study

Systems Theory Contribution to concepts for this study
• Focuses on organisational behaviour • Organisation interacts with external and internal environments (interchange with the environment) • Communication is integral to linking the systems, sub-systems and the suprasystem • Integration of the system and the subsystems is critical to survival • Environmental interchange creates balance, facilitating the system to remain active and operational • Organisations are open to changes in the environment • Performance is maximised through the interaction of the organisation and the environment • Organisations self regulate and control • Communication may be described as the input-throughput-output cycle • Effective organisations are open systems • IMC is most effective in open systems

Source: Developed for this research

2.2.2 Complexity theory of management

Complexity theory is a relatively new area of investigation in organisational studies and strategic management and focuses on the margins and integration between the science of complexity and the field of strategy in

organisations (Lewin, 1999). Like systems theory, complexity theory specialises in the interdisciplinary study of complex systems. Complexity theory supports the systems view that open systems are dynamic and self-regulating, while closed systems are characterised by decay, disorder and chaos. In contrast to the systems perspective though, complexity theory does not concur that changes in systems can take place easily. While the systems perspective posits that systems, subsystems and the suprasystem are complex, it offers a more simplistic view of the complexity of strategic organisational management and communication. Complexity theory is more perceptive and sensitive to dynamic transformations, adjustments and intricate arrangements in organisations. The premise is that organisations as adaptive systems have to match the complexity of their environment.

Similar to the systems view, definitions of complexity are often based on the notion of systems, where the suprasystem is the sum of its component parts and where parts relate to each other. This integration exhibits properties that are not apparent from the individual components or parts. Complex systems, by their design or function are characterised by multiple interactions between the component parts and are often difficult to describe or authenticate. The conjecture in complexity theory is that complex systems are non-linear; in other words they are dynamic and to some extent unpredictable. Examples of complex systems include the solar system, the human system and large multifaceted organisations. Complexity theory has been applied to both theory and strategy in organisational studies and has been influential in strategic management studies, especially the facet of complex adaptive systems (CAS), which explains how complex systems adapt and from this adjustment

reorganises itself. In other words how organisations, proactively continue to maintain themselves in what the systems theory terms equifinality.

The work of Brown and Eisenhardt (1998) is significant to this study; they declared that by strategising successful companies are able to overcome complex and unstable environments.

Frank and Fahrbach (1999) raise the question "(w)hat makes an organisation a complex system?" They suggest that the organisation must reach equilibrium in that "when there are counteracting influences involving positive and negative feedback, the system may approach a state in which the system continually changes, but the structure is bounded and has periodic stability" (p. 253). They developed a model which explored the role of values, attitudes, beliefs and opinions as core elements of communication in organisational culture. Their depiction of complex organisations supports the view that the strongest characteristic of complex systems is "cooperation between persons" and they add that "enduring cooperation can occur only if actors engage in some form of communication that changes some attribute of the actors, either their beliefs, sentiments, or behaviours" (p. 253).

Morel and Ramanujam (1999 p. 281) in discussing what they called the two commonly observed characteristics of complex systems, which are "large numbers of interacting elements and emergent properties" explain that "complex systems tend to be made up of large number of elements that interact with one another. Such interactions are typically associated with the presence of feedback mechanisms in the system. These interactions in turn introduce nonlinearities in the dynamics of the system. The elements that make up a system could be atoms.. . people, etc." A complex system can be made of diverse types of elements.

Organizations are complex systems in that they are made up of individuals, groups, and departments that interact with one another by way of feedback mechanisms. In supporting the premise of this study, this suggests that these feedback mechanisms are made possible through communication.

Contribution and criticisms of the complexity theory perspectives

Writing on task systems in organisational theory, Morel and Ramanujam (1999) strongly critique the perspective of complexity and quote Scott (1992) who opines that " it is generally agreed that the complexity of a task system is an important feature that has a significant bearing on the performance of the task system. However, there is little agreement on the definition of the term complexity. It is used to refer to the number of elements in a task, the degree to which the task is programmable, the number of exceptions in the processes, etc." (1992, p. 229). Morel and Ramanujam (1999) add that it is not easy to describe complex systems but easier to identify them. Complex systems are characterised by several interacting elements and developing properties. The notion that organisations are dynamic underpins this study and makes the case that an IMC- strategic management model positively contributes to the success of these dynamic entities.

Application of complexity theory concepts for this study

Contrary to systems theory, complexity theory offers a vivid picture of the multifarious nature of organisations. However, while communication is implicit in its observations of organisations, it does not adequately address, identify or acknowledge the unifying link of communication in complex organisations. Although complexity

theory delves into the characteristics of complex systems, it does not seem to satisfactorily explain how these complex systems link together. It is therefore plausible that this shortcoming advances the level of inquiry into the relationship between IMC and complex organisations. The proposition in this study is that IMC is integral to the success of any system as it connects systems to sub-systems and the suprasystem. The magnitude of communication (IMC) is illustrated by Littlejohn's point that "interactionist theorists view communication as the glue of society. Society could not exist without it. Social structures such as organizations, groups, families, and institutions do not pre-exist; they are created and sustained by interaction. This genre is an important part of communication theory because it makes communication the most important force in social life" (1989, p. 14).

While there are differences between the theories both theories make a robust contribution to this study as a theoretical backdrop to explain the IMC-strategic management paradigm across organisations. In this study the contribution from complexity theory is presented Table 2.3

Table 2.3 Complexity Theory: Contribution to concepts for this study

Complexity Theory **Contribution to concepts for this study**
• Organisations are dynamic and self-regulating
• Organisations are adaptive systems which adjust to complex environments
• Organisations are designed for multiple interactions and are therefore dynamic
• Relevant to strategic management is the CAS as a complex aspect of organisational management
• Organisations are proactive by nature and constantly adapting and adjusting to complexities
• Co-operation is integral between the inter-related parts within organisations

> - Organisations have a feedback mechanism, implying two-way communication

Source: Developed for this research

The systems and complexity theories are different approaches sharing a common conceptual core on organisational characteristics and behaviour. However the complexity theory addresses a key consideration in its emphasis on and sensitivity to unstable environments, dynamic transformations, adjustments and intricate arrangements in organisations.

The relationship between complexity theory and IMC is that the practises in IMC are also underpinned by finding the best possible solutions to problems in challenging and competitive environments. In contrast to systems theory, the complexity theory acknowledges that organisations may operate in unstable environments. Together with other functions in the organisation, IMC through planning, analysis and communication may enable the organisation to maintain well-ordered state in both stable and unstable conditions.

2.3 Integrated marketing communication (IMC)

The centrepiece of this study is IMC and therefore warrants deeper and broader analysis and reflection. Figure 2.2 presents the points of discussion under IMC with the objective of tracing its development from its technical position to the strategic management process. The points discussed under IMC are presented in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2 Points discussed under IMC

Points discussed under IMC
2.3.1. Definitions and descriptions
2.3.2. Tenets of IMC
2.3.3 Evolving epistemology
2.3.4 IMC-strategic management discourse
2.3.5 IMC strategy focus and considerations

Source: Developed for this research

As a behavioural science, IMC contributes to research, analysis and planning and recommend strategies for mutual understanding between the organisation and its stakeholders through ethical and persuasive communication. It is integral to "exchange transactions", be it goods, services, events, experiences, ideas, places or information (Kotler and Keller, 2008, p.3-4). A crucial orientation of IMC is to scan the external and internal environments of the organisation, to read the market and consumer attitudes, identify attitudinal trends and their impact and recommend action through strategic communication. Therefore, IMC contributes to the mutual understanding between an organisation and all its stakeholders, internal or external. From its initial conceptualisation and development as an organisational function, IMC has passed the point of tactical contribution; today it makes a strong contribution to the success of the organisation. However, while it makes a strong contribution to business success through managing strategy, literature is almost silent on IMC being recognised as a strategic management function.

2.3.1 Definitions and descriptions of IMC

To separate the definition, nomenclature and function of IMC, marketing communication and marketing, a selection of definitions are presented. Seminal works and important advances in IMC (and marketing communication) have been completed by well-known scholars (for example, Varey 2000, Fill 2005, Picton and Broderick 2005, Eagan 2007, Busch et al., 2007 and Kotler and Keller 2008) and in IMC (for example, Schultz 1996; Hutton 1995, Eagle et al., 1999, Schultz and Kitchen 2000, Schultz 2003 ; Kliatchcho 2005 and 2008). These seminal works continue to be the foundation in developing epistemological dialogue and discourse in IMC.

As with other developing professions, it is acceptable at this stage of its professional posture that IMC literature exhibits evidence of both positive discourse and discord. The terms IMC and marketing communication are often used interchangeably.

A chronology of the definitions of IMC follows with the objective of establishing a balanced view and to demonstrate that most recent descriptions seek to represent IMC as a strategic management process, a description upon which this study builds.

There is both discourse and discord on definitions and descriptions of IMC. Kitchen and Schultz (2000) maintain that there is no single way for the implementation of integrated communication. This is evident in the definitions cited below.

Kliatchko (2005, p.7) in his paper titled "Towards a new Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)" recorded that IMC " is still subject to

varying terminology, bearing names such as 'new advertising', 'orchestration', '360 branding', 'total branding', whole egg', seamless communication', relationships marketing', one-to-one marketing', integrated marketing' and integrated communications." Despite the terminologies, Kliatchko (2005) considered IMC as a business process that has become pivotal to discussion among academics and industry practitioners. In 2008, Kliacthko positioned IMC as a strategic management process.

Schultz (2003) saw the development of IMC as a result of major shifts and changes in technology, marketplace and consumer behaviour; evolving information technology, business model changes from production-sales model of business to customer focused (customer-centric) interactive and integrated communication based on database management. Duncan and Everett (1993) suggested IMC is both a concept and a process; Nowak and Phelps (1994) definitional taxonomy included one voice, integration and coordination. Hutton (1996) believed that IMC could enable marketing communication to become more humanistic in its approach to relationships.

Duncan and Caywood (1996) presented the American Association of Advertising Agency's definition of IMC, which focuses on planning and evaluation and the calculated roles of advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations which intermix and amalgamate for consistency and communication impact.

Brown (1997) conceptualised IMC as a facilitator in developing consistency and emphasised market sensitivity and orientation. He also highlighted stakeholder management and relationships and refers to the 'one spirit, one strategy, synergy'. Beard (1997) singled out two principles which have repeatedly been

presented in IMC literature; messages designed for consistency and to 'speak with one voice' and 'messages attempting to encourage quantified consumer reactions.' In a study undertaken in New Zealand by Eagle et al., (1999), it was concluded that IMC represents an essential change in professional practice (among agencies and clients) and is not just a fashionable movement of the time. Kotler viewed IMC as "a way of looking at the whole marketing process from the viewpoint of the customer" (2003, p. 563).

Picton and Broderick (2005, p. 26) describe IMC as "a process which involves the management and organisation of all 'agents' in the analysis, planning, implementation and control of all marketing communications contacts, media, messages and promotional tools focused at selected target audiences in such a way as to derive the greatest enhancement and coherence of marketing communication effort in achieving predetermined product and corporate marketing communications objectives. In its simplest form, IMC can be defined as the management process of integrating all marketing communications activities across relevant audience points to achieve greater brand coherence."

Pelsmacker, Geuens & Van den Bergh, (2005, p. 16) postulate that "IMC is the integration of formerly specialised communications functions into one organisational system that conveys a consistent set of messages to all target audiences. Integrated marketing communication manages each point of contact between the consumer and the product or the organisation." Chitty et al., (2008, p. 5), defined IMC as "a communication process that entails the planning, creation, integration, and implementation of diverse forms of marketing communication, such as advertisements, sales promotion, personal selling, sponsorships and publicity that

are delivered to a brand's targeted customers and prospects over time. The first stage of the IMC process requires the marketer to profile the customer/prospect segment, and then to determine what types of messages and channels will best achieve the communication objectives of informing, persuading, reminding and inducing action from that market segment."

Kliatchko (2008) proposed a new definition adopting the term 'business process', originally introduced by Schultz and Schultz (1998). Kliatchko believed "that the term 'business process' most aptly describes the nature and the essence of integration, as IMC is not only concerned with the integration of the various functional areas but includes all other functional areas within an organisation" (2008, p. 141). Kliatchko also endorses the views of Jones et al., (2004) and Fill (2002) that IMC has developed and progressed to the stage of a management process.

It is worth noting, contrary to the above definitions, Cornelissen and Lock (2000) view IMC as a dubious, under-developed theory that is unclear and proliferated by purported "leaders" in the field. Pettigrew (2000) questioned the authenticity of IMC because of its lack of implementation as a serious organisational function. He saw many barriers to its implementation in corporate America and posited that "while IMC is theoretically realistic, structural-functional barriers hindered its adoption in organisations."

Based on the definitions above, the tenets of IMC are highlighted in the discussion that follows.

2.3.2 Tenets of IMC

In tracing the history of marketing communication, Egan made the point that marketing communication is an evolving function, declaring that "alongside this, it is also important to acknowledge that it is an evolving medium, in a state of constant and dynamic flux influenced by both wider environmental influences and, more directly, media development, budgetary demands and, most of all, consumer attitude" (2007, p. 3).

In tracing Don Schultz's interest in IMC, Mazur & Miles, (2007, p. 161) noted that the tenets of IMC emphasise the in-depth understanding of a situation through sound research, analysis, planning, setting aims, achievable goals and objectives, fully understanding the target segments or groups, designing messages relevant to and for the group, appreciating the effective use of resources, and implementing and evaluating communication strategies are pivotal to successful business strategies. IMC emphasises integration at the organisational level. The underlying principle is what Schultz et al., (1994 and 2003) termed "an outside-in" approach depicting an organisational focus characteristic of open systems. The tenets of IMC are presented in Table 2. 4.

Table 2.4 Tenets of IMC

IMC Tenets
• Involves research, analysis, planning and strategy development
• Is a strategy and business process
• Is an "outside-in paradigm" for dynamic, energetic open systems
• Integrates activities to create " one spirit", "one voice" and synergy
• Integral to branding and brand management
• Is customer focused to achieve brand coherence and "brand personality"

Source: Developed for this research

2.3.3 Developing and evolving epistemology in IMC

IMC has drawn from the domains of management, business, law, sociology and psychology importing rich, theoretically-grounded interpretations of how IMC contributes to strategic management and organisational success. Current and progressive discourse contributes to shifts in its development both as part of scholarly interest and professional practice. These advancements bring new perspectives, taxonomies, exemplars and standards to the field. Seminal works have benchmarked the maturity of IMC and are discussed below.

On seminal works: In re-defining IMC within the realm of strategy, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) explained that IMC contributes to the communication strategy at the corporate level, but also contributes to the business and functional levels in terms of branding.

On the massification of markets: In 1994, contradicting the popular marketing paradigm, Schultz et al., (1994, p. 1) asserted that "the marketing catechism written in the '60s grew out of U.S. experience during and after World War II, and it held true for nearly two decades. But then social, political, technological and economic change converged to invalidate the old rules and spin the next generation of managers into 'Future Shock' as Alvin Toffler described it". The "mass" concept dominated; mass media, mass markets, mass audience and mass advertising; however by the 1970's Toffler's Future Shock spoke of "demassification" (Schultz et al., 1994, p. 6).

On the demassification of markets: Based on an analysis of how they interpreted the phases of "marketing", Schultz and Schultz (1998) justified their view of IMC as an emerging new paradigm of strategic communication. They maintain that from the 1960s, the first phase was controlled by the manufacturer which characterised a seller's market; this meant that full power was vested in the manufacturer for what was produced. In essence, the production model reigned. The second phase, in a somewhat similar way, was dominated by the retailer, who on the traditional selling chain was closest to the consumer. This meant that the retailer controlled what products were offered to the consumer. The current and third phase, demands a re-engineering of strategic communication which is driven by the domination of the consumer and new ways of selling through the internet and e-commerce. Today is a buyers' market, where IMC plays a strategic role as a management function in business success.

In response to these changes and trends in the marketplace, communicators must now strategically locate the targeted customer, understand their changing needs and wants and create interactive communication to maintain sound customer relationships and sustain long-term organisational survival. Integral to these demands is the integration of marketing and communication messages. The traditional 4 Ps model of marketing, product, price, place and promotion (Kotler, 1994) falls short on meeting these demands. Keller (2003) suggests that IMC should also be embraced itsimpact in international marketing.

On internal communication: On the vital role of internal communication in employee or human resource management, Duncan and Moriarty (1998) wrote on IMC and recorded that the "secondary" target group of advertising (employees) was

now attracting the attention of academics. According to Mosley (2000), after five years of research, service company experts at Harvard Business School established a quantifiable set of relationships that directly linked profit and growth not only to customer loyalty and satisfaction, but also to employee loyalty and satisfaction. The findings confirm what is intuitively sound but difficult to prove: that investing in the commitment of employees is an essential part of building customer loyalty. Ewing, Pitt, de Bussy and Berthon (2002) advocate that employees will become primary audience and will lead to competition among companies to recruit the best staff. On the contrary, Yeshin (2007, p. 336) believes that while the benefits of IMC are espoused, "relatively few companies have yet reached the stage of fully integrating their communications campaigns."

On education: The level of maturity in these developments have brought encouraging transformations in IMC and marketing communication as a whole; for example, at the International Advertising Association (IAA) World Education Conference (April 2008) the theme was "Championing Marketing Communications Education Worldwide" where the strong international development of marketing communication and its demand for education programs was examined and discussed . The notion at this conference was that higher education has to now change focus from advertising only degrees and move to the marketing communication focus to keep in tandem with professional practice and responsibility.

On brand creation, identification, maintenance and equity: Kitchen and Schultz (2005) suggest that the development of brands will demand a two-way relationship resulting in branding and IMC as the cornerstone of successful marketing.

Madhavaram et al., (2005, p. 69) wrote on the role of IMC in creating and maintaining brand equity and the role of IMC in brand identity. They maintain that IMC has firstly, "become widely accepted; *secondly*, has pervaded various levels within the firm and, *thirdly*, has become an integral part of brand strategy that requires extensive brand development activities within the firm before beginning any external brand communication effort." This is strong and encouraging support for IMC as a positive contribution to business, as brand identity and equity are two strong themes in current practice and discourse.

2.3.4 IMC and strategic management discourse

At this point discussion on IMC as a strategic management process is based mainly on the work of five scholars; Kitchen and Schultz (2000), Kliatchko (2005; 2008), Jones et al., (2004) and Fill (2002) who proposed that IMC has transcended from a communication process to a management process. Kitchen and Schultz (2000) recorded that IMC has evolved from being a promotional concept to an integrated philosophy that is customer focused.

In his definition, Kliatchko (2005, p. 24) presented what he termed four basic elements of IMC. These are:

- IMC is both a concept and a process

- IMC requires the knowledge and skills of strategic thinking and business management

- IMC is hinged on and distinguished by three essential elements or pillars: audience-focused, channel centred, and results driven

- IMC involves an expanded view of brand communications."

Of particular interest to this study is his focus on strategic thinking and business management in IMC emphasising "knowledge and skills of strategic management, such as planning, directing and controlling … brand communication programmes…to cohesively and integrally tie in with the overall corporate vision, and business objectives" (p. 24). In agreement with Schultz and Schultz (1998) he emphasises the "importance of the holistic approach to planning and execution of marketing communication vis-a-vis merely tactical approaches" (p. 25). He adds that IMC is " much more than simply coordinating marketing communication tools or creating a one-voice, one-look brand image or the merging of formerly separate areas such as advertising, public relations etc" (p.25). He also reminds us (based on Schultz and Schultz 1998) that with the supremacy, control and influence vested in the customer today, "communication should not be considered merely as a support or a tactical activity, but as a strategic management tool seen in terms of investments, returns, and how it contributes to business results and the success of the organisation as a whole" (p. 25).

Developing on his 2005 view, in his 2008 paper, Kliatchko more strongly focuses on and emphasises the strategic management of IMC program, where he positioned IMC at the corporate, business and operational levels. This is discussed in detail later in the chapter under strategic management (Wheelan and Hunger 2004, 2008) and the convergence of IMC and strategic management. Kliatchko's representation of the IMC business, corporate and operational levels is shown in Table 2.5 below.

Table: 2.5 IMC business process- corporate and operational levels

Business level	Strategic and management issues
Corporate	Takes a holistic view of business Defines scope of business, its goals and objectives Drives brand-building strategies Takes full responsibility for full integration process of functional units Creates a culture of marketing: strong customer orientation Manages integrated systems and organisational structures Views marketing communications as strategic management tool and an investment Safeguards corporate identity, image and reputation
Operational level	Follows an organisational structure that facilitates effective customer management Develops, manages, implements and measures IMC programmes Processes a strong customer orientation and creates long-term profitable relationships with multiple markets Coordinates the integration process among communication agencies and other suppliers.

Source: Kliatchko (2008, p. 143)

Kitchen's and Schultz's (2000) rationale on the necessity of IMC concludes that competitive advantage will be gained through brands and IMC and that business will concentrate on shareholder value and increased cash flows. They suggest that strong brand relationships contribute to increased sales and revenue, meeting business goals and building brand equity.

2.3.5 IMC strategy focus and considerations

IMC is integral and contributes to corporate, business, and functional strategies. At the corporate level, it contributes to activities such as reputation, image

and perception management, at the business level to brand management, and at the functional IMC strategy manifests as strategic communication programs or campaigns, for either external or internal stakeholders. Underpinning all three areas of strategy (corporate, business and functional) are research, planning, analysis, decision-making, creativity, implementation and evaluation.

According to Allert and Zawawi (2004, p. 171) "historically, strategy referred to the role of a military commander and his art and skill. Later it came to mean managerial skill in administration, leadership, oration and power, and later still was generalised to include all aspects of coordinating and planning intellectual and physical skills in order to best position oneself, or the organisation, for the long-term purpose at hand."

In IMC strategy, development is a detailed, logical process that allows both simple and complex issues to be resolved in a strategic manner. Pickton and Broderick (2005, p. 299) suggest that an IMC strategy "provides the direction for all those involved in the campaign to follow. It provides the framework within which they should operate and is the means by which marketing communication is intended to achieve the stated objectives." IMC strategies are fully integrated and give direction to internal and external relationships, or stakeholders. Overall, the role of IMC is to intellectually analyse the situation, formulate and prepare the strategic "intellectual" directions and provide a justification for the communication program, be it, above, below or through the line communication in any of the three types of strategies. Essentially IMC focuses on the impact of the situation on the organisation, short or long term. It is a function that facilitates, implements and executes the organisation's view to the identified stakeholders.

The interests, concerns and frames of references discussed earlier in this chapter on systems theory (such as von Bertalanffy 1968, van Gigch 1974, Thayer 1972, Koehler et.al. 1981, Rogers and Rogers 1976, Katz and Kahn, 1966, Roberts and Barnwell, 2006 etc.) and theorists on the complexity theories (such as Lewin 1999, Anderson 1999, Brown and Eisenhardt, 1998, Frank and Fahrbach 1999, etc) together with the strategic management scholars (such as Mintzburg 1973, Robbins et.al. 2003, Miller 2003, Wheelan and Hunger 2004, David 2008, Hubbard, 2000 etc.) are similar to those in IMC. The work of scholars such as Schultz (2003), Kliatchko (2005, 2008), Varey (2000) and Picton and Broderick (2005), also position IMC as a strategic component of organisational practice and success.

Good IMC thinking and practise is similar to good thinking and practise in other management areas, and similarly, poor IMC thinking is similar to poor IMC thinking in other areas. Strategic IMC includes the aspects of research and analysis through the situation analysis (known as formative research); planning and decision making by setting aims, goals and objectives and identifying target groups; creative, through designing campaigns, programs and messages in terms what to say (for example, is it a rational or emotional message and the choice of words in structuring the message) and designing the message (how to say it, the creative execution) for above the line, below the line and through the line media; implementation through the IMC communication mix, and controlling and evaluating through drawing up resource budgets and evaluating the strategy after completion (known as summative research).

As in strategic management practice, but in more detail, IMC includes the aspects of research and analysis through situation analysis (known as formative

research); planning and decision-making by setting aims, goals and objectives and identifying target groups; creativity, through designing campaigns, programs and messages; implementation through the IMC communication mix, and control and evaluation through drawing up resource budgets and evaluating the strategy after completion (known as summative research). While formative and summative research are undertaken at the beginning and end respectively, tracking research is also undertaken throughout the project, program or campaign.

These considerations are graphically represented below in Figure 2.3.

Figure 2. 3: Strategic considerations in IMC

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│    Information, analysis and insight generation: Analysing the situation │
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                                    ▼
      ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
      │        Planning and decision making: Setting the aim    │
      └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
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    ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
    │       Planning and decision making: Setting the goals       │
    └───────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                                    │
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   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │      Planning and decision making: Setting the objectives      │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │      Planning and decision making: Identifying the target      │
   └─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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        ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │          Creative: Designing the message          │
        └─────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │     Implementation: Implementing the IMC communication        │
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   ┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
   │        Controlling and ROI: Managing the resources            │
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  │    Control: Evaluating the strategy (summative research)        │
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Source: Singh, 2007 (Amended).

The details considered under each of these steps follow.

Information, analysis and insight generation: analysing the situation through formative research

The first step in an IMC strategy is concerned with the current conditions and the situation that face the organisation. The aim of a situation analysis is to acquire insight into the current problem or issue. This insight is gained through formal and/or "informal" research.

Smith (2002, p. 19) suggests a "situation is a set of circumstances facing an organization. A situation is similar in meaning to a problem, if by "problem" you use the classic definition of a question needing to be addressed." For answers to questions that the organisation may have in solving the problem, this first step focuses on research. During the development of an IMC strategy, many questions arise; answers to these questions, through research, contribute to the planning and direction of the strategy and its implementation.

From an advertising perspective, Arens (2006, p. 235) describes the situation analysis as "a factual statement of the organisation's current situation and how it got there. It presents all relevant facts about the company's history, growth, products and services, sales volume, share of market, competitive status, markets served, distribution system, past advertising programs, results of marketing research studies, company capabilities, strengths and weaknesses, and any other pertinent information." From a public relations perspective, McElreath (1997) states the

situation analysis in a strategy is formative research which he describes as investigations "conducted through exploratory or confirmatory research to help a manager better formulate plans for implementing a program" (1997, p. 203). Quester et al., (2001, p.111) in their discussion on the situation analysis in a strategy, recommend that a situation analysis should include informed opinion, and an analysis of secondary data, for example government data or reports. Wells et al., (2006) point out that primary and secondary research are important contributors to informed decision making. They explain that secondary research contributes to defining the problem, and primary research contributes to the situation analysis; they add that the situation analysis "identifies strengths and weaknesses, as well as market opportunities and threats (SWOTs). Interpreting marketing information in SWOT analyses helps the manager turn data into insights. The goal of marketing research is to [ascertain] both information and insight" (2006, p. 42). They focus mainly on SWOT analyses as "a means to finding ways to address the weaknesses and threats and leverage the strengths and opportunities" (2006, p.186). Clow and Baack (2007, p.9) state "the first step in a situation analysis is the process of examining factors from the organisation's internal and external environments. The analysis identifies problems and opportunities present in the external environment as well as internal company strengths and weaknesses." From the IMC perspective, Schultz and Schultz (2004, p.69) advocate that the first step in the planning process is to "identify customers and prospects in terms of behavioural data, that is, what they have done or might be influenced to do in the future." Adding to this view, Pickton and Broderick (2005, p. 297) suggest that situation analysis in integrated marketing communication informs the company "of where the company/brand is now."

Evident from the above, research is central to gaining the required information for a situation analysis. Research offers the practitioner more insight into the problem and the possibilities of solving the problem. There are many considerations in undertaking research towards the development of an IMC strategy: one is about the type of research that is needed for the problem at hand. Another is about how the research is undertaken, and yet another is how the findings of research may be used to solve the problem. Organisations that are aware of their surroundings often use research to alert them to changes in their environment; a characteristic of open systems. These organisations are generally more progressive and proactive. This means that they are aware of the changes and adjust before a problem arises. In adjusting early, organisational goals and target group needs are often met.

Information may be gathered through primary or secondary data. Data collection can be undertaken through both quantitative and qualitative data. Often exploratory research may present an insight into the situation and may proffer answers to questions that the organisation may have at the time. Generally, exploratory research may also inform the organisation on what research has been undertaken or what information or data has already been collected, recorded or published on the issue (secondary research). Exploratory research often reveals gaps in the information at hand and indicates what other information is needed. As initial research it may also explain, for example, why the issue should be reviewed now and which are the stakeholder groups that must be addressed? In other words, who are the target groups?

Techniques under quantitative research could include surveys and content analysis. Within qualitative research, techniques may include focus interviews, focus groups, ethnographic studies, testimonials and case studies. "Informal" research,

described as research that is not based on strict scientific research precepts, may include environmental scanning and monitoring, boundary spanning, issues management, SWOT analyses, communication audits, media content analysis, media monitoring, library collections, electronic databases, interviewing, diaries, corporate communication archives and the recording of incoming phone calls.

The initial research indicates what the situation is and very broadly, formulates the differentiation focus; the IMC process then establishes the details of what must be done to rectify, improve, or to maintain the situation or to develop a propitious niche. This means that IMC sets a starting point based on the macro direction of the organisation to measure or benchmark the situation. This type of research is broadly categorised as formative research; research used to inform the organisation on what issues face it and the impact of these on the overall direction of the organisation. This analysis of background information is the foundation that provides the basis strategic communication programs, stakeholder analysis and the implementation of IMC strategies. The analysis could be undertaken through both formal and "informal" research (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005) where the research techniques in formal research would include qualitative and quantitative methodologies and "informal" research would include techniques such as environmental scanning and monitoring. Table 2.6 indicates some of the formal and "informal" research techniques that may be used to gather information for a situation analysis in an IMC strategy.

Table 2. 6 Formal and "informal" research in IMC

Formal research		"Informal" research
Qualitative	**Quantitative**	Techniques include:
Techniques include: Focus interviews Focus groups Ethnographic studies Testimonials Case studies Unstructured questionnaires	Techniques include: Surveys Controlled experiments Content analysis	SWOT analyses Environmental scanning and monitoring Communication audits Media content analysis Library research Electronic database research Interviews Diaries Communication archives Recording incoming calls Boundary spanning

Source: Singh (2007)

This analysis informs the other considerations in an IMC strategy. As the strategy develops, a conscious effort is made to link the aims, goals and objectives of the strategy and ultimately, the vision and mission of the organisation.

Planning and decision making: Setting the aim

When the situation is assessed, broad aims are set which explain the intention and

the meaning of the strategy. Aims are abstract and not directly measurable and must be considered within and related to the overall aims, goals and objectives of the organisation. In addition Allert and Zawawi (2004, p. 175) state that the vision and mission statements of the organisation are important. This implies that the aim of any IMC strategy must always be consistent with the vision and mission of the organization.

To ensure that the broader aims of the organisation underpin messages in communication campaigns, IMC aims must consider and be based on the mission, vision and core values of the organisation. Effective mission statements help to position the organisation and provide a direction in its market or sector. It also identifies the purpose of the organisation for its employees, giving a shared sense of significance and accomplishment. The practical implication of good aims is that it informs the internal stakeholders such as employees of the organisation's external communication, and in instances, of brand promises. Therefore due consideration must be given to the mission statement when setting aims in IMC. The vision or the organisation for its future is also a motivating factor for employees and should underpin IMC aim setting. Core values are principles that cannot normally be negotiated or compromised. It creates a framework for the beliefs and standards for the organisation. For example, core values could be manifested through high quality products and services and/or corporate social responsibility.

Planning and decision making: Setting the goals

Goals are rooted in the aim of the organisational macro strategy and underpin the issues facing the organisation. It charts a direction of how the situation

will be changed, modified or maintained. Goals and objectives must be set before the implementation of an IMC strategy. Schultz et al., (1994) maintain that "a practical communications strategy sets out goals for the entire marketing department, and the principals in the marketing department should be held accountable for achieving the goals" (p. 81). McElreath's seminal work on strategic public relations communication maintains that goals are "relatively abstract and may be difficult to quantify; he suggests that goals should be benchmarked and must be achieved within a set time frame" (1997, p. 139). He identifies two types of goals; process and outcome goals. Process goals are seen as a means to an end, and not the end in itself. Goals are time-bound and focuses on what the organisation has to do and what it has to achieve. In addition to the direction that is given by the aim, goals set the direction for the processes that must be undertaken by the organisation before, during and after the implementation of the strategy and the outcome/s expected from it.

Goals must be specific and understandable and there must be no confusion between process and outcome goals. There must be a clear understanding on the differences between process and outcome goals and a clear explanation should be given to stakeholders on the purpose of the goals. An unequivocal acceptance must be given by the relevant stakeholders that these goals, together with the set objectives, are the standards by which the effectiveness of the IMC strategy will be judged. In writing goals, understandable language should be used and should be written as statements, not questions. Setting the goals and objectives are directly linked to the information obtained from the situation analysis. McElreath (1997, p. 139) adds that in "establishing goals, agreement must be sought from the dominant coalition in the

organisation and the goals should be discussed with all stakeholders to alleviate conflict and to facilitate group consensus."

Planning and decision making: Setting the objectives

Objectives should focus on what the IMC strategy wishes to achieve from its stakeholder group, and like goals must have a timeline and be measurable. IMC goals evaluate what the organisation itself has to do and accomplish and objectives measure what the organisation expects the stakeholder group to know or do. According to McElreath (1997, p. 162-163), "objectives are expressed in concrete, measurable terms and are not abstract. He identifies two types of objectives, informational and motivational. Informational objectives focus on informing, educating or creating an awareness of a situation. Motivational objectives are underpinned by action; doing something, not just informing as in the informational objective. Objectives are directly measurable, for example, an increase or decrease in percentage or number. Smith (2002, p. 72-73) maintains that objectives should be "goal-rooted, public focused, impact oriented, linked to research, explicit, measurable, time-definite, singular, challenging, attainable and acceptable."

Planning and decision making: Identifying the target

The next consideration in the IMC strategy is concerned with the identification of stakeholder groups, internal and external to the organisation. Arguably, identifying target groups could be undertaken before or after the setting of objectives of an IMC campaign. If there is prior knowledge of the target group then objectives setting may be done before the identification of the target group. If more details on the target

group are required, it is advisable that the objectives are set after clear identification of the target group.

In IMC these groups are further categorized as primary, secondary and tertiary target groups (McElreath 1997). Primary target groups are those that are directly affected by the situation, issue or problem. Secondary target groups are those who are indirectly affected and tertiary target groups are those who could influence the situation. These groups must be correctly identified for any strategy to be successful. Results from research indicates who the stakeholder groups are (demographics), where they are found (geodemographics) and what are their interests, attitudes, and lifestyles (psychographics, values and lifestyles) and their information needs. The stakeholder groups may comprise a large number of people who may not all be reached at the same time, at the same place or through the same message. Once these groups have been identified, the organisation must assess what the best time will be to address an issue with the group. While responses to all these considerations serve to develop a strategy, the practitioner must also determine the costs involved to implement the program. Considerations that develop during the build-up in each step of an IMC strategy are loosely known as development research.

Creative: Designing the message

In this step, consideration is given to the structuring of the message. Care is taken to align campaign or program messages with the overall organisational mission, vision and strategy. IMC strategies deliver messages to create an awareness, to influence or educate stakeholder groups. This is done with the intention of motivating the group to some or other form of action. Fill (2005, p. 19) expresses the

view that a "strategy must be communicated in such a way that the messages are consistent through time and targeted accurately at appropriate stakeholder audiences." In answering questions regarding the design of the message, Fill's point must be borne in mind; questions such as what are the considerations for the message? What should the message say? Should there be one main message together with several sub-messages? Are there verbal and non-verbal communication constraints and/or cultural and language considerations? Answers to these questions help in the creative execution of the message. Determinants of messages include whether there is high involvement or low involvement decision making, what are the main and sub-messages, are there cultural issues to be considered; or, what should the ethos, logos and pathos of the message be?

Controlling and return on investment (ROI): Managing human, financial and technical sources

Every organisation is concerned with the management of its resources, be it financial, human or technological. Budgeting in IMC is about "negotiating organisational resources" which include financial, human and technological costs. Once the financial allocations have been completed, the responsibility is to direct, coordinate, monitor and control the resources. Assigning costs to administration and to the program itself are commonplace expectations of the IMC function. A sophisticated budget is integral to the ongoing and final evaluation of both the marketing communication and IMC strategies.

Financial and other resource allocation is organisation specific and may require specific considerations. The on-going tracking of expenditure through budgets

is vitally important, since it is against the expenditure on resources (financial, human and technological) that the success and effectiveness of the strategy is measured.

Budgets may be allocated as a percentage of previous year's sales, as zero-based budgeting, budgeting by objectives, MBO (management by objectives), parity (based on what the competitor is spending) or the all we can afford method. Considerations within in IMC budgets may include administration and program budgets, in-house budgets, activity budgets and narrative budgets, all of which are popular in IMC. Through budgeting, the return on investment could be evaluated, for example, measuring sales, so that measurement could be in terms of money.

There are different views on the appropriation of funds, budgets and the expense incurred in communication-related activity. In IMC, budgets focus on "action plans that allow the manager to make a supporting budget that is essentially a projected profit-and-loss statement. Budgets focus on "the research costs, ad objective, competitive advertising activity and the funds available for advertising" (Chitty et al., 2005 p.140). Other organsiational resources that are included in a budget include human (personnel) and technological resources. Budget types may include standard budgets, narrative budgets, strategy based (MBO – management by objectives), cost benefit analysis, program, administration and activity budgets.

Implementation: Implementing the strategy

The implementation of an IMC strategy must be designed to accomplish the aim, goals and objectives of the strategy. With most of the intellectual work completed in the development of the strategy, it is now ready to be implemented. From this point on the strategy becomes public and is directed to the

stakeholder groups through the tools of communication (above, below and through the line media and other contact points).

At this stage of an IMC strategy, full coordinated activity at organizational, media and communication mix levels is critical, for example, integration between the department of sales, production, marketing and between the tools of advertising, direct marketing and public relations. In addition, management must fully support the implementation of the IMC strategy and cognizance must be taken of organisational culture especially if it could negatively impact the implementation plan. Administratively, all aspects under implementation must be communicated internally to ensure that all members of the team are aware of the roll out stages of the IMC strategy.

Internal and external coordination is integral to the success of the implementation plan. The success depends on many people; for example, management, frontline staff, the advertising agency, the marketing communication staff, retailers, wholesalers and all those identified in the stakeholder groups.

Consideration is given to the following logistical issues under implementation: How will the message be communicated? When, why and where will this be done? What is the best media selection for this strategy? What should the media mix include? What benefits would the media plan and schedule give to ensuring that the message reaches the identified target group? Implementation tools could include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and other media coverage. In addition press releases, media conferences, media interviews, community relations, publications, employee communication,

special events, meetings and conferences, government relations, fundraising and crisis management plans may be considered. Integrating and synchronizing these events and activities is the challenge in the implementation phase of an IMC strategy. In many organizations Gantt charts are used as graphically illustrate the critical path in the implementation stage.

The final step in an IMC strategy is evaluation (control).

Control: Evaluating the strategy (summative research)

Evaluation is the final consideration in an IMC strategy. Here the success or failure of the strategy is assessed and analysed through summative research.

Before embarking on a strategy the following questions are set: How would the strategy be evaluated? When, why and at what intervals will the evaluation take place? What type of research would be used to evaluate the strategy?

According to Singh (2002, p. 94), "not all organisations are the same, and thus not all use research in the same way, or to the same extent." In some organisations, the evaluation of an IMC strategy may be undertaken only by measuring the aims, goals and objectives set for the strategy (management by objectives or MBO); while in others it may be undertaken by broader key performance indicators (KPIs), and/or total quality management (TQM), and/or quality accreditation (ISOs), and/or by using the Scorecard approach, benchmarking or world's best practice.

Formative evaluative research is a continuous process and plays an important role in monitoring and tracking the effectiveness of the process and if necessary, making adjustments, to better (improve) the strategy. Summative

strategy (McElreath, 1997). Tracking research provides feedback during the

evaluation research, on the other hand, is research conducted to summarise the processes and the impact of an IMC strategy; it includes the research conducted at the initial stages of, during, and after the implementation of the strategy. The feedback from the formative evaluation research contributes to summative evaluation research which takes into consideration the situation before and after the implementation of the strategy. Together with the feedback from the formative evaluation research, summative evaluation research evaluates whether the aim, goals and objectives of the strategy have been achieved together with the impact of the strategy.

In general, evaluation criteria are developed based upon exploratory and development research, concept testing and benchmarking. Goals and objectives set for the IMC strategy also become an important determinant for evaluation.

During the implementation of a strategy, evaluation acts as a monitoring device, checking whether the strategy is moving in the direction of the set aims, goals and objectives or whether changes need to be made to the existing plan of action. Evaluation contributes to the improvement, if needed, and to the alteration of the action plan. A selection of the research techniques identified in the situation analysis (Table 2.6) could also be used to evaluate the strategy. More recently, Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer and Reibstein (2006) introduced marketing metrics as a contemporary evaluation formula; these formulae could also contribute to the evaluation of an IMC strategy.

Formative evaluation research is undertaken at the initial stages of the strategy (McElreath, 1997). Tracking research provides feedback during the development and implementation of the strategy and summative evaluation provides answers to the following questions: Was sufficient, reliable and relevant research

undertaken to answer the questions or resolve the problem? Is the scope of the aim of the strategy wide enough to address the issue? Will the process and outcome goals be achieved? Are the informational and motivational objectives correct? Will these needs be reviewed throughout the process? Have the primary, secondary and tertiary groups been correctly identified? Are the messages and sub-messages correct, relevant, understandable and clear? Will the strategy be implemented within budget and budgetary allocations, or will there be a need to inject more funds? Are the implementation plans relevant, timely, extensive enough or too ambitious? Have the most effective communication channels been used? While terminology might differ evaluation is emphasised in IMC.

More general questions may include: How could the strategy have been more effective? What unforeseen circumstances affected the success of the strategy? What steps can be taken to improve the success of future strategies?' According to Copley (2004, p. 89) "evaluation is necessary in order to find out if objectives are being achieved. This then merges with a new situation analysis. There is a need, however, to consider research at each stage of the model and what research and evaluation means for the communication mix (and strategy)." The above questions together with other formal and informal research (as identified in the situation analysis) could be the basis for the summative research.

In summary, there are many reasons for evaluation; based on the strategy, evaluation must measure, firstly, whether the financial, technological or human costs and resources, did contribute to achieving the aims, goals and objectives of the strategy. Secondly, evaluation will establish whether the target groups were reached, whether main and sub-messages were synchronised and whether the messages were

correctly interpreted. With regard to the timing of the implementation of the strategy, evaluation will establish whether it was well-timed or not. At a macro level, evaluation analyses the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy and if weaknesses are identified, how these could be addressed. Where there is strength, innovation and success, the organisation could examine its application to other strategies.

Finally, after implementation, evaluation will facilitate in measuring the success or failure of the process, plan of action, implementation and impact of the strategy. Evaluation is cyclical. The information from one strategy could contribute to other strategies in the organisation.

In concluding, Schultz (1994 p. 65) states that a strategy "requires an almost evangelical dedication to the creation of a disciplined communication strategy. If you do your homework properly in the development of the communication strategy, it will result in a sharper, more persuasive-integrated-selling message directed to the most likely prospect. This, in turn, will result in the creation of a unique brand or service personality, one that separates your product or service from its competition. When done correctly, the use of an integrated selling message leads to personal communication, the kind of communication people want to listen to and to act upon."

For successful communication, it follows therefore, that the development of an IMC strategy demands careful and detailed consideration.

2.3.6 Relevance and application to this study

To direct this study an investigation was undertaken to review the development of IMC from its early stages of development to current discourse.

Through this scrutiny the benchmarks of growth and development of IMC were highlighted.

IMC is an interpretative and integrative system which assesses and addresses many aspects of a business or organisation. This may include environmental scanning and boundary spanning, or corporate social responsibility, or issues management, crisis management, change management, or customer relationship management, investor relations or competitor analysis, etc. This suggests that IMC makes sense of these subsystems and through the system (the organisation) addresses issues that may affect the organisation on day-to-day functional issues such as product branding. Through integration IMC modifies organisational responses proactively facilitating in the organisation's adaptation to the environment and preventing finality.

2.4. Management, managerial skills and strategic management

In the rapidly changing context of work, twenty-first century management functions include research, analysis, planning, decision making, the management of finance, production, sales, distribution, information technology, knowledge management, research and development, human resources, reputation and image management and communication management. Communication management may take the form of customer relationship management (CRM), reputation and image management, corporate communication, corporate affairs, public affairs, public relations, marketing communication management, crisis management, issues management, risk communication and management and change management. Branding and brand management are the most recent additions to the tally. Within this foray new challenges are presented and management is expected to meet these

challenges; how these are met or dealt with depends largely on leadership, organisational culture and communication.

Organisational culture, leadership, management and structures are important determinants of successful organisations. Contemporary management is required to be more knowledgeable and more accountable for performance. Managers are expected to understand the conceptual bases for managing organisational performance and to be able to critically evaluate and monitor organisational performance. Managing portfolios includes many "generalists" aspects of organisational management; determining organisational goals and setting performance measures, performance indicators, benchmarking, evaluation, quality management, the development of information systems and effective communication. The triple bottom line, profit, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and the environment are the imperatives of management. Almost three decades ago, Evered recorded that managing change is "fast becoming the more urgent functions of management, especially corporate-level management… and it remains one of the least understood of all management functions" (1980, p. 7). Today, expertise in managing change is integral to business success.

With the objective of contributing to the conceptual framework in this study, discussion ensues on management functions, managerial skills and strategic management.

2.4.1 Management functions

Kreitner (1998 p. 14-15) identifies eight functions of management; planning, decision making, organising, staffing, communicating, motivating, leading and controlling. Table 2.7 presents a summary upon which an explanation follows.

Table 2. 7 Kreitner's (1998) management functions

Planning	Primary management function; long term planning; gives organisational direction and purpose
Decision making	How informed judgements are made; involves analysis; considers alternate courses of action
Organising	Includes delegation of duties and responsibility
Staffing	Involves recruiting and training or developing staff
Communicating	Includes communicating technical knowledge, instruction rules.
Motivating	Motivating individuals to contribute to the group and the overall common objective of the organisation
Leading	Involves leading through vision, inspiration and adapted management styles.
Controlling	Involves evaluation and using evaluation feedback to improve or rectify situations.

Source: Kreitner (1998).

Planning: is regarded as a primary management function by which future courses of action are formulated. This gives a direction and purpose to the organisation and its employees.

Decision making: is where and how informed judgements are made and/or alternative courses of action decided upon.

Organising: includes how duties are delegated and responsibility assigned as part of an efficient use of human resources.

Staffing: involves recruiting and training people and developing employees.

Communicating: Kreitner (1998 p. 15) states that "today's managers are responsible for communicating to their employees the technical knowledge, instructions, rules and information required to get the job done. Recognizing that communication is a two-way process managers should be responsive to feedback and upward communication."

Motivating: involves motivating individuals to group level organisational goals through job satisfaction.

Leading: involves leading through vision, motivation and inspiration and through well-adapted management styles.

Controlling: this involves evaluating results and adding successes to future efforts or correcting failed efforts.

While other scholars such as Certo (2003) and Ivancevich et al., (1994) concur with Kreitner (1998), they do not include all eight functions. Both emphasise planning, structures of tasks and authority, leadership and influencing and controlling and standards of performance. For this study Kreitner's (1998) recommendations of management functions are adopted toward the conceptual map against which the findings from the study will be analysed.

2.4.2 Managerial skills

Literature on management skills focus mainly on conceptual, human and technical skills (see, for instance, Ivancevich et al., 1994, Kreitner, 1998, Certo,

2003). Ivancevich et al., (1994) further classify the three common skills and add analytical, decision making and computer skills to their managerial skill set. Skills identified in this study will be clustered against the suggestions of Ivancevich et al., (1994) as the additional three criteria allows for wider classification for this study. At this point there is no managerial skill or attribute configuration for IMC in the literature. Table 2.8 presents the managerial skills and descriptors of Ivancevich et al., (1994) against which the findings in this study will be analysed.

Table 2.8 Managerial skills

Conceptual	See the big picture; goal focused; long range planning; changing environment
Analytical	Planning; diagnosis and evaluation; problem solving; develop a plan; forecasting
Decision Making	Choice; Analytical
Technical	Techniques; measuring quality ;control charts; cause and effect diagrams
People	Leadership; effective communication
Computer skills	Use of software to perform a job; abilities in computer skills

Source: Ivancevich et al., (1994)

Management, organisational communication and systems theorists maintain that communication in its broader sense is integral to the success of any organisation. Writing on the elements of management within the classical approaches

to management, Miller (2003, p.7) notes that while Henri Fayol (1949) "did not include communication as one of his "elements" of management… it is difficult to imagine the performance of these elements without communication. That is, the organizing, command, coordination, and control elements of Classical Management Theory all require communication between management and workers. Therefore, communication can be seen as an implicit part of Fayol's elements of management."

This means that these ever-changing issues and demands must be continuously monitored and addressed for organisational success. David (2008, p. 105) emphasises the role of communication in strategic management and believes that " communication may be the most important word in management".

The skills identified by Ivancevich et al., (1994) contribute to the managerial skills conceptual frame in this study.

2.4.3 Strategic management

In business today, strategic management is the avant-garde of the entire management process and managerial responsibility (Daft, 2010). Kreitner (1998, p.196) defines strategic management as "the ongoing process of ensuring a competitively superior fit between an organization and its changing environment" to achieve organizational goals. Strategic management involves strategising for the organisation as a whole and is characterised by consistent and effective decision making. This is achieved by employing the managerial skills set of 'conceptual, analytical and decision making skills.

Strategic management entails strategic planning, which focuses on the organization's blue print on how it intends to attain its long term goals with the total

resource that is available (Kreitner, 1998). It also focuses on developing a vision or pathway to navigate the organization through turbulent times. According to Kreitner (1998) strategic managers engage in transactive and generative strategic modes; in transactive strategy the focus is on continuous improvement and in generative strategy the focus is on risk taking, both also the focus in IMC. Kreitner's management functions are presented in Table 2. 7.

Hubbard (2000) identifies the following functions of strategic management; long-term planning and competition sensitivity, decision making, integration and focus, value for key stakeholders and customers and implementation. Functions of strategic management are operationalised through three levels of strategy; corporate, business and functional.

The first, corporate level strategy, deals with the issues related to the organisation's business mix and product range as a whole. The second, is business level strategy which focuses on the strategy for each of the business units or each of the units in the product range. The goal of the strategy entails sustaining competitive market edge. The third is functional strategy, which focuses on how research and development, marketing, advertising and communication contributes to the achievement of the set business strategy.

In Wheelan and Hunger's discussion on strategic management (2004), they identify three types and levels of strategies in strategic management; business strategy, corporate strategy and functional strategy.

Corporate strategy and IMC in strategic management

"Corporate strategy is primarily about the choice of direction for the firm as a whole" (Wheelan and Hunger, 2004, p. 137). As with the business strategy, IMC acts as a sensor and facilitates the intellectual formulation of strategies for the choice of direction an organisation chooses to consider and/or adopt. Corporate strategy is concerned with three main issues:

- "the overall orientation toward growth, stability or retrenchment (directional strategy)

- competing industries or markets in which the organisation operates through products or services (portfolio strategy)

- the way management coordinates activities, transfer resources, and develops and promotes capabilities among product lines and business units (parenting strategy)" (Wheelan and Hunger 2008, p. 137).

IMC is integral to all three, and contributes to all three strategies above by acting as a sensor, for example, through the multifaceted research and analysis it undertakes, such as in situation analysis and environmental scanning.

Business strategy and IMC in strategic management

A business strategy "focuses on improving the competitive position of a company's or business unit's products or services within the specific industry or market segment that the company or business unit serves" (Wheelan and Hunger, 2004, p. 115). This contributes to the organisation's direction, bottom line, maintenance, reputation and general "health and well-being." At this level of strategic management IMC contributes through formal research or environmental scanning and

boundary spanning to aspects such as reputation, image and perception management and issues management. The type of research undertaken in IMC, through public relations generates alternative business strategies. IMC under business strategy can also contribute to strategic alliances, joint venture programs and cross-cultural knowledge in international strategic alliances.

Functional strategy and IMC in strategic management

Within the functional strategy, IMC contributes to linking the macro aims, goals, objectives and the mission of the organisation. The functional strategy positions the brand, product or service or alternatively, it develops new markets for current and or new products. In terms of Wheelan and Hunger's model, (2008, p.11) IMC has the same focus; environmental scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation and control.

Hubbard's (2000, p.16) three levels of strategy are presented in Figure 2.4 .

Figure 2.4 Levels of strategy
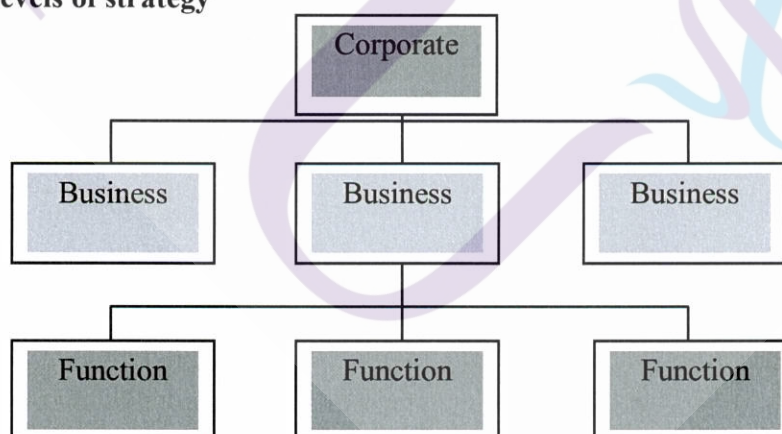
Source: Hubbard (2000)

2.4.4. Considerations in strategic management

Wheelan and Hunger (2010, p. 53) suggest that 'strategic management is that set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of a corporation. It includes environmental scanning (both internal and external), strategic formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation and evaluation and control." Kreitner (1998) maintains that "strategic management is about synergy which includes market synergy, cost synergy, technological synergy and management synergy. Coulter (2008) posits that strategic management is a process involving the analysis of a situation, the development of relevant strategies for the situation, implementation of the strategies and finally the evaluation, modification or changes based on needs. While said in different words, similar constructs in the above are managerial decisions, long-run performance, environmental scanning (both internal and external), analysis of the situation, strategy development, strategy formulation, implementation and control, and evaluation.

Postmodern strategic management is "a rational approach firms use to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above-average returns" (Hanson et al., 2008, p.25). In their analytical explanation of strategic management, they identify three key areas; firstly, strategic management inputs, secondly, strategic actions: strategy formulation and, thirdly, strategic actions: strategy implementation. Under strategy management inputs, aspects of strategic management, strategic competitiveness, and the external and internal environments are considered.

In explaining the benefits of strategic management, David (2008, p. 15) states strongly that "strategic management allows an organization to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future" and adds this is the case in both the private and

non-profit sectors. He records that the historical importance of strategic management was to devise and prepare stronger and sounder strategies through methodical and well analysed strategic alternatives and selections. What he does add to this view and which is of fundamental importance to this study is that "this certainly continues to be a major benefit of strategic management, but research studies now indicate that the process, rather than the decision or document, is the more important contribution of strategic management. It is a strong argument in this study.

Wheelan and Hunger's (2008) diagrammatic representation of the strategy process display the considerations in strategic management shown in Figure 2.5 below.
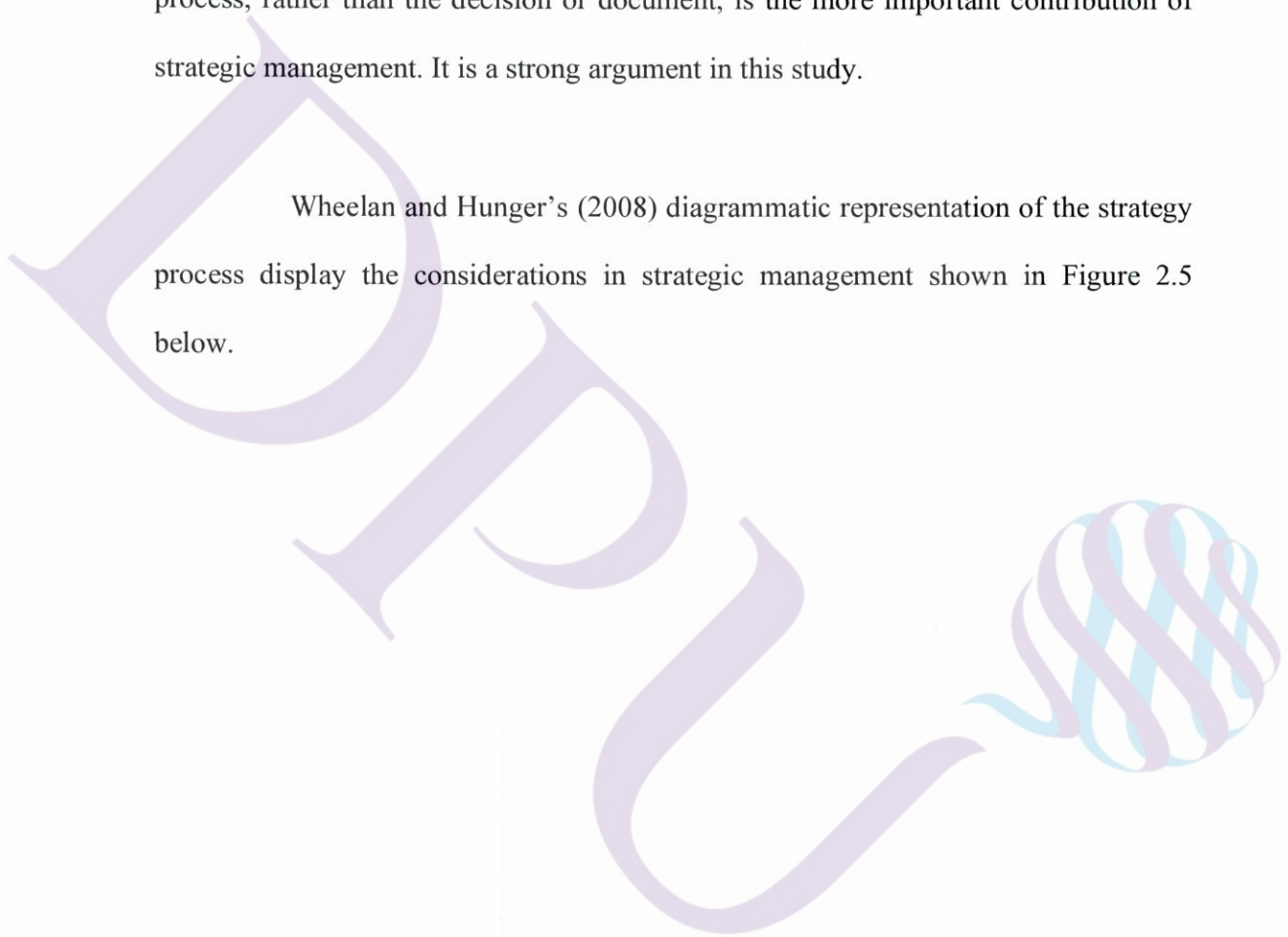
Figure: 2.5 Considerations in strategy formulation

Environmental Scanning	Strategy Formulation	Strategy Implementation	Evaluation and Control
Gathering information	Developing long-range plans	Putting strategy into action	

Mission — Reason for existence

Objectives — What results to accomplish by when

Strategies — Plan to achieve the mission & objectives

Policies — Broad guidelines for decision making

Programs — Activities needed to accomplish a plan

Budgets — Cost of the programs

Procedures — Sequence of steps needed to do the job

Performance — Actual results

External: Opportunities and Threats

Societal Environment: General forces

Task Environment: Industry analysis

Internal: Strengths and Weaknesses

Structure: Chain of Command

Culture: Beliefs, expectations, values

Resources: Assets, skills, competencies, knowledge

Source: Wheelan and Hunger (2008, p11)

2.5. Critique on strategic management discourse

While strategic management literature and literature on strategy abounds with new developments (for example David, 2008; Haberberg & Rieple, 2008; Mintzberg, 1983), it is not explicit how management communicates its strategies. Wheelan and Hunger (2008) offer a similar model to IMC strategy, but do not identify IMC as an integral aspect of strategic management; in fact they still see the marketing mix as the 4ps; since the 4Ps there has been, among others, proposals of the 6Ps, 7Ps, and 7Cs in marketing! If prolific writers such as these and others still have not acknowledged or understood the role of IMC, it suggests scholars are unaware of the function or choose to disregard it or have not delved deep enough into the literature on communication and related areas. Or perhaps because of its academic and professional posture, IMC has not penetrated nor caught the attention of strategic management scholars. Dominant discourse on strategic management seems to be hushed on this issue and seems to accept communication as implicit, or discrete, or take it for granted and ignores it on austere assumptions. This study maintains that communication, and more specifically IMC is integral to strategic management and must make its debut in the strategic management milieu soon (Wheelan and Hunger 2008, p. 137).

2.6 IMC and strategic management: Juxtaposition, convergence and inter-disciplinarity

The foregoing discussion serves as demonstrated evidence that there is convergence between IMC and strategic management; that these operate as inter-disciplinary entities and that both areas are concerned with the application of

strategies for successful organisational performance. Miller (2003, p. 7) noted "that communication can be considered an implicit part of Fayol's elements of management." If the organising, command and coordination by definition is in the domain of IMC then it implies that strategic control is a management function. It suggests that IMC has to be viewed as a strategic management function as the decisions and actions taken over the four elements (environment scanning, strategy formulation, strategy implementation, evaluation and control) determine the long term performance and ultimately the survival of the organisation.

In presenting his view on IMC Implementation at the corporate level, Kliatchko's (2008, p. 6) registered that "(a) t the corporate level, senior management takes on a holistic view of business, defines what business it is in (what it will and will not do), determines its mission (corporate goals and objectives), advocates a strong customer orientation in the management of its business, and drives brand building strategies." Kliatchko also acknowledges Kitchen and Schultz's view (2001) which confirms that "senior managers at this level are at the helm of safeguarding the identity, image and reputation of the organisation… and that senior management views marketing communications as a strategic management tool, an investment that generates business results in the long term" (ibid). At the operational level, Kliatchko (2008, p. 6) notes that "IMC managers at this level focus on planning, management, implementation and measurement of the IMC planning process that begins with a deep understanding of needs, desires and behavioural patterns of multiple markets (both internal and external audiences)." This analysis informs the development of "specific strategic IMC programmes that will allow the firm to compete successfully in its chosen business."

Holistically these types of strategies contribute to the success of the organisation, and so does IMC. Based then on Wheelan and Hunger's model (2004) and the views of Jones et al., (2004) and Fill (2002) "that IMC has progressed to the status of a management process" and Kliatchko's view (2008) that IMC operates at the corporate, business and functional levels, it can be argued that analogous to other organisational strategies, IMC strategies have identical foci and function and therefore should be regarded as a strategic management function.

2.7. Concepts from the literature review for this study

The following are the specific theoretical and concept contributions from the literature review:

1. A frame based on the systems and complexity theories, presented in Table 2. 9

2. A frame on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, illustrated in Table 2.10

3. A frame on management functions based on Kreitner (1998) and Kliatchko (2008) illustrated in Table 2.11, and

4. A frame/list for managerial skills based on Ivancevich et al., (1994) illustrated in Table 2. 12.

Table 2.9 Specific conceptual contribution and concepts from the literature review for this study: Management theories

Systems theory	Complexity theory
Organisational behaviour	Organisational behaviour
External and internal environments	Adapts and adjusts to environment
Complex environments	Complex environments
Environmental interchange	Co-operation
Open to changes in the environment	Self-regulation
Performance maximised in open system	Multiple interactions
	Feedback

Self-regulatory Input-throughput-output cycle: 2 – way communication Integration	Integration

Source: Developed for this research

Table 2.10 Specific conceptual contribution and concepts from the literature review for this study: IMC-strategic management

IMC – Strategic management precepts
• Complex internal and external communications • Holistic view • Corporate, business and functional strategies • Long and short term planning • Open system • Internal and external environments • Environmental scanning • Integration • Cost efficiencies • Strategic thinking • Competition sensitive • Knowledge • Reputation, perception and image management • Issues management • Problem resolution • Research • Analysis • Decision making • Creative • Communication • Implementation • Evaluation • Stakeholder and customer relationship management (CRM) • Corporate social responsibility (CSR) • Branding and brand management

Source: Developed for this research

Table 2.11 Specific conceptual contribution and concepts from the literature review for this study: Management functions

Planning	Krietner: Primary management function; long term planning; gives organisational direction and purpose – corporate strategies eg. safeguarding reputation, image, perception of the organisation, issues management; environmental scanning, range planning. Kliatchko-IMC: Contributes to business level strategy; defines scope, goals and objectives of business. Creates long term profitable relationships with stakeholders
Decision making	Kreitner: How informed judgements are made; involves analysis; considers alternate courses of action Kliatchko-IMC: Analysis of market for planning; crisis communication plans; alternate strategy plans, CRM plans
Organising	Kreitner: Includes delegation of duties and responsibility Kliatchko-IMC: Action plans, agency and organisational responsibility
Staffing	Kreitner: Involves recruiting and training or developing staff Kliatchko-IMC: Appointment of agency or in-house staff; Coordinates the integration process among communication agencies and other suppliers.
Communicating	Kreitner: Includes communicating technical knowledge, instruction rules. Kliatchko-IMC: At corporate level, drives brand strategies; strong customer, stakeholder focus. In IMC – may involve communicating technical specifications through publications, manuals etc. but also involves internal and external communication eg. strategy implementation, CRM
Motivating	Kreitner: Motivating individuals to contribute to the group and the overall common objective of the organisation Kliatchko-IMC: In IMC this could involve internal communication, staff procurement, special events, get-togethers
Leading	Kreitner: Involves leading through vision, inspiration and adapted management styles. Kliatchko-IMC: Integrates departments and functional units which creates a feeling of oneness;
Controlling	Krietner: Involves evaluation and using evaluation feedback to improve or rectify situations. Kliatchko-IMC: Formative, tracking and summative evaluation

Source: Developed for this research from Kreitner (1998) and Kliatchko (2008)

Table 2 .12 Specific concepts from the literature review for this study: Managerial skills

Managerial skills – IMC-strategic management
Conceptual
Analytical
Decision making
People
Technical
Computer

Source: Ivancevich et al., (1994).

2.8 Chapter summary

Four conceptual frameworks for the study were presented on management theories, the IMC-strategic management paradigm, managerial function and managerial skills respectively. Chapter three presents the literature review on postgraduate coursework curriculum in IMC.

CHAPTER 3

CONSIDERATIONS IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The literature review on management theories, IMC, strategic management and managerial skills was presented in Chapter two with the objective of demonstrating the challenging milieu in which organisations operate and the task of IMC as a strategic management function in that environment. The second purpose was to develop a conceptual framework for the study based on the research questions and objectives outlined in this study. Extending the theoretical frame, and with the same objectives, this chapter introduces the discussion on postgraduate coursework curricula in IMC.

As this study seeks to progress the inquiry on whether IMC is viewed and practised as a strategic management function, it examines the reciprocal impact of this development on educating for the profession, specifically in English-medium postgraduate coursework curricula in IMC. The analysis attempts to address the following:

- The research question of "what are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC?

- The research objective of "proposing considerations for a managerial level skills based curriculum for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC", and

- The research focus of "analysing curricula against expected managerial skills in strategic management-IMC focused professional practice.

The discussion on higher education and curricula are presented with the purpose of creating a framework against which the findings will be analysed. Due to the diverse needs of academic conventions and professional practice demands in different environments and marketplaces the study does not propose a "ready-made" curriculum for adoption. Rather, it seeks to establish considerations for postgraduate coursework curriculum in IMC from which individualised, custom-made course offerings may be developed. Chapter four presents the research methodology.

Figure 3.1 represents a preview and structure of this chapter.

Figure 3.1 Structure map of Chapter 3
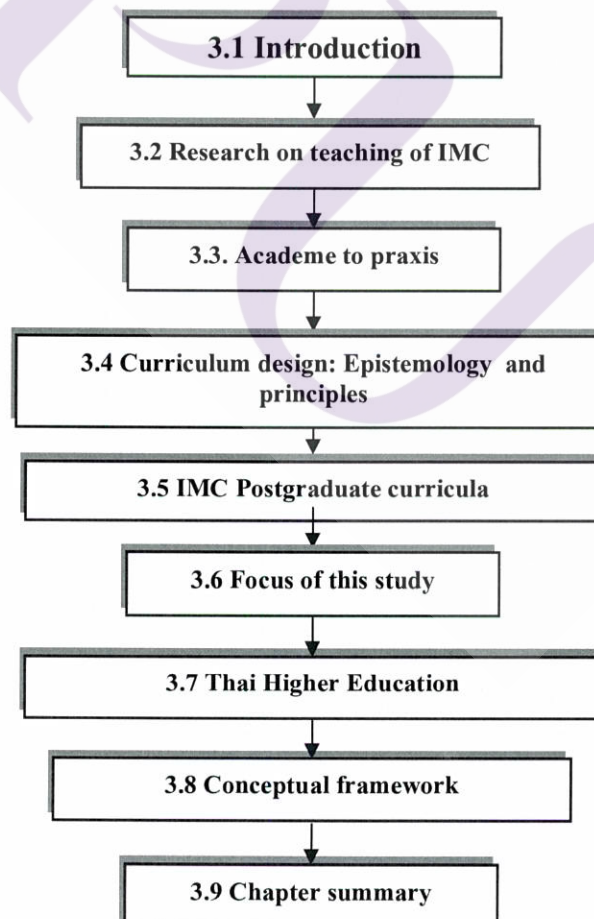
Source: Developed for this research

3.2 Research on teaching of IMC

An underlying premise in the study is that academic conventions are the most influential factors in IMC curriculum design and development. As a young, self-regulated profession IMC is challenged by the paucity of literature in the field and while literature is emerging on its strategic position (Kitchen et al., 2004, Schultz and Schultz 2004 and, Kliatchko 2005 and 2008), evidence at this point indicates IMC is still not recognised as a strategic management function. There is also no established professional body in IMC or marketing communication to direct the profession or scholarly debates on emerging issues.

While there have been many studies on the scholarship of teaching and learning for example, Kolb (1984) Biggs and Collis (1982) and Fry et al., (2003), formal academic education in IMC at universities has only recently been studied (Kerr et al., 2004, 2008; Sauber et al., 2008). Perhaps, academic programs have been reviewed, formally or informally within institutional conventions and policy but to date these reviews have not been published. Nor is there much literature on the effectiveness of the programs in educating prospective practitioners or whether postgraduate curriculum is well linked with managerial skills required in professional practice.

The study undertaken by Kerr et al., (2008, p. 512) raises and records critical issues in both teaching and its impact on the future of IMC. The focus of their study was to "identify the gaps between IMC theory and classroom content, and to help guide the creation of IMC course content that will inspire productive, creative

research that will further advance the field." The paper records that "IMC education programs are informed by different influencers one of which is "field practice" where IMC knowledge focuses on "what it is , how it works in practice, and what it might most contribute to marketing communication and brand management in the future" (ibid).

Their deliberations considered whether IMC courses are "repackaged" with existing and somewhat relevant offerings on campus, (and/or with appended or affixed IMC concepts) to package it as IMC designed study. They also suggest research in IMC among academics and other researchers have focused on the day-to-day core activities in professional practice rather than curricula. Contrary to these findings, this study converges theory, professional practice and curricula regarding it fundamentally as an osmotic process and a mutual relationship.

3.3. Academe and practice: Influential factors, pummelling academe and practice

While set epistemologies, national quality frameworks, literature and internal university policies inform curriculum content, there is more debate and discussion on the academe-profession link. In some instances, there are intense debates; Hunt (2002) identified a lack of engagement with professional practice in what he described as the "academician-practitioner gap." Nyilasy & Reid (2007) in their paper titled "(t) he academician-practitioner gap in advertising" were insightful and strongly criticised the academic community for not engaging with professional practice. They maintained that both seem to live in different worlds" and are also of

the opinion that there are wider and deeper gaps or levels in the advertising profession than in the mature profession like medicine, engineering or law.

An explanation of their paper is worthy in this study and while it focuses on advertising/marketing, it has applications for IMC. They document that at their conference in 2006, the American Academy of Advertising arranged a "special topic session focused specifically on the problem of the academician-practitioner gap with the objective of creating stronger links between advertising professional practice and academia. In trying to bridge this gap their paper, firstly, addressed the split in academician-practitioner disparity in the literature and secondly, recommends a new method to move forward with the deliberations on this matter. They also draw a parallel with marketing and refer to the work of Hunt (2002, p. 305) where Hunt claims that "(t)hroughout its 100-plus year history, one of the most recurring themes has been that there is a "gap" or "divide" between marketing academe and marketing practice." In terms of their findings and their view, this is not characteristic of the "outside-in-approach" advocated in a recent study (Kerr, 2008). As a young profession, IMC could avoid a similar history if it engages with the profession.

Hunt (2002, p. 305) asserts that literature review has revealed three failings; "The explanations offered are incomplete; they lack clear theoretical framework – they tend to be ad hoc assessments, and they have little empirical support."

In addressing this, they recommended

- "Their approach offered a new explanation that complements the existing literature

- It utilises a firm theoretical base, and

- It maps out directions for future empirical investigations" (ibid).

Catterall and Clarke (2000), in their paper "(i) mproving the interface between the profession and the university" detailed their views on the relationship between professional practice and the university fraternity and challenged both groups to review curricula for more innovative and holistic perspectives and to revitalise action and market research. The critique worsens.

Writing on the MBA programs in Australia, the Australian Financial Review (12 Sept. 2008) examined the MBA programs in Australia and concluded that employers have concerns about graduates because they do not have the ability to apply their knowledge in the workplace. They claim that subjects in the MBA programs have not been updated with new technologies, learning styles and requirements of the younger generation and business ethics. These difficulties are in part the result of not talking to and engaging with the profession. They question models of pedagogy and the lack of integration and alignment; this differs from the European model where generic skills are fully integrated within programs across the degree. A dean of a well-known and respected university said that their MBA has been drawn from scratch after extensive consultation with prominent CEO's both here (in Australia) and overseas.

In its quest for a more integrated and aligned academic-professional practice paradigm, this study does not postulate that academic and intellectual input should be minimised; on the contrary, it advocates a richness in curricula on a firm theoretical base (the hallmark of university education), and engagement with stakeholders and through communities of learning and practice, in essence, integrating

and aligning teaching-learning-professional practice based on collaboration, community and trans-disciplinary dialogue.

3.3.1 Studies in IMC education

This study will be undertaken among middle management professionals with a master's or higher qualification, and among executives as the objective was to investigate the position of IMC at the management level. This study progresses the inquiry into the IMC-strategic management paradigm literature, and then tests it in professional practice for managerial skills indicators to inform curriculum design at the postgraduate level (masters) in IMC coursework study.

On IMC, the work of Kitchen et al., (2004), Schultz and Schultz (2004) and Kliatchko (2005 and 2008) informed this inquiry; on curricula the findings of the study undertaken by Kerr et al., (2004, 2008) was considered.

The epistemological and taxonomy issues and the premise in the study undertaken by Kerr et al., (2008) are of significance to this study. However, in the Kerr et al., study it seems that the results for both undergraduate and postgraduate studies were aggregated; therefore the results were unclear on postgraduate level study only. Consequently, a direct comparison with the findings in the Kerr et al., study cannot be undertaken. This study fills the gap of identifying curricula for English-medium postgraduate (master's level) coursework in IMC.

The market for professionals with postgraduate qualifications continues to grow and so does the need for managerial skills for this area of employment (for example, evident in the International Advertising Association's World Education

Conference 2008). Given the situation and addressing these needs, what are the challenges to higher education?

3.3.2 Challenges to higher education: In context

In the broader context, there are many challenges facing higher education worldwide. Similar demands and challenges face Thai education. Concerns include government and institutional funding, academic, administrative and management structures and education quality frameworks. In the teaching and research domain there is increasing accountability for student learning, teaching, curriculum development, research output and professional development.

Amidst these challenges, the core business of learning and teaching must go on and to this end the curriculum is a priority. Underpinning curriculum, teachers must be aware of how students should apply knowledge, think critically, synthesise information and effectively express themselves through communication. To inform curriculum development, literature on student learning and teaching at the postgraduate level has been examined with the purpose of creating a frame for this study. Aspects of graduate skills and attributes, epistemology, principles and considerations in curriculum design and studies undertaken in IMC course content follow.

3.3.3 Graduate skills and attributes

Graduate skills (abilities) and attributes (qualities) have been identified and well documented for undergraduate programs (Barrie, 2007). While there is literature

on competencies for postgraduate programs in general, there is a paucity on managerial skills, specifically on IMC postgraduate coursework programs.

This study will document the first set of managerial skills that should underpin postgraduate coursework programs in IMC. Developing highly trained graduates, a stronger body of theoretical knowledge and cultivating a sound link between curricula and managerial skills for professional practice can contribute to the growth of the profession. While there is no postgraduate coursework "skills" framework, the principles on the discourse on undergraduate skills are presented as a frame of reference.

Barrie (2007) states that "universities around the world are increasingly concerned with ensuring that the students develop attributes which will better equip them for the world of work, and as members of society." He also explains that "generic outcomes are referred to by a variety of terms, including graduate attributes, core or key skills, and generic skills. For example, in Australia 'generic graduate attributes' have come to be accepted as being the skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable in a range of contexts and are acquired as a result of completing any undergraduate degree." In their seminal work on graduate attributes, Bowden et al., (2000) assert that "generic graduate attributes are the qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution. These attributes include but go beyond the disciplinary expertise or technical knowledge that has traditionally formed the core of most university courses. They are qualities that also prepare graduates as agents of social good in an unknown future."

The work of many scholars and reports underpin the implementation and methods of evaluation of graduate skills and attributes (Bennett, et al., 1999; Bowden, et al., 2000; Knight and Yorke 2004; Bates 2005; Robley, et al., 2005; Cleaery, et al., 2007; Erickson 2008). Their work deliberates on work-integrated learning, patterns of core and generic skills provision and the mapping of generic curricula. Knight and Yorke (2004) have made a seminal contribution to challenging the role and responsibility of higher education to the graduate labour market. They conceptualise employability as more than skills and wish-lists, suggesting students should be developed for employability and through work-integrated learning. Their work contributes to how graduate skills and attributes would tangibly manifest in learning outcomes.

Incorporating post-graduate managerial skills as a measureable learning outcome presents a challenge. How graduate managerial skills will be integrated into the curriculum and how would it be evaluated is an inquiry of this study.

3.4 Curriculum design: Epistemology and principles

In his introduction to his chapter on "Constructing learning by aligning teaching: constructive alignment", Biggs (2003) suggests that "the key to reflecting on the way we teach is to base our thinking on what we know about how students learn. The inclination in this study is based on the constructivist model of learning where students are active in creating meaning and interpreting occurrences and phenomena. The constructivist model explains that

"(t) he teaching context is based on the understanding and acceptance that university study is a forum where errors may be made in order to learn. Learning is constructed as a result of the learner's activities. Activities that are appropriate to achieving the curriculum objectives result in a deep approach to learning. Good teaching supports those appropriate activities, thereby encouraging students to adopt a deep approach" (Biggs, p.11).

Constructivism "emphasises what students have to do, rather than on how they represent knowledge. Both emphasise that the student creates knowledge – call it "constructing knowledge" or constituting knowledge' as you will – so that knowledge is not imposed or transmitted by direct instruction" (Biggs, 2003, p. 13). He went on to add that "knowledge is created by the student's learning activities, their approaches to learning. The low cognitive level of engagement deriving from the surface approach yields fragmented outcomes that do not convey the meaning of the encounter, whereas the deep approach yields the meaning at least as the student construes it. The surface approach is therefore to be discouraged, the deep approach encouraged" (2003).

Mentokowski and Associates (2000) assert that "learning that lasts refers to an integration of learning, development, and performance …. Where faculty and staff should conceptualise, design, practice, experience, evaluate and improve curriculum – all as an ongoing process."

They pose four main questions that need to be addressed in designing a curriculum for learning:

1) "What is most important for these students to know and how can these be expressed? (An issue of goals and structure).

2) What can be the best ways for students to learn? (This relates to the teaching-learning process).

3) How can this learning experience be evaluated in terms of whether the student has learned it? (An assessment issue).

4) How can feedback improve the effectiveness of teaching? (Evaluation)"

3.4.1 Fundamental issues in curriculum design

Discussion and debates are ongoing, and will continue in the dynamic field of curriculum. Fraser and Bosanquet (2006, p. 269) cite the view of Schubert (1986) that "(t)he term curriculum is familiar in the context of school education. Although the word 'remains contentious in terms of definition and delineation amongst curriculum theorists, it is part of the common parlance of the school system." They assert that "there is a lack of shared understanding which has the potential to impact on the implementation of curriculum change and development" (p. 270). They highlight the views of academics' understanding of the curriculum in four categories where the fourth category is "a dynamic and interactive process of teaching and learning" and where the curriculum is viewed as "a collaborative *process of learning*, with teacher and student acting as co-constructors of knowledge" (2006, p.272). This category for curriculum development is well-suited to the postgraduate level where students are more mature, or may have worked or are working in an IMC related area, and therefore can make a strong contribution as co-constructors of knowledge.

Curriculum development includes many considerations; on the one end of the continuum on profiling learners and clear course aims and learning outcomes to the other end of evaluating curricula and assuring ongoing quality (Donnan, 2008). The steps involved in Donnan's model are graphically illustrated in Figure 3.2. The curriculum process begins with profiling learners, clarifying course aims and learning outcomes, determining course content and structure, selecting teaching methods to evaluate the curriculum and assuring ongoing quality. Donnan's (2008) model is the conceptual framework against which the IMC postgraduate curriculum in this study will be analysed.

Figure 3.2 Considerations in curriculum development
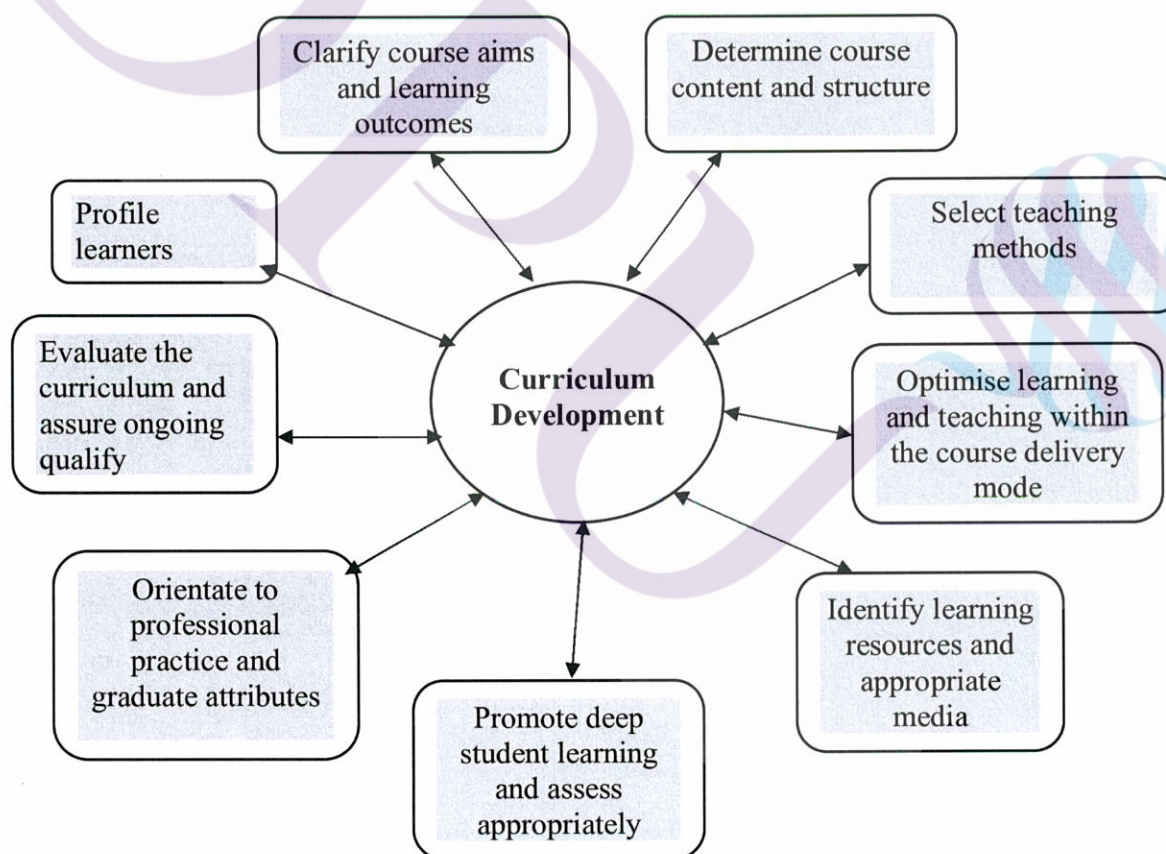
Source: Donnan (2008)

The questions that should be considered in the design of individual subjects towards the academic curriculum are outlined by the University of Otago in Figure 3.3. This model offers more detailed considerations in subject design and includes subject learning outcomes, assessment framework, teaching and learning progress and content and sequence. Attention to these details in subject development and design is fundamental to sound curriculum development and design and adds to a holistic perspective in curriculum design.

Figure 3.3 Questions to consider in the design of individual subjects

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

What are the goals of a university education? That is, what are your university's obligations to scholarship, students, and the wider community?

What are the objectives of the degree to which your course/model belong? How does your course/module relate to others in the same programme?

Who are your students? What are their educational, social & cultural backgrounds? Why are they taking your course? What are their needs?

What are the pre-requisite and co-requisite skills, knowledge and values?

How does all of this translate into learning outcomes appropriate to your content?

TEACHING-LEARNING PROGRESS

What is your role in student learning?

What activities will promote student involvement and interest in the subject?

What approaches do students take to their study? What strategies can you use to foster a deep approach to their study?

How can you best use lectures, tutorials, labs, etc. to foster student involvement in the subject?

What resources do you need to support the teaching-learning environment?

How will you monitor/evaluate teaching and learning so as to enhance the quality of the learning experience?

KNOWLEDGE BASE OF THE SUBJECT

Knowledge, concepts

ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

What material will you cover? Why this material? To what level/depth should you go?

How will you organize this material into units or blocks? (By topics? Themes? Competencies? Problems? Case studies?

For each unit or block, what are the specific objectives? Are these objectives derivable from the major or learning outcomes?

How will you sequence the course units?

What freedom will you provide students to select material for themselves to study?

CONTENT AND SEQUENCE

What tasks will be set? (Essays? Tests? Projects? Oral presentation? Etc.) What student qualities/objectives are to be assessed in each task? Are these qualities/objectives derivable from the learning outcomes?

What grade are marking criteria will be used?

What provisions have been made for self-assessment?

Source: University of Otago (2007)

3.5 IMC Postgraduate curriculum: An international perspective

In their 2008 study on course syllabi, Kerr et al., undertook an analysis of syllabi from universities in six countries; Australia, Korea, New Zealand, Taiwan, United Kingdom and the United States. Their study considered both undergraduate and postgraduate programs. The published results seem to be aggregated results for both levels of study, which means that while the results indicate trends and offer a good insight into areas of focus, the results for only the postgraduate courses are not clearly observable. However, their study presents trends in IMC higher education and creates a point of reference for analysis in this study.

In their study, they rated the IMC content of subjects, or what they termed courses across six countries which exhibits similar trends in IMC course content. Table 3.1 represents the mix and focus of courses. Of particular note IMC, creative, to some extent media, measurement, advertising, public relations, direct marketing and sales promotion are taught in most courses in the six countries.

Table 3.1.   Rating of IMC content across six countries

TOPIC	AUS				KOREA			NZ				TAIWAN				UK			USA		
COUNTRY																					
Role of IMC	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
IMC in marketing	X				X	X			X								X		X	X	
Perception of IMC	X																			X	
Consumer behaviour	X	X			X			X	X			X				X			X		
Organisation of IMC	X							X												X	
Situation analysis	X				X			X											X		
STP	X				X			X	X										X		
Product life cycle	X				X			X													
Communication theory	X	X			X			X	X	X		X	X			X	X		X		
Branding	X				X			X	X			X	X			X			X	X	
Database	X				X	X						X	X						X		
How IMC works	X															X					
Plan/develop IMC	X											X	X			X			X	X	
Implementation	X															X					
Objectives	X	X						X	X	X		X				X			X	X	
Budget	X	X			X			X	X			X				X			X	X	
Creative	X	X	X		X			X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X	X	X
Media	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X			X	X	X
Measurement	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X		X	X
AdResltesting	X				X			X											X		
Ethics/social	X	X			X			X	X								X		X		
Legal	X							X	X										X		
International	X				X			X	X										X		
Advertising/corporate advertising	X	X			X	X	X	X				X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
PR	X	X	X			X		X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	
DM	X	X	X		X			X	X			X				X	X	X	X	X	
Sales promo	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X				X	X	X	X	X	
Personal selling	X	X			X	X						X				X			X		
Internet interactive	X	X			X			X	X											X	
Sponsorship	X				X			X	X			X				X			X		
Conference	X																				
Word of mouth		X																			
Future Challenges	X																				

KEY: XXXX   All courses have content topic   100%
　　　XXX   All courses have content topic   67-99%
　　　XX   All courses have content topic   34-66%
　　　X   All courses have content topic   1-33%

Source: Kerr, et al., 2008

On IMC content they clustered their results as shown in Table 3.2 depicting the major areas of marketing, IMC, communication, planning and tools

Table 3.2. Modularisation of IMC content

	Modularisation of IMC		
Major IMC area	**Topics within area**	**Major IMC area**	**Topics within area**
Marketing	IMC in marketing Consumer behaviour Situation analysis Segmentation, targeting and positioning Product life cycle	Planning components	Objectives Budget Creative Media Measurement
IMC	Role of IMC Perceptions of IMC Organisation of IMC Planning and implementing IMC Database marketing Branding	Marketing communication tools	Advertising Public relations/publicity Direct marketing Sale promotion Personal selling Internet communication Sponsorship Conference/trade shows/exhibits
Communication	Communication theory Ethics and social responsibility International perspective		

Source: Kerr, et al., 2008

Table 3.3 displays the findings of their study in terms of clustering IMC content by country.

Table 3.3: IMC cluster content by country

Country	Communication	Planning	Marcom tools	Marketing
Australia	30%	30%	25%	15%
Korea	25%	25%	25%	25%
New Zealand	30%	30%	25%	15%
Taiwan	33.3%	33.3%	33.3%	-
United Kingdom	80%	20%	-	-
United State	-	40%	40%	20%

Source: Kerr, et al., 2008

At the postgraduate level, Sauber et al., (2008) shared their experience in developing a Master's Degree in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) which they opine was prompted by the latest developments in marketing communications and the indicators in the sector. Using an interdisciplinary framework with emphasis on learning outcomes and not course levels, they found a realistic correlation between competencies and student learning. Their paper discussed the development of a steering committee, information collection and benchmarking, competency development process and the subject areas. The subject areas they identified for their Master's degree are recorded in Table 3.4.

Table: 3.4. Modularising the content of IMC courses

Subject Areas	
IMC principles	Direct marketing
Audience behaviour	Public relations
Brand development	Sales promotion
Communications research	Campaign strategy
Creative strategy	Ethics and regulations
Media planning	

Source: Sauber et al., (2008)

IMC English-medium postgraduate IMC curriculum in Thailand

As this study is based in Thailand, it is prudent that the offering of the only English medium postgraduate programme in Thailand be presented with three objectives; one, to document the offering; two, to present the course for analysis against those already discussed, and three, to analyse the offering against the findings in this study.

At the time of this study the only English-medium master's level program was offered by Dhurakij Pundit University International College (DPUIC) based in Bangkok. In terms of pedagogy the program positioned itself as an international program drawing on literature and teaching expertise from North America, Australia, Europe and Asia. In its epistemology, the program is positioned on IMC, marketing, management and strategy. With regard to its skills development, "the program prepares students for a cross-functional role as well as equips them with the unique skills needed to effectively integrate various communications approaches and tools" (DPUIC, 2009). Table 3.5 presents the program framework of the Master's

program of DPUIC, titled "Master of Arts in Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC).

Table 3.5 DPUIC: Master of Arts in Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

Core courses	Elective courses	Research courses
Creativity and Idea Strategy	Customer Relationship Management	Marketing Research
Strategic Marketing Management	Delivering Superior Customer Value	Independent Study in IMC
Consumer Behaviour Insights	Strategic Brand Management	
IMC Tools Development and Delivery	Customer Database and Interactive Marketing	
Strategic Integrated Marketing Communication Management	Strategic Management	

Source: DPUIC, 2009

Based on its epistemology, the program structure is weighted on subjects that cover IMC (strategy, tools and implementation/delivery), customer relationship management, consumer behaviour, marketing and marketing management, brand management and research.

3.6 Focus of this study

In comparison to the studies (Kerr et al., 2008 and Sauber et al., 2008), in this study, the English medium postgraduate programs were analysed by country, name of the degree to determine its focus and disciplinary home, for example, in the arts or humanities or social sciences and by subjects in the degree; details of

subjects were not analysed. These programs were taught mainly face-to-face with two universities offering their program in both modes, face-to-face and fully online.

The analysis of postgraduate curricula revealed that the highest number of programs was in the USA, followed by Asia, with Australia and the United Kingdom equal and then Europe. The percentage of IMC programs in the USA may be attributed to the growing maturity of IMC in the USA and the evidence of IMC growing across regions (Kerr et al., 2008). At the time of this analysis (2008) twenty English medium coursework postgraduate programs in IMC across Asia, Australia, the United Kingdom, Europe and the United States of America were analysed. Table 3.6 displays the countries/region and the number of the programs which were analysed in this study.

Table 3.6. Countries, number of IMC programs and percentage of total programs

Country/region	Number of programs	Percentage of total
Asia	3	15%
Australia	2	10%
Europe	1	5%
United Kingdom	2	10%
United States of America	12	60%
	20	100%

Source: Developed for this research

3.6.1 United States of America

The table below (Table 3.7) illustrates the emphasis on IMC, planning, marketing and "other" (single subjects of one-off elective subjects). The programs do not have a heavy focus on communication and marketing communication tools.

Table 3.7. Analysis of areas of focus in IMC postgraduate programs: United States

Analysis of areas of focus in IMC postgraduate programs: United States					
IMC-25%	**Planning-22.7%**	**Coms-9.1%**	**Marcom Tools -6.9%**	**Marketing – 18.1%**	**Other-18.2%**
IMC Branding Capstone unit in IMC Audit (IMC) Case studies in IMC Databases in IMC Digital communication Media Promotion Marcom management Relationship management Audience behaviour Creativity	Research Evaluation in IMC Internet Planning Message design Strategy	Communication Ethics Crisis communication Computers in communication	Public relations Direct marketing Sales promotion Advertising	Marketing management Sales management Business to business Consumer behaviour Marketing Cause marketing Multicultural marketing	Organisation behaviour Theory Internship Regulation and society Management Change management Finance Leadership Account planning

Source: Developed for this research

3.6.2 United Kingdom and Europe

The analysis of programs in the UK-Europe mix are displayed below in Table 3.8

Table 3.8 Analysis of areas of focus in IMC postgraduate programs: United Kingdom and Europe (2008)

Analysis of areas of focus in IMC postgraduate programs: United Kingdom					
IMC-18.75%	Planning-6.25%	Marcom Tools-6.25%	Communication-12.5%	Marketing-43.75%	Other-12.5%
Branding IMC Corporate reputation	Media	Advertising	Communication theory Ethics	Consumer behaviour Research Marketing Direct marketing Sales promotion Consumer protection Marketing management	Organisational behaviour Law

Source: Developed for this research

The UK-Europe region focuses heavily on marketing, with IMC next, communication and "other" and with relatively less weighting on planning and marketing communication tools.

3.6.3 Australia

The Australian landscape revealed that IMC has the strongest focus, with equal weight on planning, marketing communication tools and marketing. "Other subjects" are far less than the US, UK-Europe group. Table 3.9 below illustrates the Australian postgraduate programs.

Table 3.9 Analysis of areas of focus in Australian IMC postgraduate programs (2008)

Analysis of areas of focus in Australian IMC postgraduate program				
IMC-36%	**Planning - 18%**	**Marcom Tools- 18%**	**Marketing- 18%**	**Other-10%**
IMC Branding Theory Integrated Communication Campaigns	Research Strategy	Advertising Public relations	Marketing Management Consumer behaviour	Management

Source: Developed for this research

In Asia the focus is on IMC, marketing, marketing communication tools, planning, and communication. In a comparison, the trends across the two countries and two regions are displayed in Table 3.10

Table 3.10 Comparison of areas of focus by percentage in the US, UK and Europe, Australia and Asia (2008)

Country	IMC	Planning	Marcom Tools	Marketing	Communication	Other
USA	25%	22.7%	6.9%	18.1%	9.1%	18.2%
UK & Europe	18.75%	6.25%	6.25%	43.75%	12.5%	12.5%
Australia	36%	18%	18%	18%	-	10%
Asia	30%	15%	30%	15%	-	10%

Source: Developed for this research

The above table shows a range of between 25-36% in the area of IMC; close trends in planning between the USA, Australia and Asia; a substantial difference in marketing communication tools between Australia and Asia on the one hand and

the USA, UK and Europe on the other. Marketing is highly emphasised in the UK and Europe, whereas similar trends are evident in the US, Australia and Asia. Communication is underscored in the US and UK-Europe teaching and 'other' the largest component of choice is in the US, with similar proportions/levels in the UK-Europe combination, Australia and Asia.

3.7 Thai Higher Education

The complex realities of the 21st century and the needs of new generations and new marketplaces challenge higher education in Asia as it does elsewhere.

In his edited publication Sinlarat (2000) brought attention to higher education in Thailand where views were represented on the transition in and challenges to Thai higher education through social, economic and institutional change. The financial investment in Thai higher education is substantial; Sinlarat (2004, p. 218-219) indicates that "Thai higher education consumes almost half of the money spent on education and if higher education does not contribute significantly to society, it will be difficult to defend the investment in it." This challenges university management "to encourage and guide universities to accomplish the task of creating the knowledge and the educated citizenry that society needs" (ibid).

The most recent work by Sinlarat (2007 and 2008) is presented in this study to illustrate the development and discussion thus far on skills and attributes in Thai higher education. However, it only offers a perspective for undergraduate higher education in Thailand. There is little literature on the development or views on generic skills and attributes for postgraduate coursework study in Thailand. Sinlarat in his unpublished paper (2007) on "Creative and Productive Higher Education (CPHE):

New Model for Promoting Sustainable Development in Thailand" proposes an alternative concept for higher education in Thailand. This Creative and Productive philosophy is designed to develop a new generation of Thai graduates characterised by the following attributes:

- Critical Minds: the ability to think critically and make sound judgements

- Creative Minds: the ability to think creatively in Thai society with the capability to adapt foreign ideas for local consumption

- Productive Minds: the ability to produce local products for the enhancement of Thai society

- Responsible Minds: the ability to develop a sense of social responsibility and actively participate as a community to resolve issues in Thai society (p.10-11).

Consequently, the focus of higher education will be the development of the four (4) attributes. Sinlarat also expects higher education curricula to keep pace with technologies and innovations in line with the new Thai society.

He proposed that the teaching and learning process should be based on:

- "Critically-Based Instruction: focuses on the development of critical thinking in the learner. Learner thinks for himself, reflects on ideas through writing and tests ideas

- Creative-Based Instruction: focusing on the development of new ideas and direction for work

- Productive-Based Instruction: focusing on learners developing ideas or academic work as their own product

- Responsibility-Based Instruction: focusing on the learner developing a responsible consciousness towards society and the environment. The learner also develops an appreciation for morality, ethics, culture and traditions and to problem solve societal issues" (2008, p. 11-12).

Sinlarat concluded that sustainable development in Thailand will be attained once higher education introduces the Creative and Productive philosophy into teaching and learning. He also suggested that graduate education should be diverse. He added that the factors that determine growth in education are the demand for academic knowledge, professional knowledge and manpower. At the introduction of professional programs, the professional trend was designed to advance professional competencies, rather than knowledge discovery and research. He documented what is widely discussed in literature that "when universities were first established, it was clearly recognised that they would produce graduates with the characteristics required of government officials.... The qualifications of graduates had to change; yet the goals and the direction of the changes were not clear." He added that 'Thai higher education has always been criticised for being alienated from society and for failing to ensure that universities serve society" (ibid).

The UNESCO report (2006) on Higher Education in South East Asia acknowledged the major changes in Thai education and its impact. Of specific interest to this study is the point that higher education must design itself to address the needs of knowledge-based economies and should meet both local and global standards. Much criticism has been levelled at inter-institutional twinning programs with universities abroad in that there is not much local relevance (Bovonsiri, 2006). This

study addresses the concern by internationally contextualising IMC and the related aspects of this study, but is also cognisant of the local needs and applications.

The former Deputy Minister of Education, Dr Varakorn Samakoses (October 2008) in his address on the "Future of postgraduate study: Directions to develop quality graduates under the current economic situation" recommended that Thailand must urgently review their postgraduate offerings which he described as "super bachelor" degrees. He challenged higher education to prepare better quality postgraduate programmes and graduates. Table 3.11 indicates his view on what he termed the new age education demands.

Table 3.11 Recommendations for better quality postgraduate education in new age education

Recommendations for better quality postgraduate education in new age education	
Relevancy	Good governance
Change	Innovation
Creativity	Benchmarking
Networking	Management
Learning	Searching
Value creation	Relationship

Source: Samakoses (2008)

He asserted that learning should be stimulated by encouragement and that a compulsory system in education should develop skills, knowledge, value, behaviour and attitude. He emphasised the need of sound research skills especially in the developing cyber world.

On curriculum matters, he recommended that curriculum must be selected and sourced to match the real need of the country's market and the future. As with

other countries, a national qualification framework should be developed which is underpinned by creating cyber networks, access to lectures, journals, databases, textbooks, reading lists, other references and available to students both from their home and at university, making education accessible to students. He asserted that "(e)ducation is expensive but ignorance is more expensive." Similar to the work of Birch (1998) discussed earlier in this chapter, Samakoses (2008) beckoned higher education to develop and create an open system mentality.

Thailand's former Prime Minister, Anand Panyarachun in his presentation to the Cambridge Society, Oxford Society and Harvard Club, of Belgium (2008), identified education as the pillars of sustainable democracy and the future demands new thinking about education. He noted that "(a) struggle in many developing countries is to channel resources to make education more relevant to the tasks of daily life, to change the emphasis from rote memorization to creativity and independent thinking" (p. 9).

Focusing now on Dhurakij Pundit University (DPU) in the private higher education sector, a short historical overview of Thai higher education is presented. In tracing the historical development of higher education in Thailand, Praphamontripong (2010) undertook an empirical analysis of the different types of higher education institutions in Thailand. Under the private higher education sector, DPU was categorised as a 'semi-elite' institution, where semi-elite institutions are described simply as "those between elite and non-elite' (p. 133). In describing the 'semi-elite' institutions, better insight is gained on the characteristics of such institutions. Semi-elite educational institutions were generally launched by business elites. In describing its competitive positioning, Praphamontripong (2010) believed that most private

higher education institutions have a sound reputation and "a comparable reputation to most good public universities and usually enrol students with high socio-economic status." (ibid). Competition is mainly against what are termed "second-tier public universities. Praphamontripong (2010) cites the work of Demurat (2008) and states that "given that most students who fail to enter the top national public universities usually consider semi-elite PHEIs [private higher education institutions] alongside second tier public ones" (ibid).

In terms of the teaching focus, PHEIs are strong proponents of 'hands-on' and experiential learning. In the same study, the work of Clark (1998) is cited and academic programs in semi-elite institutions are described as "up-to-date with their market niches….since typical semi-elite PHEIs are market-oriented and professionally run, they are well-connected to their market employers and very aggressive in the market competition." As a benchmark for its standards, PHEI's seek accreditation with national and international bodies and "they pay serious attention to internationalization, institutional rankings as well as domestic and international partnerships" (ibid, p.134).

In the empirical analysis, DPU is categorised as a semi-elite university and one of the "6 leading Thai private universities" in Thai higher education. Given the semi-elite status and trajectory of DPU, it implies that with its sensitivity and open attitude to the environment in which it operates, it was the first university to launch an English-medium postgraduate (master's) level program in IMC, taking the lead in English medium IMC postgraduate education in Thailand.

3.8 Conceptual framework in this study

The conceptual framework by Donnan (2008) and the subject framework by University of Otago (2007) together with the constructs offered by Sinlarat (2007) on Thai education forms the curriculum conceptual framework for this study.

3.9 Chapter summary

This chapter presented the discourse and issues on curriculum in higher education with the objective of creating a conceptual framework for the study. Concepts and a model for subject development was presented only and not other aspects of curriculum such as the role of academic support programs, student clubs and societies, the library etc. which by the definition of curriculum, involves the entire learning experience. Literature was reviewed on international studies in IMC curricula and the primary research and analysis undertaken for this study was presented. The literature on Thai education proffered a snapshot of various issues in Thai higher education. Chapter 4 introduces and discusses the research methodology for this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the process of working through the research design and methodologies to undertake the research in this study. It presents the epistemological and theoretical perspectives underpinning the study and the rationale for the research methodology and methods. Considerations in and for data collection, data analysis, reliability, validity and ethical considerations are presented.

There were five sets (groups) of participants in this study. The study was undertaken in Thailand where the researcher does not reside, and therefore cultural protocols, research ethics, international convention and logistical considerations were fundamental considerations. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the research methodology. Chapter five presents the findings in two parts, Part I and Part II.

Figure 4.1 previews the structure of the chapter.

Figure 4.1 Structure map of Chapter 4

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         4.1. Introduction           │
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                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│      4.2 Research methodology        │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        4.3 Research methods          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│         4.4 Data collection          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│       4.5 Data analysis strategy     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   4.6 Validity, reliability and ethics │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ 4.7 Protocols and international conventions │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     4.8 Logistical considerations    │
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                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│     4.9 Limitations in the study     │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  │
                  ▼
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        4.10 Chapter summary          │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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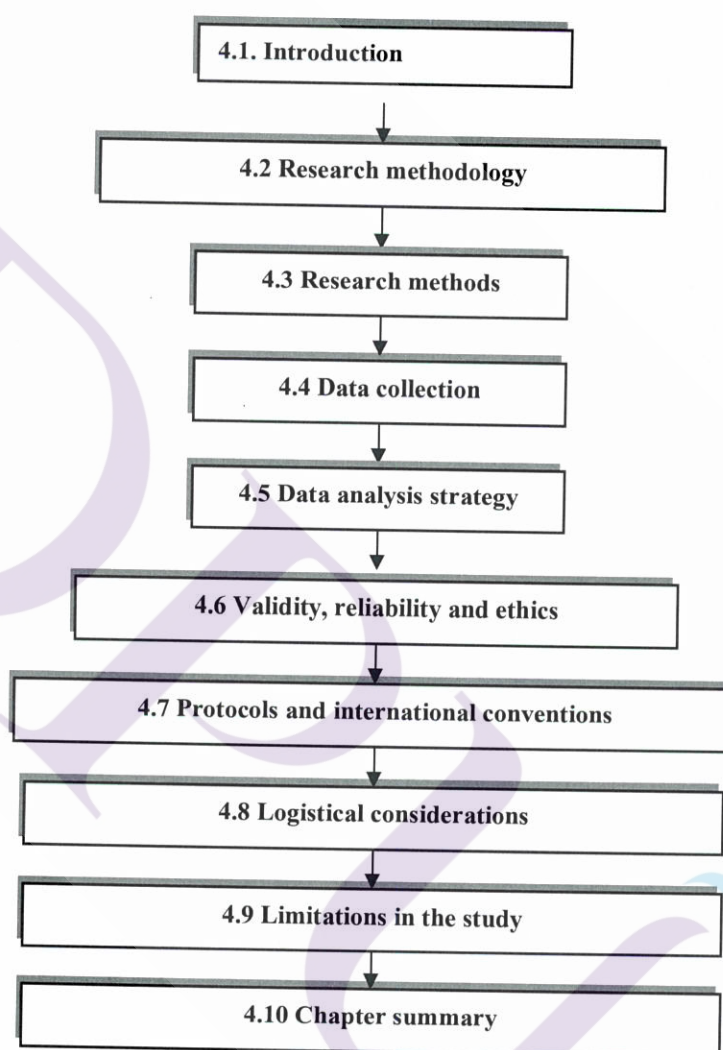
Source: Developed for this research

The research questions seek to advance the view on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, required managerial skills and its link to postgraduate coursework curricula. The research design guides this investigation through a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods using focused interviews.

For convenience, the research issues are repeated from Chapter 1, (Table 1.4) below:

(Idem): Table 1.4 Research questions, research objectives and research foci

Research questions	Research objectives	Research foci
Is IMC a strategic management function?	To advance a model for IMC as a strategic management function	Establish whether IMC is practiced as a strategic management function
What are the managerial skills required for management level IMC professional practice?	To build a framework of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice	Identify the managerial skills expected of an IMC professional to work at a "management" level
What are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curriculum in IMC?	To propose considerations for a managerial level skills based curriculum for postgraduate English medium curriculum in IMC	Analyse curriculum against expected managerial skills in strategic management focused professional practice.

Source: Developed for this research

4.2 Research Methodology: Qualitative-Interpretive research framework

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used in the study. It is well established that good research is underpinned by methods best suited to obtain the data needed for the problem, which is sometimes quantitative, sometimes qualitative, and sometimes mixed. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were

used in this study to investigate the extent of the understanding of the relationship between IMC as a strategic management function, managerial skills required and post-graduate coursework curricula in English medium IMC (master's) programs. Quantitative research will be undertaken through a survey using an electronic questionnaire. The purpose of using the self-completion questionnaire was to ascertain the following:

1. Demographic data on the respondents

2. Respondents' opinions on IMC practice in Thailand

3. Respondent's opinions on managerial skills required in professional practice in Thailand

4. Respondent's opinions on the relationship between postgraduate curricula and professional practice

5. Respondent's views on the skills and attributes developed in their postgraduate studies

According to Finn et al., (2000) the use of both these methodologies is complementary and Richards (2005, p. 36) points out that "qualitative and quantitative data do not inhabit different worlds... most qualitative studies will need both sorts of data. Table 4.2 illustrates the use of mixed methods followed in this study.

While both methodologies of data collection were used, each had a different weighting in this study; the qualitative data were weighted more than the quantitative data.

4.2.1 Qualitative methodology

One of the key issues identified in this study is that IMC is an area which is not very well-developed and therefore has weak conceptual foundations (noted in earlier discussion). Quantitative research may not be able to explore issues in this study as well as qualitative research which will offer deeper and more meaningful insight. Srijumpa et al., (2004, p.60) suggest that "qualitative methods are essential at several stages of developing a comprehensive research stream about any topic." As a cultural consideration in this study focus interviews rather than focus groups, were undertaken " as Thais are used to verbal expression.. and many respondents would not be comfortable with public confrontation which might come up in focus group situations where they [may have to] complain about service delivery failure (ibid, 63).

In addition subjective responses of participants offer deeper insight into the reality of the situation being investigated. The study could be replicated based on the research methodology and identified issues using different, but equally knowledgeable respondents.

4.3 Research methods

Survey research was used to collect quantitative data and focus interviews were conducted to explore deeper meaning and understanding of the relationship based on the findings of the survey. In addition, due consideration was given to the following:

- that the prospective respondents may have completed their post-graduate studies in the last ten years or so, and therefore their memory on academic study may need prompting;

- that from a language perspective, the prospective respondents may be communicating more in the Thai language than in the English language and therefore may need more time to answer questions in English, and

- that the focus interviews would verify and give deeper insight and understanding to the research questions.

4.3.1 Survey research

There is a paucity of literature on the relationship between the IMC-strategic management paradigm and its integration in postgraduate coursework programs in IMC. To gather data that would provide a holistic view, both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were used; in the quantitative methodology a questionnaire was used. The questionnaire is considered best used where "people" self report or provide subjective responses which are the best sources of information (Sproull, 1998 p. 164). Generally, questionnaires provide quantitative data; however, open-ended questions can be incorporated for analytical purposes if explanations and clarifications are required. Fin et al., (2000) suggest that in survey research all relevant variables should be identified and operationalised in the research design; in other words, what types of questions are included and for what reasons, for example, in terms of content, closed or open-ended questions, structured or unstructured questions.

4.3.1.1 The questionnaire for this study

The questionnaire (Appendix II) was designed and developed specifically for this study and for self-completion by respondents. The overall design of the

questionnaire aimed to address selected issues in the relationship between professional practice and considerations for curricula. The questionnaire is divided into five sections. Table 4.3 below demonstrates the sections and their foci.

Table 4.1 Sections of the questionnaire

Questionnaire sections	Questionnaire focus
Section A	Demographic data on the respondents
Section B	The personal opinions of the respondents on IMC practice in Thailand
Section C	The opinions of the respondents on attributes and skills required in professional practice in Thailand
Section D	The opinions of the respondents on the relationship between postgraduate curricula and professional practice
Section E	The views of the respondents on the attributes and skills developed in their postgraduate studies

Source: Developed for this research

The questionnaire comprised closed questions and focused on the details in the table above. While there are different views on whether the demographics of respondents should be discussed first or last, in this study it was deemed important that it be discussed first with the objective of illustrating the relatively high level of education and jobs of the respondents, implying a knowledgeable set of respondents. With this calibre of respondents, the assumption is that the responses are from credible and well-informed sources. However, careful attention was given to how data were reported to ensure that the participants remained anonymous and that any potentially sensitive information was carefully considered.

For the collection of a participant's feelings on or examination of particular issues, a 5-point Likert Scale was used in selected questions. Likert scales are commonly used when behaviour, attitude or perception is being measured (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005). The Likert scale was used to ascertain what participants thought of identified attributes; those that they may have developed in professional practice. Ratings included not at all, somewhat, well trained, very well trained and exceptionally well trained with the focus on establishing the intensity of attributes through a scale. It was expected that the participants would reflect on the intensity of their professional experience in the attributes that were being rated. The questionnaire is designed using the computer program Survey Monkey (see www.surveymonkey.com).

4.3.1.2 The rationale for the electronic questionnaire and the use of Survey Monkey

Research design must take cognisance of and incorporate a number of important considerations, for example, access to relevant people, the variety, array and range of views and perspectives sought, ethics in research and of data collection and the procedures for data analysis (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). This advice was heeded in the study as the researcher was based in Australia and through planned fieldtrips to Thailand undertook the study. To ensure maximum output during the field research periods and to minimise the risk of hampering the research design, the research process or the validity of the study, research visits to Thailand were carefully planned and negotiated. Other considerations included logistics and respondent availability; for example the demographic data was gained through an electronic

survey in order to maximise the use of the allocated time for focus interviews. The researcher also considered the possibility that while the respondents were educated through the English medium in their postgraduate study, after their studies they may not have used English as intensively as they had during their study. The electronic survey facilitated in familiarising the respondents with the study and the language used in the study. Respondents were given two weeks to complete and submit the questionnaire.

The survey was undertaken through SurveyMonkey, a web browser program which allows respondents to answer at their own pace during the period of the survey. It also offered a series of question types including multiple choices; rating scales, drop-down menus, etc. Responses were categorised and basic statistical information was calculated.

There are both advantages and disadvantages of e-questionnaires. Speed and ease of reaching potential respondents at minimal cost and the speed of data collection highlight the advantages of using e-questionnaires (Jennings, 2001). It is also pointed out that there are disadvantages; these include the extent to which the population being studied use information technology, possibility of data corruption as a result of virus transition and the possibility of non-genuine replies as a result of computer hacking activities (Jennings, 2001). Noting the disadvantages of e-questionnaires, the following were addressed to limit the disadvantage:

- potential respondents must all have email addresses and some IT knowledge
- virus detection soft-ware offers a high level of protection against data corruption. In addition, SurveyMonkey employs multiple layers of security so

that the data resides behind the latest firewall and intrusion technology www.surveymonkey.com)

- the chance of receiving non-genuine replies was minimal because of the education level and professional standing of the respondents and their anticipated commitment to the profession, the relatively small amount of time required to complete the questionnaire and the type of information sought.

4.3.2 Focused interviews

4.3.2.1 Rationale for the focused interviews

In Phase 1 of the study twenty three prospective respondents were invited to complete the e-questionnaire. Twenty returned the questionnaire; there was a non-response of three. In Phase 2, thirty-eight appointments were sought, and thirty-five responded positively, with one participant as an agency executive and representing a professional body and another responding as a professional practitioner and an academic. All thirty five interviews were successfully completed. The data gathered from Phase One and Two are discussed in Chapter 5, Part I and Part II respectively.

Within qualitative methodologies, the interview is considered a useful method of data collection; it enables the researcher "to explore the perspectives and perceptions of various stakeholders and publics (Daymon and Holloway 2002, p. 166). Kayrooz and Trevitt affirm that interviews offer the best source of information where "people self-report on their understanding, opinions, attitudes and beliefs" (2005, p. 8). The information gathered from interviews was the participant's subjective view, based on their interpretations of their experience and conveyed in their own words and speech styles (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). Similar to other

data gathering techniques, the interview has advantages and disadvantages (listed below). According to Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005 and Frankfort-Nachmias, 2008 the advantages and disadvantages are:

Advantages:

- a relationship or rapport is developed between the interview and interviewee
- the depth to which topics/questions can be explored can be determined as the conversation evolves
- the interviewer can seek clarification when participants show a lack of understanding or are unclear
- data collected from the interview is situated within its own social context
- interviews provide a higher response rate than questionnaires
- interviews can be recorded electronically

Disadvantages:

- interviews are labour intensive and costly
- the interviewer is dependent on the keenness and willingness of the interviewee to report
- interviews are subject to interruptions
- lack of standardisation in data collection processes makes interviewing vulnerable to interviewer bias
- unlike in mail or e-questionnaires, the interviewee has no anonymity. Consequently the interviewee may feel threatened or intimidated by the interviewer.

Types of interviews

Different types of interviews may be undertaken; interviews are arranged along a continuum from formal to informal and may be structured, semi-structured or unstructured (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005). In this study, a semi-structured or focused interview was used to collect data from participants. Focused interviews are often used in qualitative research and were selected for the following reasons:

- The participants in this study were known to have been involved in a particular experience (postgraduate studies and working in IMC)

- The interview focused on the participants' experiences regarding the situation under study

- Participants were given considerable flexibility and liberty to express their views on the situation presented to them

- The researcher was able to obtain details of personal reactions

As a result of the location of the researcher in Australia and the participants in Bangkok, Thailand, the researcher offered the participants the option of face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews or online interviews (through Skype). Six open ended questions designed and developed specifically for this study were asked of all participants in Groups 1-4 during the focused interview. In each instance permission was sought from the participant to have their responses electronically recorded. In anticipation, should this not have been allowed, back-up comprehensive hand written notes would have replaced the recording.

Sample design

Sample design involves the selection of a technique to choose the population in the research. Table 4.4 below shows two types of sample designs available to researchers; each type has a choice of three techniques that may be used:

Table 4.2 Considerations in sample design

Sample Design	
Probability sampling	Nonprobability sampling
↓	↓
Simple sampling	Convenience sampling
↓	↓
Systematic sampling	Purposive sampling
↓	↓
Stratified sampling	Quota sampling

Source: Frankfort-Nachmias 2008

In probability sampling all units of a population have the same chance or probability to be included in the sample. In nonprobability sampling (also known as qualitative sampling) it is not possible to ensure the probability that each unit of a population may have had a similar chance of being included in the sample (Frankfort-Nachmias 2008). A purposive nonprobability sampling technique was used in this research design. The choice of purposive sampling was based on the researcher being

able to select those individuals and organisations that would have yielded the most information and are most relevant on the topic under investigation. According to Somekh and Lewin (2005, p. 219) "in purposive sampling, cases are handpicked for a specific reason." In this study participants were handpicked for their knowledge, level of education and experience in IMC. In the researcher's opinion, the participants were considered relevant for the research topic (Leedy and Ormrod 2005).

4.3.2.2 Questions for the focused interviews

The following questions developed specifically for this study were asked to four of the five research groups in this study; professionals at account executive levels, agency management, professional bodies and academics:

1. Is IMC a *strategic management function?*

2. What *managerial skills* must practitioners in IMC have (with postgraduate qualifications) to contribute to effective business management?

3. What should be added to postgraduate *curricula* in IMC to enhance these skills for professional practice?

4. What *knowledge* should postgraduates in IMC have to be effective in professional practice?

5. What are the *current and future trends* in IMC in Thailand?

6. In what Thai sectors (private, public or non-profit) will there be a *demand* for IMC?

The question posed to the fifth group, policy makers in Thai higher education was: What are the issues in higher degree curriculum development and design in Thailand? The intention of this question was to obtain a deeper

understanding of the issues through the insight of these high powered, highly experienced and knowledgeable individuals. Where a deeper understanding was needed by the researcher, questions leading in that direction were asked to explore or probe further.

4.3.2.3 Structure of the interviews

The recording of the interviews, setting up the recording equipment and the recording of one set of comprehensive back-up notes was undertaken by the scribe. A second set was written by the researcher but was more in the form of structural notes in its format so that the researcher could focus more on the interview. This enabled the researcher to introduce herself, re-introduce the aims and objectives of the study and, where applicable, remind the respondents of the confidentially and anonymity agreement. Thereafter the interview proceeded, with it being recorded on tape and with two sets of hand-written support notes.

4.4 Data collection

4.4.1. When, where, from whom and in what form were the data collected?

The data were collected in July and October 2008 in Bangkok. There were five categories of participants (discussed later). The e-questionnaire in this study provided an opportunity for the use of quantitative analysis of salient features of the study. Data that were collected in numeric form enabled the researcher to identify and test basic relationships between variables. Statistical tables and graphic representations were used to represent these relationships. From these data it was possible to illustrate data in pie charts, bar graphs, distribution tables and cross

tabulations for data analysis. In the focus interviews, data were recorded electronically on an EDIROL which was regarded as a highly reliable and sensitive tape recorder extensively used by journalists and other professionals. The reliability of the instrument was a fundamental consideration as the primary method of data collection was recorded interviews. It was anticipated that this would be the safest option and would minimise the risk of non-recording or badly recorded or contaminated data. The recordings were transcribed verbatim.

4.4.2 Composition of participants

The categorisation of the five groups facilitated data collection across a range of professionals for their expertise either in IMC, higher education or curriculum matters in Thailand. The same questions were asked of four of the groups (Groups 1-4) with a single question posed to the high-level professionals in Thai higher education. Composition of the participants was:

1. Group 1: Thai professional practitioners
2. Group 2: Executives of IMC related agencies
3. Group 3: Executives of Thai professional bodies
4. Group 4: Thai academics teaching in IMC from Thai universities, and
5. Group5: Senior policy makers in Thai higher education

Prior to the study being formalised, the feasibility of finding participants for this study was undertaken through networking in the IMC fraternity in Bangkok. Through this process it was established that there were sufficient participants to pursue the study. While the number of the survey participants is

relatively low and does not represent the whole population , as an exploratory study the findings make a contribution to the field. Perry (1998) suggests that for a PhD thesis, 35-50 interviews are required. The study anticipated interviewing professional practitioners, agency executives, presidents of professional bodies, academics teaching specifically in postgraduate IMC programs and policy makers in Thai Higher Education.

Professional practitioners: Professional practitioners were chosen based on their having a Master's qualification in IMC or a related area through English-medium study and who were working at an account management level. Twenty professional practitioners were interviewed.

Agency executives: Agency executives were introduced to the researcher through the informal network of the professional practitioners. Contact was then made to invite the executives to participate in the study. Executives were included in this study based on their approval and willingness to participate. This method of introduction through a network, and seeking voluntary participation was considered appropriate based on the work of Srijumpa et al., (2004) on the strong traditions of business executive access and secrecy in Asian organisations. The following categories were included in the agency cluster; there were 4 interviews in this group; direct marketing , advertising, public relations and a media house.

Professional body presidents or representatives: Presidents of IMC related professional bodies were identified and invited to participate. Participation was voluntary. As IMC worldwide does not have a professional body of its own under the auspicious of IMC, the professional bodies of the component parts of IMC, direct marketing, advertising and public relations were considered in this study. In addition,

as an IMC-strategic management paradigm is being tested, it was deemed pertinent that the Thailand Management Association be interviewed as well. At this stage, the other two component parts of IMC, namely, sales promotion and personal selling have not yet formed professional bodies, and therefore were not considered. While five interviews were arranged, only four eventuated. Despite extensive and early contact through email and telephone for appointment arrangements (together with the option of a telephone interview from either Australia or Thailand), the Public Relations Society of Thailand finally did not respond and is recorded as a non-response in this study. Interviews were held with the executives or representative of the executive committee of the

- Thailand Management Association
- Marketing Association of Thailand
- Advertising Association of Thailand
- Thai Direct Marketing Association

Academics: Academics who taught in IMC focused postgraduate studies were identified through the IMC academic fraternity and invited to participate. Participation was voluntary. Five Thai academics who were involved in postgraduate IMC programs from three universities in Thailand were interviewed.

Policy makers in Thai Higher Education: Based on the paper presented by the Thai Deputy Minister of Education (Samakoses, 2008) a meeting was sought to explore further his views on curriculum policy in Thai Higher education. The Deputy Minister volunteered to participate in the study. On the Deputy Minister's recommendation, two other Thai Higher Education respondents volunteered to

participate. The three respondents in this group comprised the Deputy Minister of Education, the Deputy Secretary-General for the Commission on Higher Education and a senior advisor on curriculum matters to the Commission on Higher Education.

While 38 interviews were anticipated, there was a non-response from the Public Relations Society of Thailand; and two middle management professionals who were also teaching in IMC, responded as middle management professionals and academics. While there were 37 responses, there were 35 individuals who were interviewed, with one representing a professional body and an agency executive, and the other a professional practitioner and an academic. In total, the number of interviews met the requirement recommended by Perry (1998).

4.5 Data analysis strategy

The collected data in this study came from two sources; the e-questionnaire and the focused interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative techniques were used to analyse the data.

For the questionnaire descriptive statistics was used to analyse the data and the process for the reduction of the data in the focus interviews was undertaken through content analysis which included the collection of raw data from focus interviews (audiotapes); processed data (transcribing the interviews verbatim), developing themes from content and analysing the relationship among the themes, the theoretical propositions and the concepts used from the literature review in this study.

Noting the point made by Miles and Haberman (1984) that qualitative data is in the form of words and not numbers, the data were analysed following the action

or steps suggested by them. The **first step** involved the reduction of data so that a story could be told. The focus in this first step is in making the decision of which data are relevant to the complexity and content of the study. The **second step** dealt with the assembly and presentation of data as visual displays, such as charts and graphs, which clarify and focus the direction of the analysis of the gathered data for the purpose of this study. The analysis of data and visuals from the e-questionnaire were developed based on this step. The **third step** dealt with the researcher making and drawing possible themes and propositions through observing regularities, patterns and possible explanations relating to the themes in the study. The **fourth and final stage** was the verification of provisional conclusions.

The findings from the quantitative study (survey) are presented in Chapter 5, Part I and the findings from the qualitative study (focus interviews) are presented in Chapter 5, Part II.

4.6 Validity, reliability and ethical considerations

Validity is defined as the "degree to which the research measures what it intended to measure" (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005 p. 133). Leedy and Ormrod (2005) consider validity in qualitative research as dealing with accuracy, meaningfulness and credibility. Validity in qualitative research is often about people's perception and it is difficult to gauge whose perception should prevail (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005 and Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Validity is demonstrated through methodological excellence. Table 4.5, (sourced from Kayrooz and Trevitt 2005, p. 135) presents the measures undertaken to achieve validity in the study.

Table 4.3 Features of validity

Three features of validity			
Criterion	**Traditional term**	**Naturalistic term**	**Naturalistic approaches (in organisations and communities)**
Truth value	Internal validity	Credibility Authenticity	Aim for a fit between study purpose and the report of outcomes Use extensive, in-depth interactions Use a researcher diary Engage in successive checks on draft findings by participants
Applicability	External validity	Transferability	Seek substantial broad-ranging descriptions Triangulate at both conceptual framework and methods levels Use a researcher diary Use purposive sampling
Consistency	Reliability	Dependability	Ask whether others could do the same research and get much the same kind of answer

Source: Kayrooz and Trevitt (2005, p 135)

Types of validity

Validity, like reliability deals with the measurement of a construct. Constructs tend to be abstract and ambiguous and validity provides a sense of credibility or truthfulness to the construct being measured. In this study the construct being measured is IMC. The study is attempting to validate or measure the realness that IMC is a strategic management function. Neuman (2006) identifies four types of validity to measure the truthfulness of a construct. These are:

Face validity: this is the most basic form of validity that shows that the construct being measured is real. In other words, based on this study IMC has face validity since it has been established through research (Schultz, 1993; 2003; 2004 and

Kliatchko, 2002; 2005; 2008) and others) as being integral to customised corporate, business and functional strategies and involves short and long term planning strategies. In this study these aspects of IMC are being investigated to establish whether IMC is a strategic management function. Further evidence of face validity is also being sought through other attributes, such as managerial skills, that may be related to IMC as a strategic management function.

Content validity: Deals with the fullness of the content of a construct being defined for measurement. According to Neuman (2006 p. 193) the "measurement should sample all aspects of the construct and in this case IMC. Content validity includes three stages; identifying or defining the content of the construct being measured; sampling from all aspects of the definition of the construct; and, establishing indicators that cover all aspects of the defined construct. In this study the content validity of IMC was sought through the survey and focused interviews to establish the extent to which participants believed that IMC was as a strategic management function. IMC as defined in chapter 1 was measured to establish IMC as a strategic management function.

While a brief description of constructed validity was presented to present a full understanding of the concept of validity, it was not considered for this study. How various aspects or content of IMC as a strategic management worked together was not investigated.

Criterion validity: deals with the criterion used to show or indicate a construct accurately. This is achieved by comparing the indicator with another measure of the

same construct considered appropriate by the researcher. There are two types of criterion validity; concurrent validity in which the indicator has an association with a pre-existing validated indicator; and predictive validity which describes an indicator that can predict the future in relation to a construct.

Construct validity: the measuring of multiple indicators and how well they work together in relation to a construct. There are two types of construct validity; convergent validity: the indicators of a construct work together or are associated with each other; and discriminant validity where the indicators of a construct while working together are negatively related to an opposing construct.

Validity was sought through the coherence between the research topic, research design and in the way the results and conclusions were interpreted, presented and communicated.

Truthfulness and realism underpin validity. In essence this means how well the research issue fits into its context in reality. Neuman (2006) suggests that validity presents the challenge of how the social reality being investigated and evaluated corroborates with the concepts that researchers use to explore and understand it. In this study, against the features of validity espoused by Kayrooz and Trevitt (2005) - Table 4.5, the following were considered in this study:

1. the features of truth value, for internal validity, was achieved by extensive in-depth interactions

2. for applicability and external validity, by the use of a purposive sample, and

3. on the criterion of consistency, through the belief that the study could be replicated and will be reliable.

Reliability

Reliability is the "extent to which research findings would be the same if the research were to be repeated at a later date or with a different sample of subjects (Veal 2005, p. 42). Damon and Holloway (2002) define reliability in qualitative research as the "extent to which a research instrument such as a questionnaire, when used more than once, will reproduce the same results or answer" (p. 90). They also point out that while the study could be repeated by other researchers, but because the researcher was the main instrument, the study cannot be wholly consistent and replicated. However, reliability can be achieved by setting up an "audit trail or discussion trail" (p. 20). In the application of reliability criteria for this study, stringent records of data, methods and discussions were made throughout the study making it possible to achieve reliability and consistency. Reliability in this study was secured by ensuring that all processes in the study were transparent, consistent and dependable. This also meant that should the study be repeated it would be consistent.

Ethics

Cognisance of ethics in research, both general and specific, was taken. According to Charles and Mertler (2002, p. 13) the researcher's ethical responsibility relates to beneficence, honestly and accurate disclosure. This study reflects these principles throughout the research process with a clear intention to contribute to the body of knowledge of organisational learning and knowledge, maintaining integrity in data collection and interpretation and familiarising each research participant with the

intention and design of the research. As part of the research design, participants received a letter (see Appendix I) detailing:

- The researcher's role and background

- The aims of the research

- Groups 1,2 and 4 were informed of the confidentiality and anonymity of participation and that their responses would only be interpreted for aggregated results

- What the research involved for the participants

- The time commitment, and

- How the results from the research were to be disseminated.

Participants were asked to and indicated their willingness to participate. Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity were assured for Groups 1,2 and 4. Personal details of participants and all interview transcripts were handled carefully and confidentially. Results from the e-questionnaire were published in aggregated form so that individual responses could not be identified and quotations were anonymous.

4.7 Protocols and international conventions: Working in a foreign culture

Discussions on Thai culture were held with experienced researchers on researching abroad generally, and specifically in Thailand. Research was undertaken from websites and advice sought from the Thailand Desk at the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade on researching in Thailand. Other websites included the Australian Embassy in Thailand website and the Australia-Thailand Institute was researched. A discussion was held at the Asian Institute (Thailand) at the

Australian National University in Canberra to discuss cultural protocols and international conventions for Thailand. An insight into the relevant Thai laws from the Institute was also gained before undertaking the research. On the Thai side, The Royal Thai Embassy website (Canberra) and the Royal Thai Consulate-General websites were researched. Through this investigation a fair understanding was reached of Thai culture in general, Thai "working culture", Thai law and international conventions as it relates to Thailand. Advice was also sought from Thai academics well-versed and experienced in research in Thailand.

4.8 Logistical considerations

In respecting the culture of Thailand and the Thais, and to reduce the risk of incompletion of this study, the researcher broadly studied the following relevant topics on Thai culture and its implication for researching in Thailand.

4.8.1. Technology considerations

As primary data were recorded, the researcher had to ensure that recording was permissible, and that there was easy access to an electrical socket. As a back-up though, two sets of batteries were carried to all interviews. The use of a mobile telephone in Thailand was also an important consideration to keep two-way contact with participants, especially in the case of appointment changes or postponements or cancellation.

4.8.2 Timing and time management

With an average of 3-4 interviews on some days, and in respecting and appreciating the respondent's generous offer of their time, managing the risk of not being late or lost in Bangkok was integral to the success of the study. Another driving factor was that the field trips for interviews were undertaken in limited time. In discussing risk management and minimisation with the relevant and identified stakeholders, it was deemed necessary that the researcher seek guided assistance in an around Bangkok in order to honour appointment times and anticipate alternate directions in heavy traffic. The assistant was a university student, who also acted as a scribe. She was asked to sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents and their responses. Worthy of note, is that interview appointments were re-confirmed through email or telephone a week before, and then again a day before the interview as there was the possibility of delays through interviewees demanding work schedules. The implication of this was, firstly, to ensure that sufficient time was built in to complete the interview, and, secondly to proceed to the next interview, especially in Bangkok traffic.

4.8.3 Political stability

During the course of this study (2006-2009), Thailand had undergone immense political instability. This situation was continually tracked both as risk management and appreciating that since the respondents were employed in communication areas, during political upheaval they may not be able to honour their appointments.

4.8.4 Risk management

Overall, the risks included errors in judgement by the researcher in everyday situations or during the interview; or technology not being available to record the interview; transport and traffic considerations and political instability.

4.9 Limitations in the study

It was only possible to interview a selection of professionals in each respondent group. Since the study was undertaken only in Thailand, fully extrapolating the findings to other countries is not possible. Among the twenty professional practitioners there was a predominance of education from foreign (western) universities with a high percentage from Australia (University of Canberra). Reasons for this may be that there were not many English medium or Thai postgraduate programs in Thailand during this period and students had to go to foreign universities in the United States, or Britain or Australia where postgraduate programs were mainly offered. A second reason may be that in western countries offering this level of education, currency values at the time may have been a determinant for the country of choice where Australia was the cheapest destination for study (idem).

4.10 Chapter summary

This chapter provided the research methodology and a justification for the research design. The constructivist's approach underpinned the methodology and the theoretical perspective was interpretive. In keeping with this approach a mix of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies involving the use of an e-questionnaire with follow up semi-structured focused interviews were adopted. A detailed analysis

of the data collected from the e-questionnaire and focused interviews follows in Chapter 5, Part I and Part II respectively.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: PART I and PART II

PART I

SURVEY: ELECTRONIC QUESTIONNAIRE

5. 1 Introduction

This chapter reports on the findings of the study in two parts; Part I presents the results from the survey (e-questionnaire) and Part II the results from the focus interviews.

Part I consists of data gathered from an electronic survey among 20 Thai professionals working in IMC or related areas in Thailand. The results of Part I are mainly a record of data profiling the demographic data of the respondents and contextualising aspects of the study which is then expanded on in the Part II findings (focus interview).

Part II discusses the findings from the focus interviews undertaken to explore further and expand the understanding gained from the electronic survey.

Chapter six discusses and concludes on the findings of the study on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, the requisite managerial skills and its impact on postgraduate coursework curricula.

Figure 5.1 previews the structure of chapter 5 Part I.

Figure 5.1 Structure map of Chapter 5 – Part I

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                    ┌─────────────────────────┐
                    │    5.1 Introduction     │
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        ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │ 5.2 Section A: Respondents' demographic data  │
        └───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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        │     5.3 Section B: IMC practice in Thailand   │
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        │  5.4 Section C:  Skills for professional practice │
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        ┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
        │     5.5 Section D: Curriculum design and      │
        │           professional practice               │
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            │    5.6 Chapter summary (Part I)     │
            └─────────────────────────────────────┘
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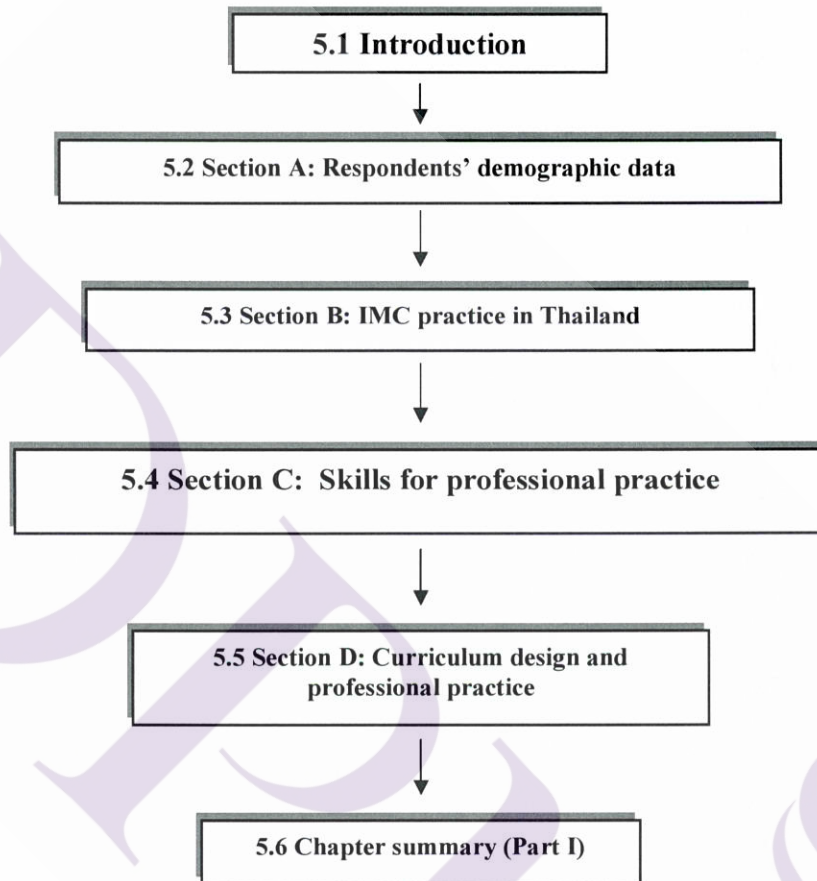
5.2 Section A: Demographic data

Section A of the questionnaire was designed to gather basic demographic data, contact details and the best method for contact as the researcher was based in Australia. Apart from the two-country issue, the respondents in this study were mainly in management or executive positions where time for and timing of appointments were crucial to the success of this study, especially within the fieldwork time frame of interviews and the quality of responses required. Other details

ascertained in this section included the year, title and institution at which the respondent obtained both their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees; their current designation (title) at work, the main aspects of their job and the number of years of working experience. Information was also sought on the type of organisation they worked in at the time of the study, for example, manufacturing, and whether the organisation was a local, national, multinational or transnational organisation. A question on the three previous job positions and designations held completed this section of the questionnaire. The responses in this section represent the replies to questions in Section A of the questionnaire. While percentages are used to indicate responses, the sample was a relatively small purposive sample used to explore and gain more depth on the research questions in this study. For example, 80% represents the responses of 16 respondents in this study.

Question A-1: Respondent's name and gender

All 20 respondents identified themselves by first and surname. However, in this study respondents were informed that their identities will remain anonymous and their responses confidential. The names of the respondents have been coded for reporting purposes. There were 16 females and 4 males in this phase of the study.

Question A-2: Contact details

The most reliable and best contact details were requested to ensure contact was possible and open and to avoid losing respondents thereby minimising non-responses. Email addresses, landline telephone numbers (work and home) and mobile telephone numbers were requested. There was a 100% response to all methods of contact. The results were as follows:

- email addresses – All respondents were contactable through email

- telephone -landline (work) - All respondents recorded their work telephone numbers

- telephone- landline (home) - All respondents recorded their home telephone numbers

- mobile telephone - All respondents recorded their mobile telephone numbers.

Question A-3: Contact time

Sixteen (16) of the 20 respondents answered this question. All 16 suggested afternoon/evening contact with 3 of the 16 also including mornings as convenient contact times. Logistically, telephone contact from Australia would have meant late night contact for the researcher as Australia is three hours ahead of Thailand during Australian non-daylight savings periods and four hours ahead during daylight saving periods. However, the times identified by the respondents offered another opportunity for contact should other contact times and methods prove difficult. The results are illustrated in Figure 5.2.

Figure 5.2 Question A3 – Contact time

The best time to contact
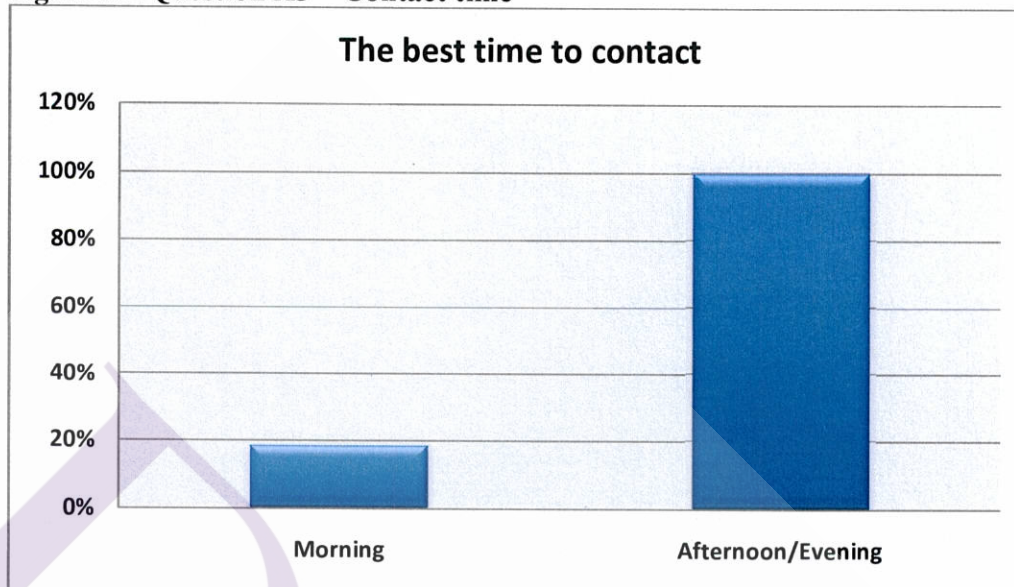
Question A4: Contact through Skype

As a contemporary method of communication, especially amongst professional communicators, the researcher explored the possibility of this medium for the focus interviews. There was an overwhelming negative response (80%) to Skype contact either because Skype was not available to the respondent, or if it was available, it was not a "contact option." Using Skype as a contact option was dismissed. Question 5 requested Skype contact details of which there were only 2.

Question A6-a: University at which undergraduate study was completed

Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents answered this question. All respondents to this question completed their undergraduate study in Thailand. Responses to this question are illustrated Figure 5.3.

Figure 5.3 Question A6-a: University at which undergraduate study was completed
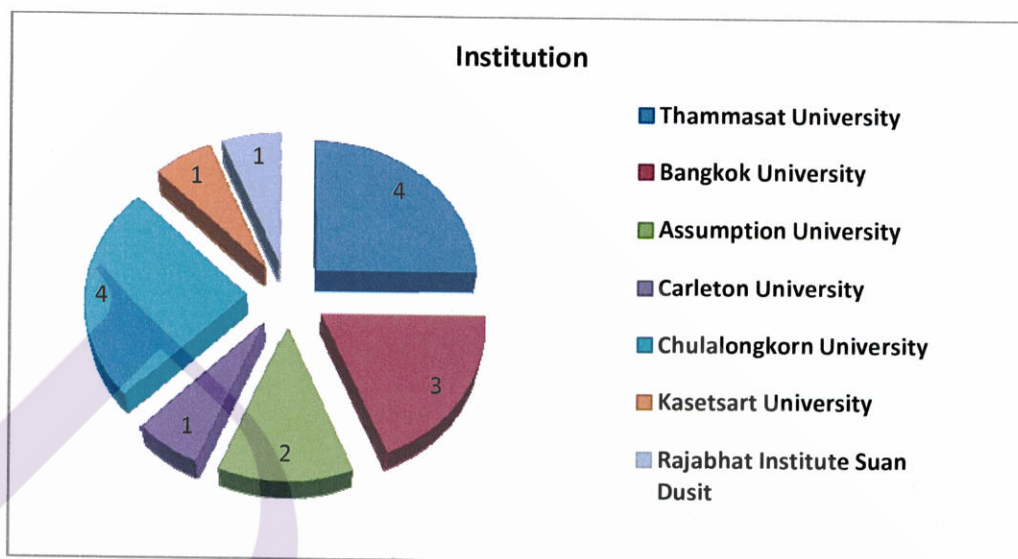
Question A6-b: Title of undergraduate degree

Sixty percent (60%) of respondents answered this question; the majority had obtained a Bachelor of Arts with a similar second, Bachelor of Communication Arts. The responses are illustrated in Figure 5.4.

Figure 5.4 Question A6-b: Title of undergraduate degree
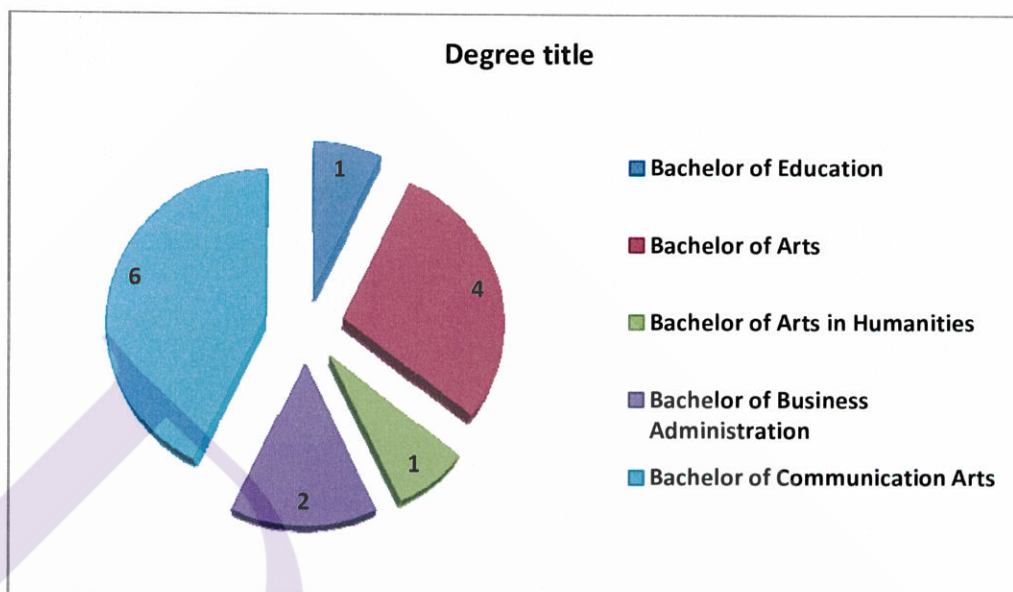
Question A6-c: Year in which undergraduate study was completed?

Seventy five percent (75%) responded to this question. It is interesting to note that the period of undergraduate study spans 1992 to 2002, perhaps indicative of the period when Communication and Communication Arts undergraduate programs gained popularity in Thailand. Responses are illustrated in Figure 5.5.

Figure 5.5 Question A6-c: Year in which undergraduate study was completed
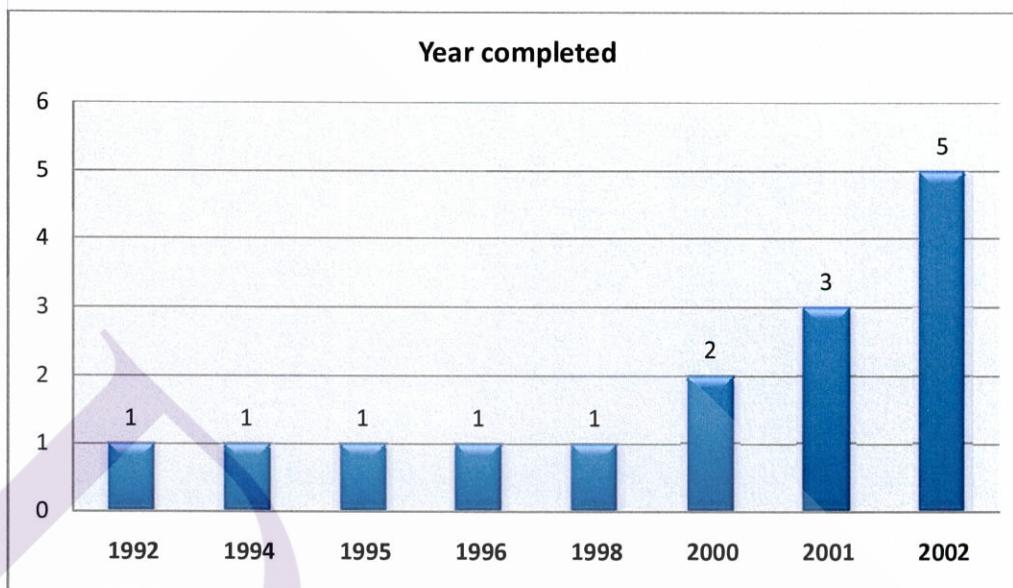

Question A7-a: University at which postgraduate studies were completed

Ninety percent (90%) responded to this question; all respondents had completed their postgraduate studies abroad, perhaps also indicative that Thailand's universities were not offering English medium postgraduate programs in IMC (or Marketing Communication) during the period in which the respondents had studied abroad or it may be that these respondents just chose a foreign university education. There was high a percentage from Australia (University of Canberra). Reasons for this may be that, firstly, there was a limited number of postgraduate programs in Bangkok during this period and interested students had to attend foreign universities where postgraduate programs were mainly offered such as in the United States, or Britain or Australia. Secondly, that of the western countries offering this level of education, Australia may have been the cheapest destination for study.

Another observation is that while two of the respondents studied in Thailand at Dhurakij Pundit University, their studies were undertaken under the auspices of an Australian university. This implies that the courses would have contained "foreign" content and the western view of IMC may be presented as a somewhat Thai view. The universities and number of students are presented in Figure 5.6

Figure 5.6 Question A7-a: University at which postgraduate studies were completed
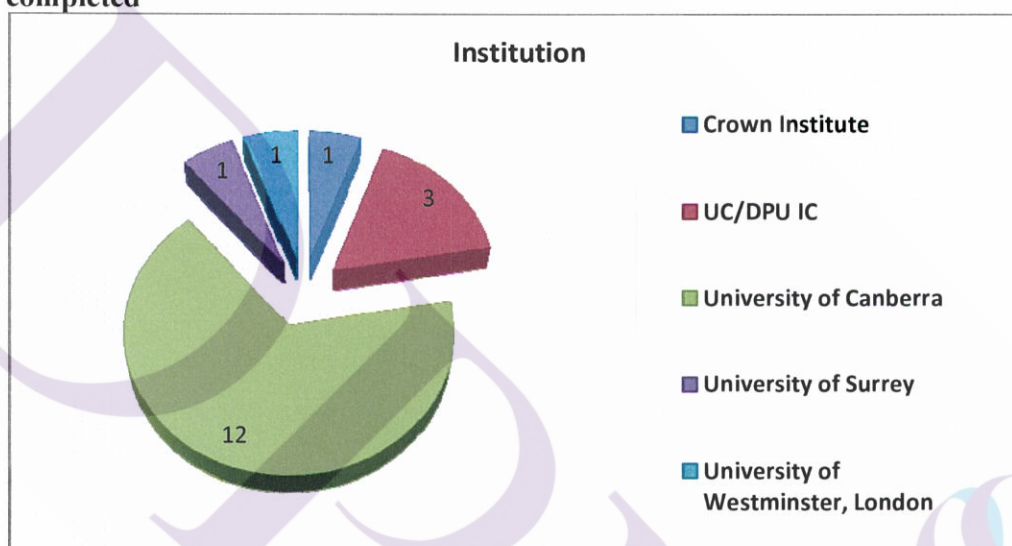
While the predominance in the sample of postgraduate qualifications from Australia is a limitation in this study, as an exploratory study the results offer insight into changing professional practice paradigms, managerial skills required in IMC and considerations for postgraduate curricula.

Question A7-b: Title of postgraduate degree

Ninety percent (90%) of respondents had qualified with a Master of Marketing Communication. The responses are illustrated in Figure 5.7.

Figure 5.7 Question A7-b: Title of postgraduate degree
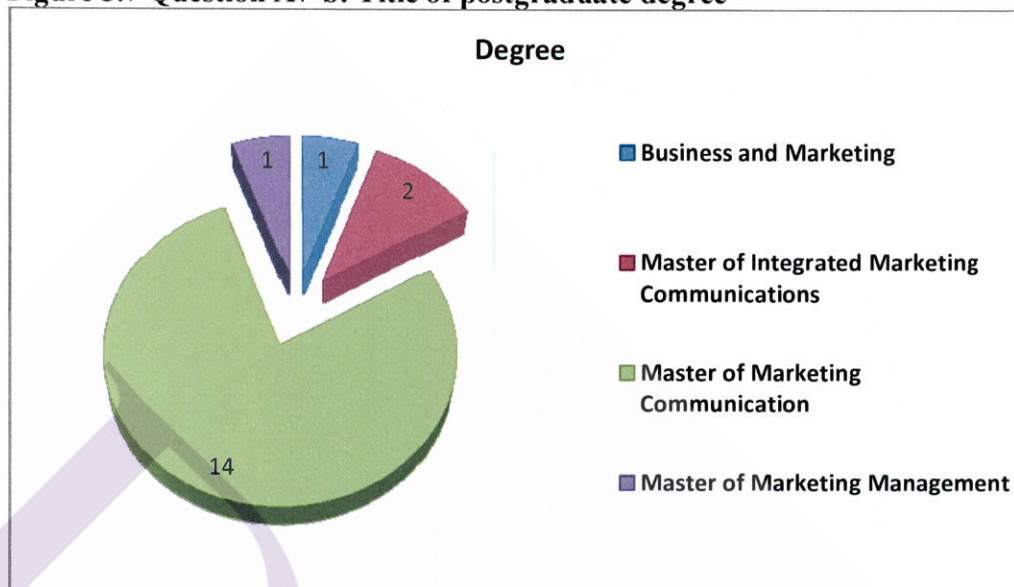
Responses to the two questions above illustrate the highly qualified respondents in this study, implying that the responses were well-informed and of good quality. It is anticipated that the study will fittingly build on the work of Anantachart (2001 – 2007) which was also based on high level professionals.

Question A7-c: Year in which postgraduate degree was completed

Ninety percent (90%) responded to this question. The bar graph, Figure 5.8 shows that 33% and 27% of respondents graduated with a Masters degree in 2004 and 2006 respectively.

Figure 5.8 Question A7-c: Year of completion of postgraduate study
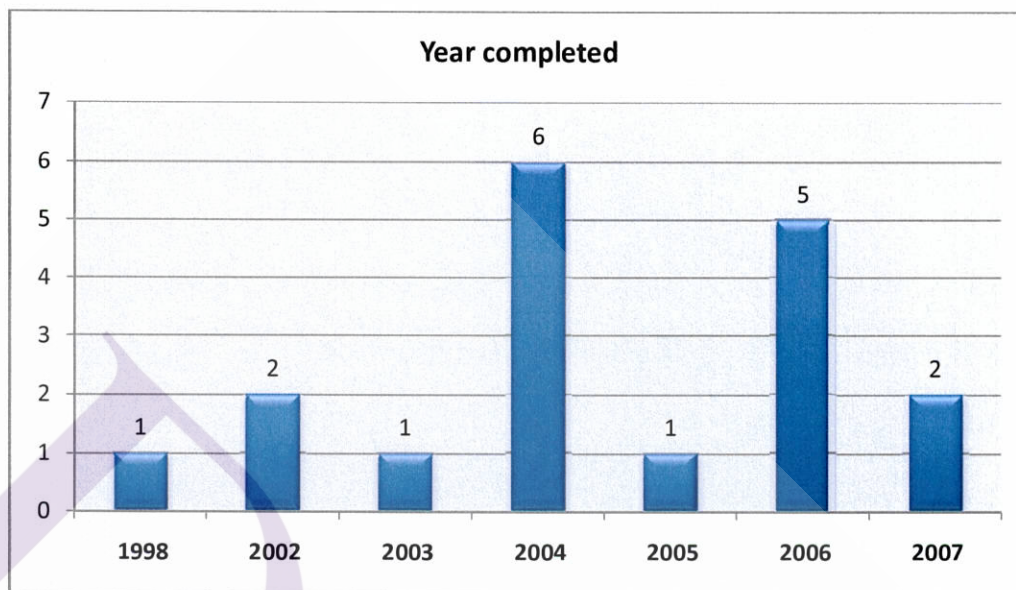
Question A7-d: Number of years to complete Master's level study

Ninety five percent (95%) answered this question. Figure 5.9 displays the average period to complete the master's degree which was 19 months.

Figure 5.9 Question A7-d: Postgraduate study – number of years
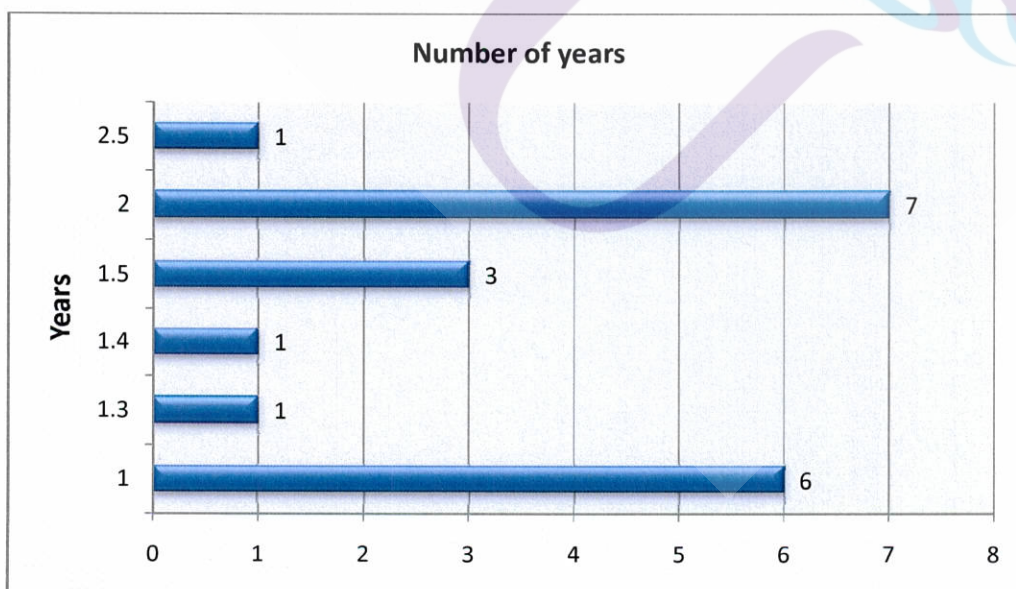
Question A8: Current designation (job title) at work

Five percent (5%) of respondents did not respond to this question; all 95% who responded were in management level positions; 20% of the respondents were involved with media planning and fifteen 15% in accounts management/supervision positions. Media (see Figure 5.10) is a significant area of study within IMC as identified in Chapter 4.

Figure 5.10 Question A8: Current designation (job title) at work
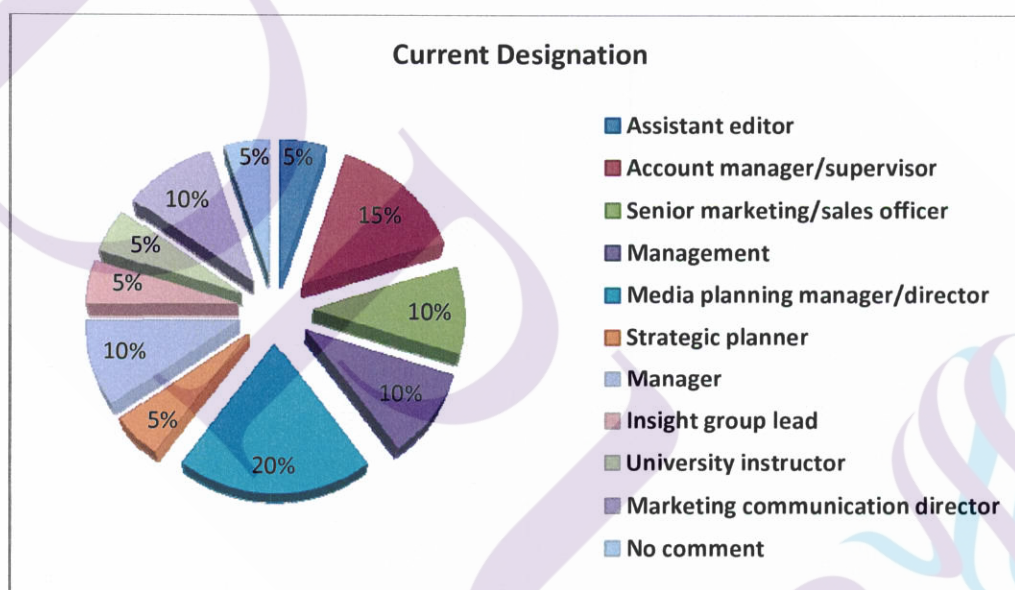
Question A9: Main aspects of current job

The responses to this question are illustrated in a total of 5 pie charts from Number 1 to Number 5 (Figures 5.11 – 5.15). Respondents were required to list the five main aspects of their jobs on a scale of 1-5, 1 being the highest. The answers (which will be discussed in more detail in Part II) support the findings in chapter four

where strategy, planning, customer relationship management and media were significant aspects of postgraduate IMC study, corresponding with the criteria espoused by Kreitner (1998).

Figure 5.11 Question A9-1: Main aspects of your current job – Number 1

Main aspects of your current job - No.1

- No comments
- Curriculum development
- Budgeting
- Media relation/planning
- Consumer behaviour
- Public relations
- Marketing/Communications research
- Customer relationship management
- Web management
- Strategy planning
- Event strategy management

Figure 5.12 Question A9-2: Main aspects of your current job – Number 2

Main aspects of your current job - No.2

- Preparing reports
- Marketing
- Database management
- Research
- Strategy planning
- Advertising
- Liaison
- Media relations/planning
- Student advisor/management
- Analysis
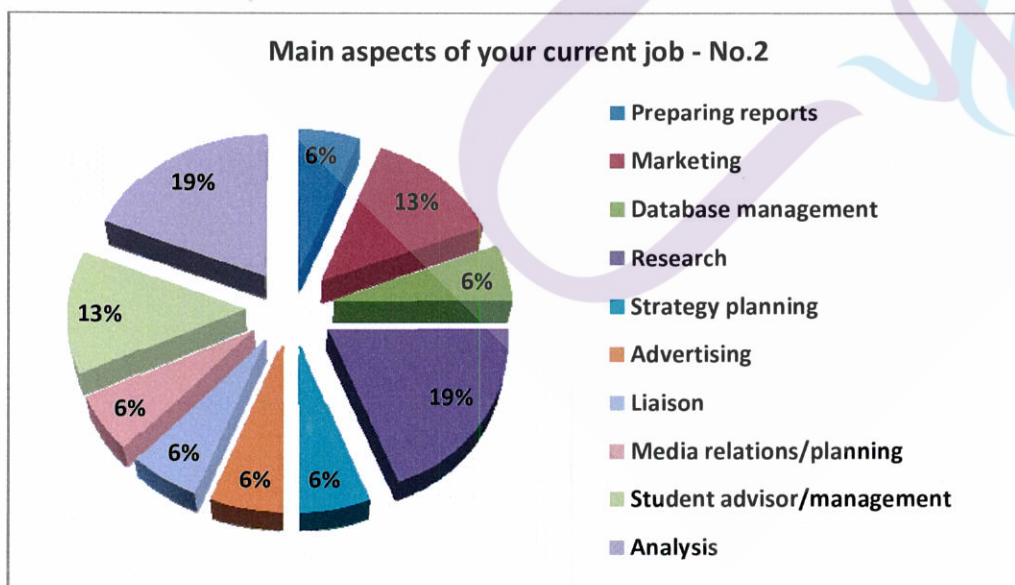
Even at second position, research and analysis hold, again meeting the Kreitner (1998) model.

Figure 5.13 Question A9-3: Main aspects of your current job – Number 3

Figure 5.14 Question A9-4: Main aspects of current job – Number 4
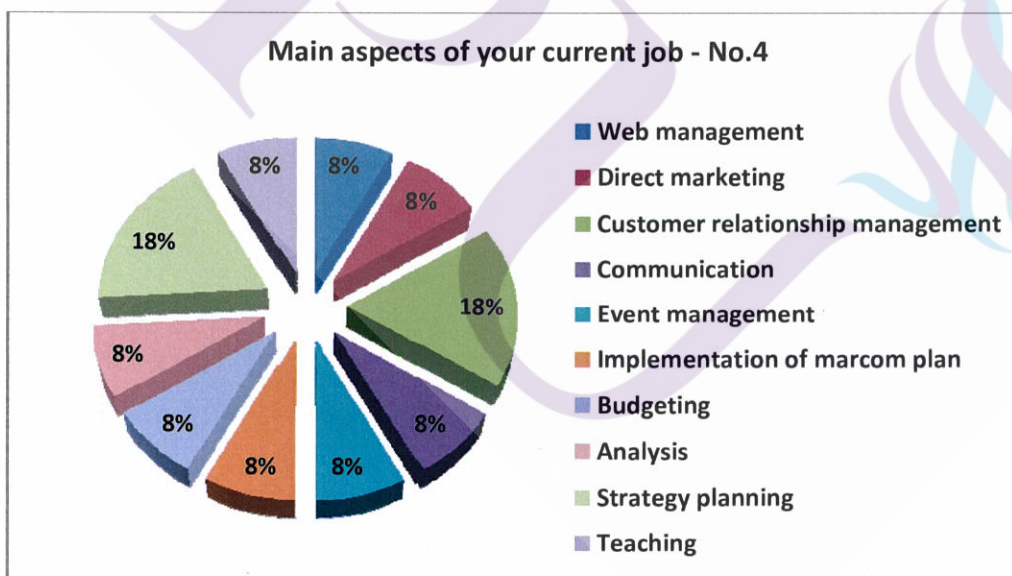
Figure 5.15 Question A9-5: Main aspects of current job – Number 5
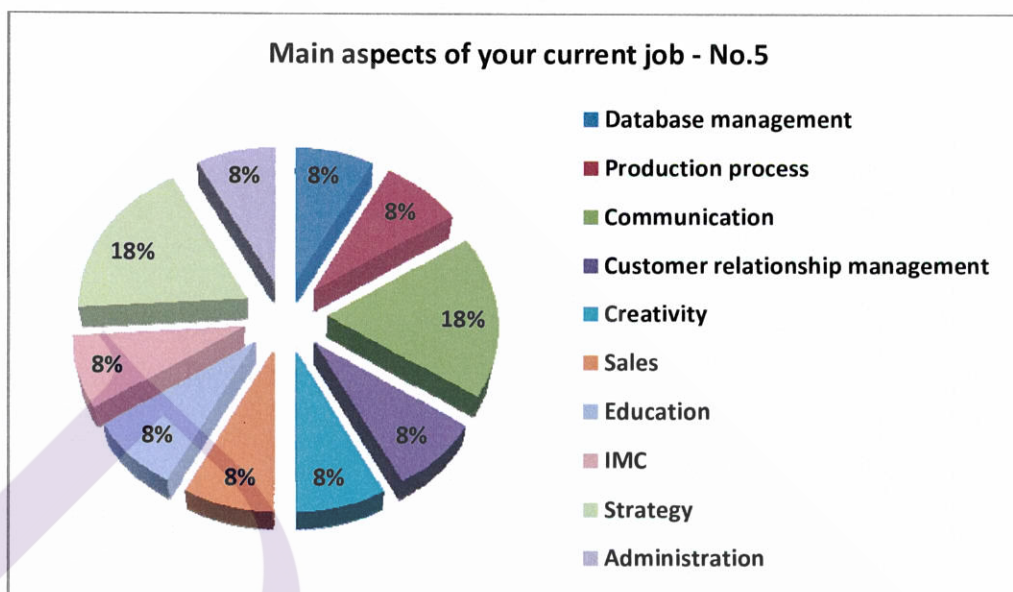
Responses to the questions above illustrate that strategy planning and CRM are still focused on, and in Figures 5.15, communication, CRM and strategy are strongly practised. It suggests that whether these functions are rated first or fifth in a job, it still holds in the top five main aspects of the job, supporting Kreitner (1998), Certo (2003), Hubbard (2000) and Kliatchko (2008).

Question A10: Number of years of working experience

One hundred percent (100%) responded to this question. The number of years of work experience range from 1 to 16.5 years (Figure 5.16), contributing to a range of experiences and contributing to a rich mix of responses.

Figure 5.16 Question A10: Number of years of working experience

Number of years of working experience
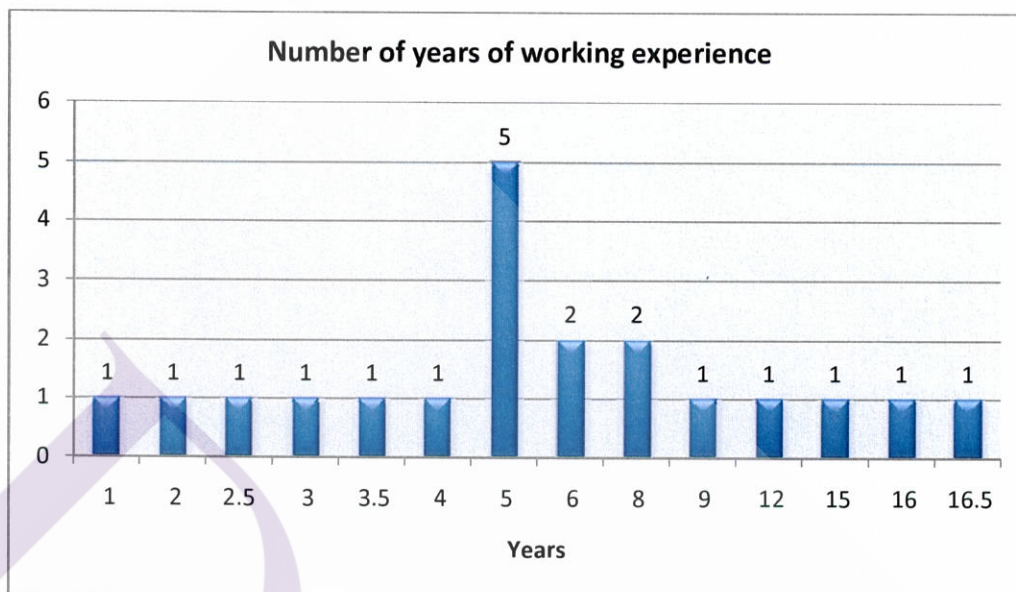
Question A11: Current job – industry sector (eg. agency, manufacturing, FMCG, government, education etc.)

All respondents (100%) answered this question of which almost half worked in agencies. While the advertising agency/agency are seen as the highest category, advertising agency/agency could also include advertising agencies that offer a one stop shop IMC service. The full response is illustrated in Figure 5.17.

Figure 5.17 Question A11: Current job – industry sector

Organisational type

Industry sector	Value
Advertising agency/Agency	9
Education	3
Media	1
Pharmaceutical	1
IT	1
Retail banking	1
Hotel	1
Financial field	1
Food industry	1
Airlines	1
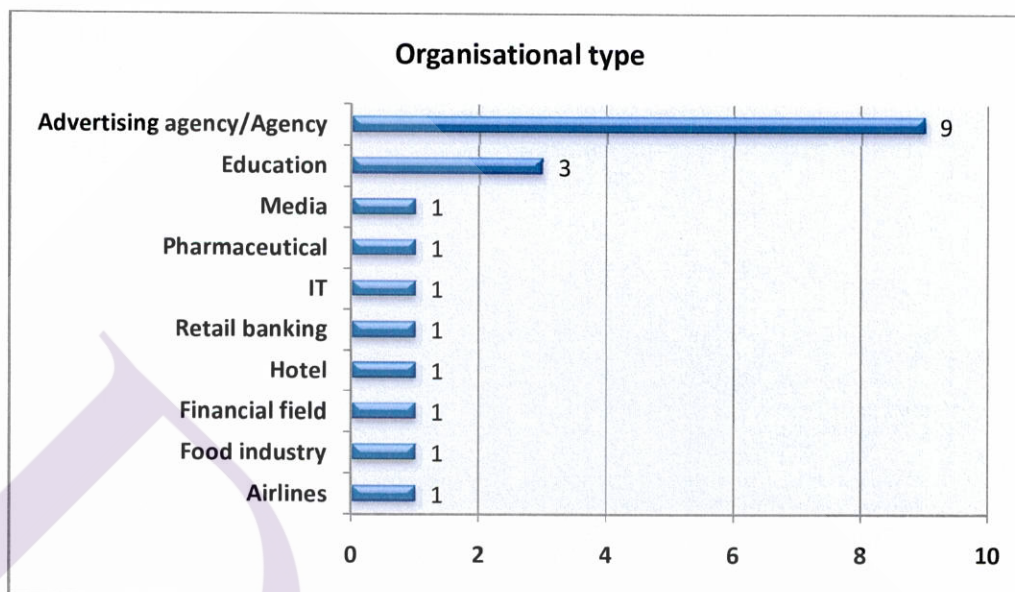
Question A12: Organisational type - local, national, multinational or transnational

While all respondents answered this question (Figure 5.18), 70% worked either in a national, multinational or transnational company; 30% worked in local companies indicating a high level of IMC practice in large organisations.

The responses to organisation type suggest that views may be foreign-influenced especially where practitioners are employed in a multinational (national company with foreign subsidiaries) or transnational organisation (organisations that do not identify with one national home). However, while Thai company operations may differ, there is little difference in performance (Speece and Suwannaporn, 2004).

Figure 5.18 Question A12: Type of organisation: Local, national, multinational or transnational
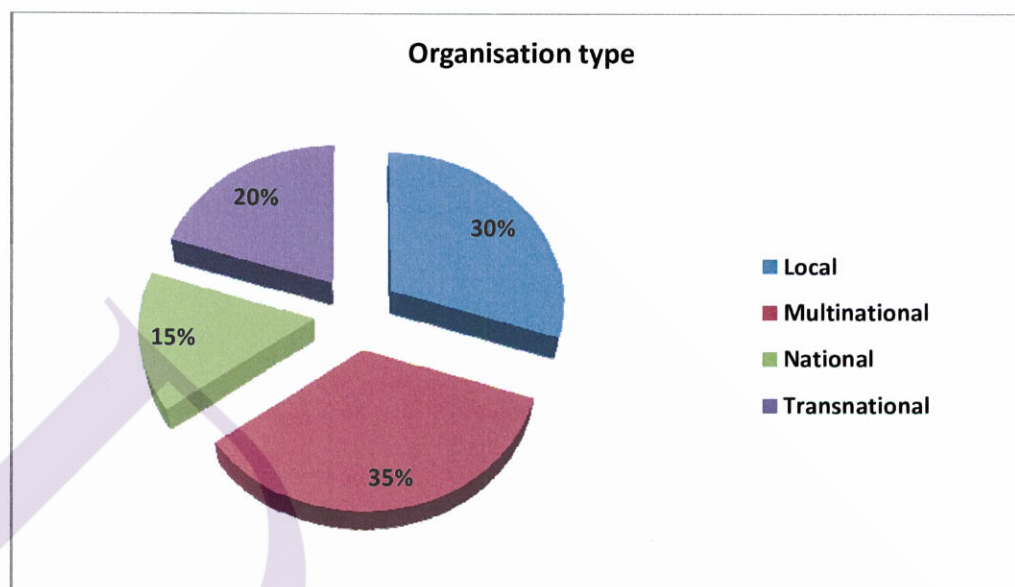
Question A13. Previous three positions at work

Of those that held three jobs, 42% achieved progress in their careers to executive levels. The growth areas were in media (26.3%) and PR/marketing/advertising (36.8%), a total of 63.1%. The type and percentage of jobs held in the 3 previous positions are shown in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Types of jobs held in the three previous positions

Position categories	%
Media	26.3
Account Executive	21.1
PR/Marketing/Advertising	36.8
Company Director	10.5
Non-response	5.3

Source: Developed for this research

The above position categories illustrates the cross functional nature of IMC practise which includes media, account management, public relations, advertising, marketing and executives positions.

5.3 Section B: IMC practice in Thailand

This segment of the chapter reports on Section B in the questionnaire which sought opinions on current issues in professional practice in Thailand.

Question B1: Current demands on IMC professional practice in Thailand

Ten (10) areas of current demand in IMC were listed of which 20% of the respondents rated strategic planning and implementation as the first priority; 15% rated IMC in management, branding and IMC education as a current demand, and the role of IMC in society and the environment as third (10%). The total reveals a strong focus (90%) on IMC related areas, with 5% on consumer behaviour and 5% on

internal communication. Table 5.2 displays the identified issues and the percentage of respondents who identified the issue.

Table 5.2 Current demands on IMC professional practice in Thailand

Issue identified as first demand on IMC in Thailand	Percentage of respondents
Strategy planning and implementation	20%
IMC in management	15%
Branding	15%
Education in IMC	15%
IMC in environmental awareness	10%
Changes in consumer behaviour	5%
Budgeting	5%
Evaluation	5%
Internal communication and teamwork	5%
The role of IMC in a maturing market	5%
Total	100%

Source: Developed for this research

Strategy, brand management, branding, awareness are strongly identified, supporting Hubbard (2000) and Kreitner (1998). While the above were listed, respondents also identified other areas currently demanded in IMC in Thailand; these were research, creativity, digital knowledge and communication, crisis management, event management, data base management and media planning.

Question B2: The 5 most important demands in the next ten years on professional practice in Thailand

All respondents answered this question; strategic planning and implementation (33%), branding (16%) and digital knowledge and internet marketing (11%) were ranked highly. Other areas identified were research and environmental

scanning, media planning, budgeting, IMC implementation, teamwork, corporate social responsibility and creativity (concept designing) and change management. Strategy, branding and digital knowledge are strongly identified as demands for the next decade. Figure 5.19 graphically illustrates this finding.

Figure 5.19 Question B2- Most important demands in the next ten years
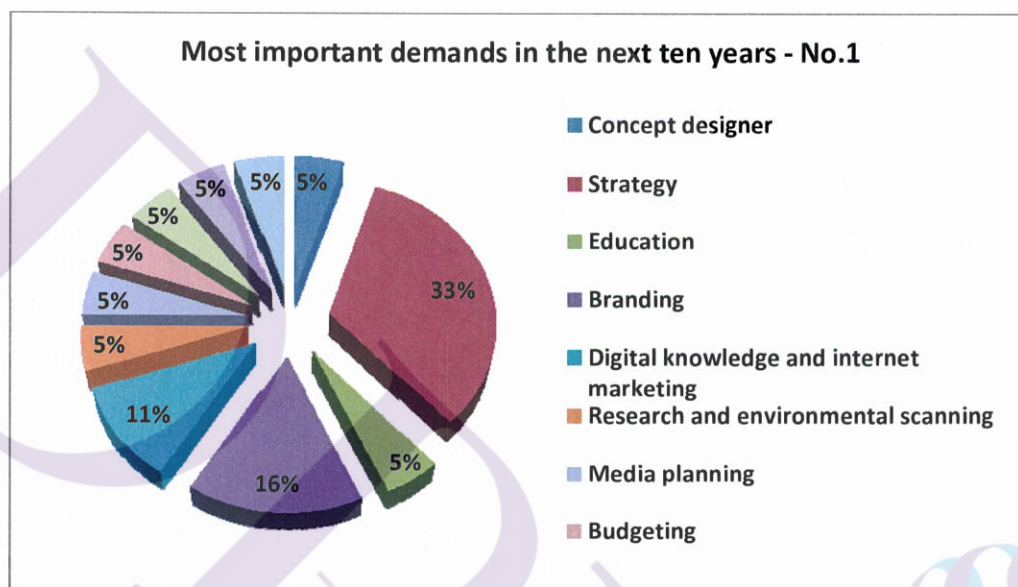
Question B3: Sectors in which IMC makes a strong contribution in Thailand (eg. business, government or non-profit organisations)

One hundred percent (100%) of respondents believed that IMC makes a strong contribution to the organisation in the private sector. For both the government and non profit sectors, only 10% believed that IMC makes a contribution. This may be because IMC is not practised much in these sectors in Thailand evident in Figure 5.17.

Question B5: Areas in which the function of IMC will grow

All respondents (100%) answered this question. The growth of IMC is envisaged to be mainly in the private sector in areas such as IMC agencies, retailing (generally), and the "fast moving consumer goods" (FMCG) area. Health is also identified, although it is unclear as to whether it is public or private sector health areas. From the responses about the slow uptake of IMC in the public sector, it is plausible that health in the private sectors will grow, rather than the public sector due to differences in organisational cultures. The marketing of Thai education is also identified. In contrast to the response rate on IMC in the government sector, 30% of respondents in this question identified growth in the government/public sector. Figure 5.20 illustrates the responses

Figure 5.20 Question B5: Areas of growth in Thai IMC practice
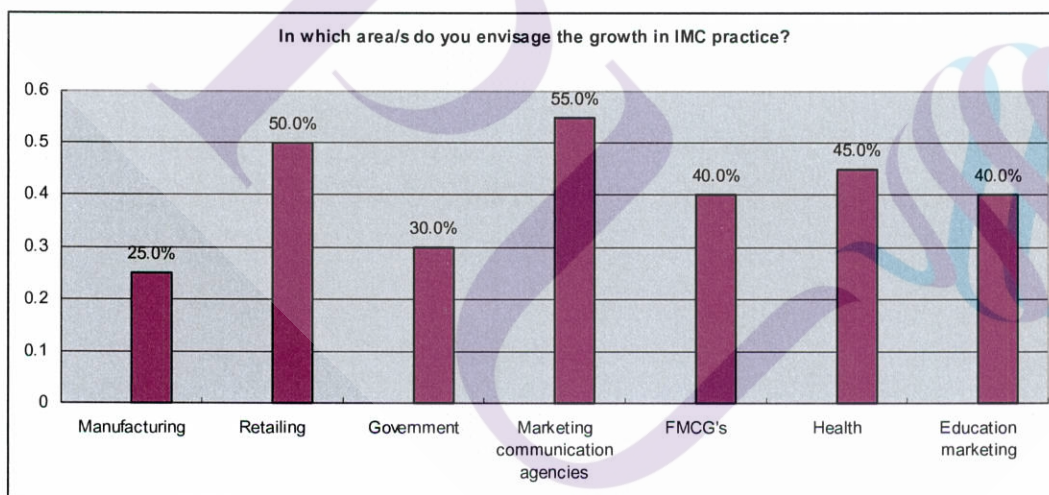
5.4 Section C: Skills required for professional practice in IMC in Thailand

This aspect of the chapter reports on Section C of the questionnaire which investigated the required skills for professional practice in Thailand.

Question C1: Personal attributes needed to meet the current demands of professional practice in IMC in Thailand

In this question at least 5 attributes that practitioners with postgraduate qualifications should have, were identified by the respondents. These were categorised from 1 to 5, 1 being the first attribute identified and 5 being the fifth attribute identified. Respondents were not required to list these in order of priority; but rather were required to identify 5 attributes as they deemed fit. Not all respondents offered 5 attributes. Table 5.3 displays the response rate for the number of attributes where 100% offered five attributes and 65% offered a 5th attribute.

Table 5.3 Response rate for attributes needed to meet current demands of professional practice in IMC in Thailand

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
5	100.0%	20
4	95.0%	19
3	85.0%	17
2	85.0%	17
1	65.0%	13

In categorising the attributes, Table 5.5 displays the common and uncommon attributes that were identified for professional practice in Thailand. Of significance are the attributes of educationally qualified, ability to strategise and implement IMC strategies, creativity, ability to work, work in teams and independently, be flexible,

punctual and have a sense of social responsibility. For more details on Table 5.4, see

Appendix IV.

Table 5.4 Listed attributes needed to meet current demands of professional practice in IMC in Thailand

Identified Attributes	Percentage
IMC Education and training	87
Environmental scanning	41
Team work	41
Social responsibility	38
Creativity	34
Attention to details	33
Ability to work	32
Strategy	32
Punctuality	31
Flexibility	28
Work under pressure	20
Communication skills	16
Confidence	15
Experience in Marcom.	15
Ethics	13
Any other attributes	11

Source: Developed for this research

Figures 5.21-25 show attributes by choice, first to fifth.

Figure 5.21 Question C1-1- Personal attributes needed to meet demands in professional practice in Thailand – No. 1
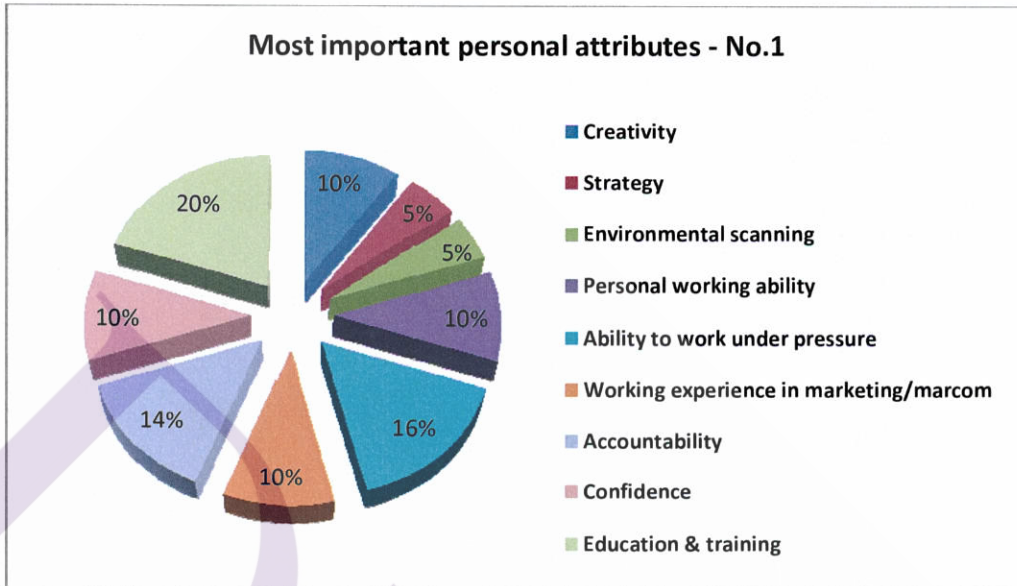
Figure 5.22 Question C1-2: Personal attributes needed to meet demands in professional practice in Thailand. – No. 2
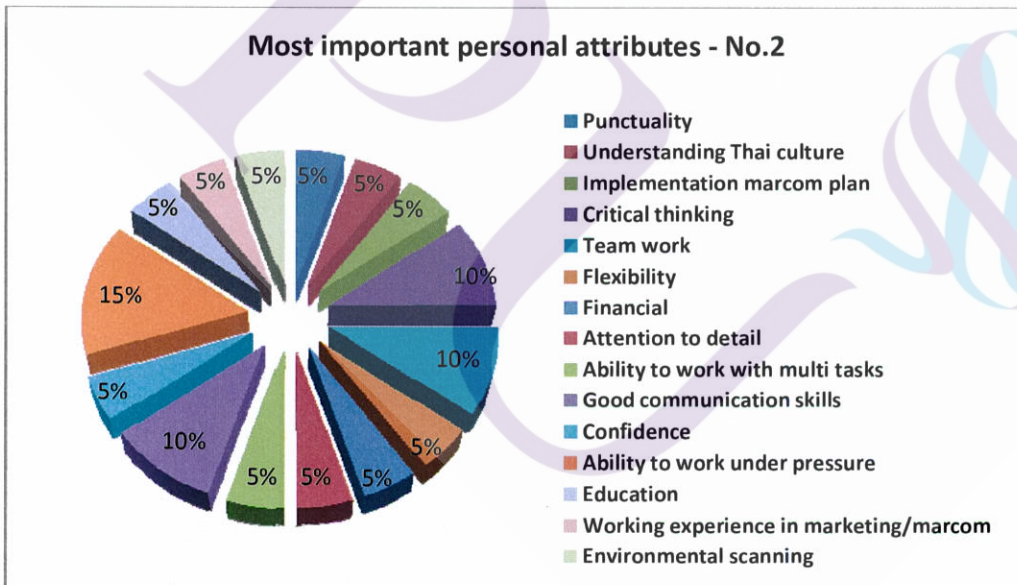
Figure 5.23 Question C1-3: Personal attributes needed to meet demands in professional practice in Thailand – No. 3

Most important personal attributes - No.3

- Fexibility
- Education
- Punctuality
- Social responsibility
- Open-minded
- Creativity
- Strategy
- Environmental scanning
- Curiosity
- Team work
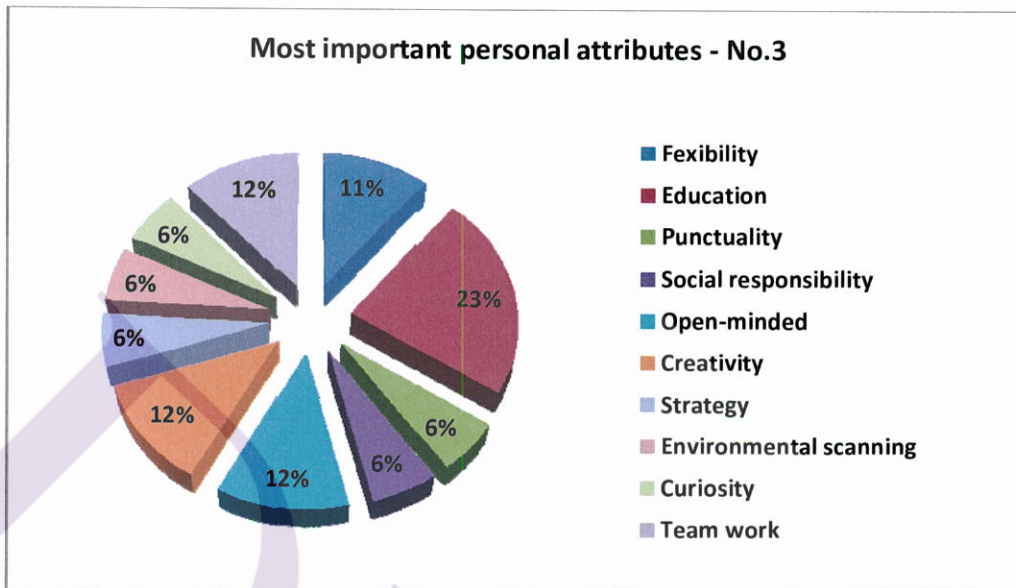
Figure 5.24 Question C1-4: Personal attributes needed to meet demands in professional practice in Thailand: No. 4

Most important personal attributes - No.4

- Language skills
- Social responsibility
- Enthusiasm
- Education
- Environment scanning
- Fairness
- Good time management
- Creativity
- Flexibility
- Team work
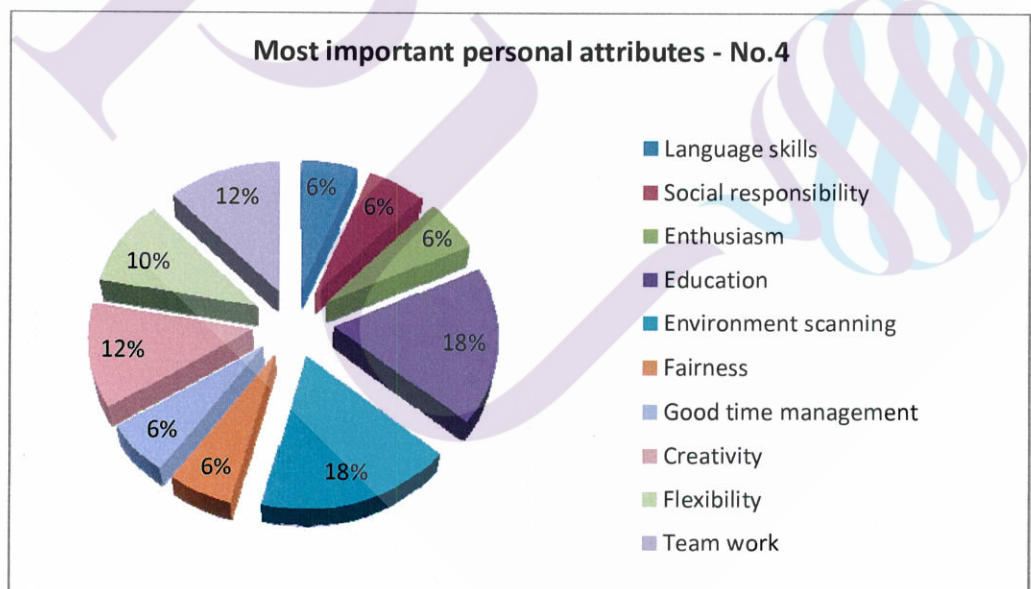
While it is apparent that there was an overlap in the interpretation of skills and attributes (a limitation of this study), Figures 5.23 and 5.24 indicate education in IMC is a strong "attribute" suggesting higher education should take cognisance of this in

curriculum planning and Kerr's et al., (2008) view of curriculum development on the

principles of the outside in model.

Figure 5.25 C1-5: Personal attributes needed to meet demands in professional practice in Thailand: No. 5
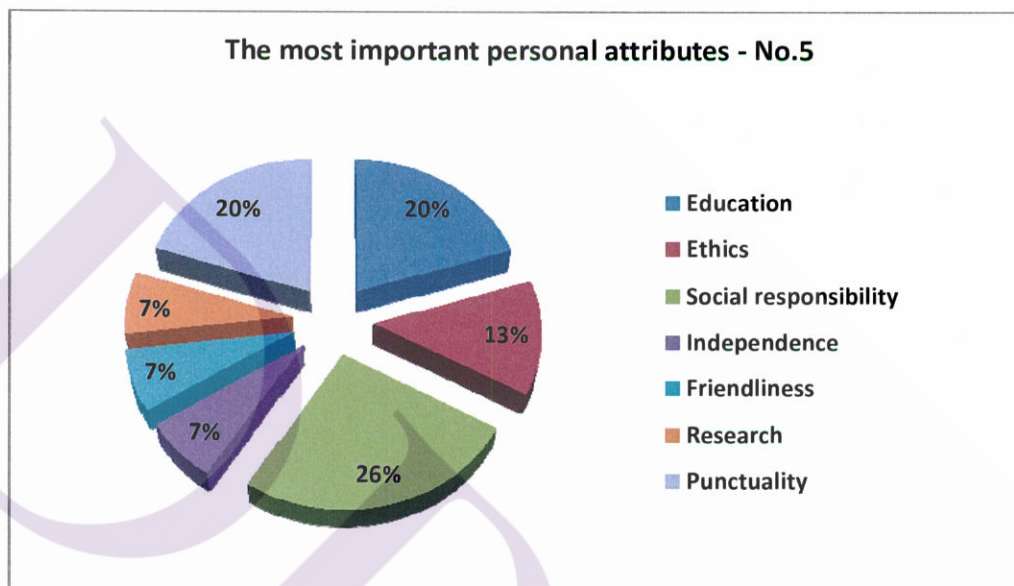
Question C2: Skills needed to meet the current demands of professional practice in IMC in Thailand

In this question at least 5 skills that practitioners with postgraduate

qualifications should have were identified. These were categorised from 1 to 5 (the

first skill identified in the first column and the fifth in the last column). As in the

question above, respondents were not required to list these in order of priority; rather

they were required to identify five (5) skills as they deemed fit. Not all respondents

offered 5 skills. Table 5.5 displays the response rate for the number of skills where

100% identified 5 skills and 65% offered up to a 5th skill.

Table 5.5 Skills needed to meet the current demands of professional practice in

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
5	100.0%	20
4	85.0%	17
3	80.0%	16
2	70.0%	14
1	50.0%	10

IMC in Thailand

Table 5.6 below categorises the skills that respondents believed were required in professional practice in Thailand. The most common skills identified were analytical skills, interpersonal communication skills, digital/IT skills, presentation skills, creative skills, and negotiation skills, concurring in part with Ivancevich's et al., (1994) where it is espoused that analytical skills, people skills and computer skills underpinned managerial skills. For more details on Table 5.6 see Appendix V.

Table 5.6 Skills required in IMC professional practice in Thailand

Skills Required	Percentage
Digital/IT skills	63
Management skills	49
Interpersonal communication skills	44
Analytical skills	43
Creativity	39
Negotiation skills	32
Presentation skills	31
Finance and budgeting skills	22
Problem solving	22
Strategic thinking and planning	18
Knowledge of media	17
Application of knowledge	13
Any other skills	11

Source: Developed for this research

Question C3: What did the respondents believe were missing in their postgraduate course of study?

The top three "missing components" identified were "updated strategies and knowledge (25%), creativity (19%) and financial/budgeting knowledge (13%). Six percent (6%) identified the aspects of confidence building, management skills, media knowledge, ability to work under pressure, knowledge of psychology and business knowledge. Figure 5.26 illustrates the responses to this question.

Figure 5.26 Question C3-1 Attributes development missing in your course of study

Attribute development missing in postgradute study?

Legend:
- Confidence
- Management skills
- Media knowledge
- Up-to-date strategies/knowledge
- Financial knowledge/Budgeting
- Ability to work under pressure
- Psychology
- Business knowledge
- Working experience
- Creativity
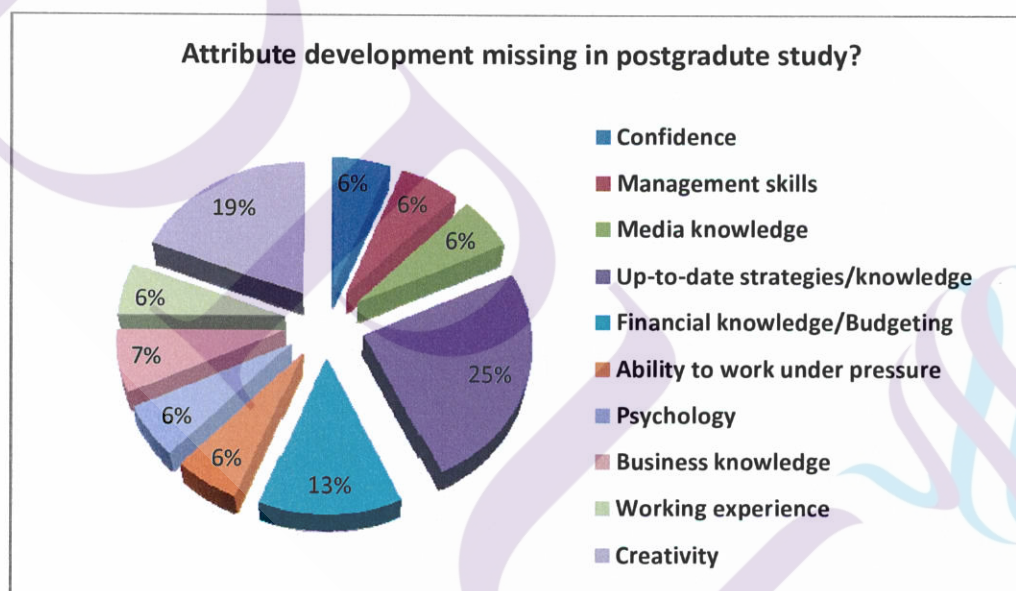
Question C4: What did the respondents believe were missing in their postgraduate course of study in terms of skills?

The skills that were identified as "not developed" during the postgraduate study were business and management skills (32%), negotiation skills (16%), analytical skills (11%), financial skills (11%), 6% on creativity, relationship

management, digital/IT skills, team work and experience in professional practice. The responses are represented in Figure 5.27.

Figure 5.27 Question C4: Skills missing in your course of study
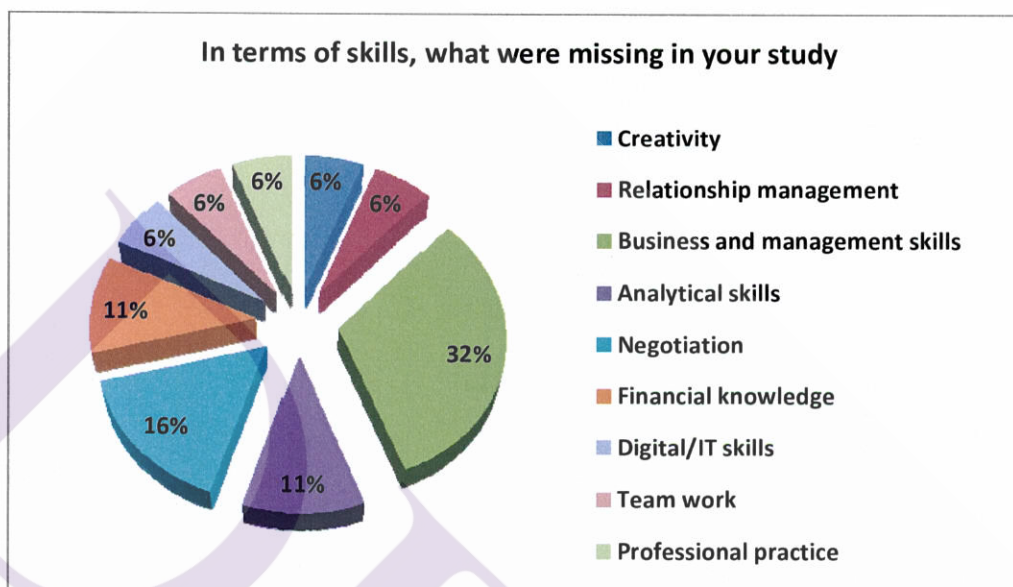
Responses in this section impacts curriculum design and supports the managerial functions and skills discussed by Kreitner (1998) and Ivancevich (1994), respectively.

5.5 Section D: Curriculum design and professional practice

The objective of the questions in this section was to ascertain what subjects were undertaken in the respondent's Master's programs, it's relevance to current professional practice, the strengths and weaknesses of the course of study and, what should be added to syllabus for best practice.

Question D-1, D-2, D-3, D-4, D-5, D-6

The synopsis below summarises the responses to the following:

- D-1: Subjects undertaken in the Master's program

- D-2: Did the subjects prepare you well for the job market?

- D-3: Subjects most relevant to the demands of the workplace?

- D-4: Subjects in the study of least use in the workplace?

- D-5: Subjects that should be included in the Master's program?

- D-6: Main areas of study that should be included in postgraduate study?

- D-7: Anything else that could be included in postgraduate curriculum so that it better equips graduates for the business world?

For Question D-1 (subjects undertaken in the Master's program), the subjects are categorised on topics identified by scholars such as Schultz, Kitchen, Fill, (1998-2005) and is also based on the international postgraduate curriculum analysis on IMC in Chapter 4.

In Question D-2, there was a one 100% response to the question (regarding whether the subject/areas of postgraduate study prepared them well for the job market). 90% responded positively and 10% responded that their master's program did not prepare them well for professional practice.

Based upon this question, the next question (Questions D-3) probed which subjects were most relevant to the demands of their jobs. Responses are recorded in the third column in Table 5. 7 below.

For Question D-4 (subjects of least use in current practice), there were only eleven responses (55%) to this question of which three respondents recorded that all subjects were of use, that is, none were of "no use." Contrary to the results under attributes and skills and Question D-3 above, subjects on research, finance, public relations practice, database management, segmentation and theory are regarded of least use.

In summarising the above, the table below identifies what respondents believed was relevant and what should be included in the curriculum. Relevant to their work, respondents identified specific subjects that informed their day-to-day practise and separately reiterated what subjects they thought should be included in postgraduate curriculum. Where subjects were not considered "relevant" but were identified for inclusion in postgraduate curricula, suggests that while some were not practicing in the area, they believed the knowledge was important. Table 5.7. summarises the subjects identified as "relevant" and that "should be included in postgraduate study. For more details on Table 5.7, see Appendix VI.
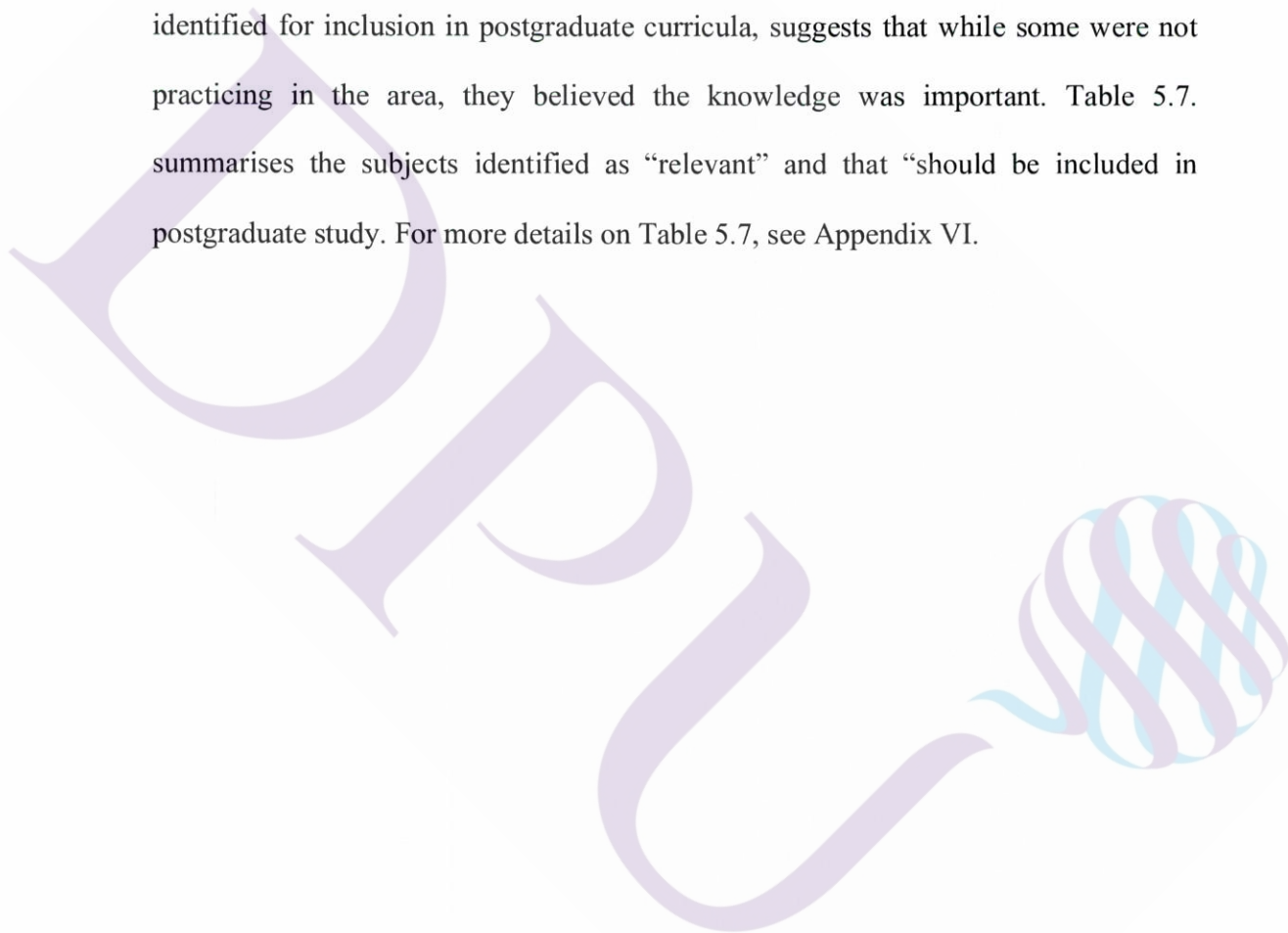
Table 5.7 Summary: Subjects identified as "relevant" and "should be included in postgraduate study"

Discipline	Relevant	Should be included
Marketing communication		
Marketing communication	√	
Strategy	√	√
Direct marketing	√	
Advertising Operations	√	
Public Relations	√	√
Sales promotion	√	
Media	√	√
Theory	√	√
Creative	√	√
IMC	√	√
Integrated communication campaigns	√	√
Branding	√	√
Customer relationship management	√	√
Practicum (experiential training)		√
Seminars	√	√
Marketing		
Marketing (general)	√	√
Marketing management	√	√
Consumer behaviour	√	√
Consumer insight	√	√
Branding	√	√
Market research		√
Finance and economics		
Finance		√
Economics		√
Business		
E-business		√
Business administration	√	√
Other areas : Included 15 other subjects –see Appendix VI)		

Source: Developed for this research

Question D8, 9 and 10: Should Master's programs in IMC have more business and management related subjects as in the (MBA) Master of Business Administration?

In Question D-8, 80% responded positively to the question and 20% felt the Master's program in IMC should not have more business and management related subjects. Probing further the next question (D-9) enquired whether the subjects from an MBA program would be appropriate for the IMC program; subjects such as international marketing, business administration, management, marketing, finance, strategic planning, marketing research, relationship marketing and branding were identified. Negotiation, problem solving, case studies and media were also identified. Only three responded to Question D-10.

Question D11: Should a Master's program in IMC be titled "Master of Business Administration (Marketing Communication)

In an attempt to establish the strength of the MBA and business link to IMC, through a dichotomous question, respondents were asked whether Master's programs in IMC should be titled "Master of Business Administration (Marketing Communication). There was an unexpected and overwhelming negative response to this question (65%) and only thirty five percent (35%) responded yes.

5.6. Chapter summary (Part I)

Part I of Chapter 5 established four aspects for the study, demographics of respondents, IMC practice in Thailand, skills required and considerations for curricula. First, through demographic profiling the following were ascertained; academic qualifications, university at which undergraduate and postgraduate degrees were completed, current designation (job title), the main aspects of their job, the number of years of experience, industry sector and organisational type (national, multinational or transnational). Second, respondents' views were ascertained on IMC practice in Thailand regarding current and future demands and areas in which IMC will grow. Third, skills and personal attributes for current professional practice were determined, and fourth, subjects that respondents undertook in the course of study, what they believed was relevant to professional practice and what should be included in postgraduate study; and, their views on which subjects best equipped them for their career. The focus interview delves deeper into the issues in this survey.

Chapter 5

Part II

Part (II) 5.1 Introduction

Part II of Chapter 5 presents the findings and analysis of the depth interviews undertaken among professionals against the literature reviews in Chapters two and three. The first group of twenty for the focus interview were the same respondents who completed the e-survey and were professionals with master's level qualifications in IMC or a related area; the second group were agency executives, the third, executives of professional bodies, fourth, academics who were teaching in IMC and fifth, policy makers in Thai higher education. The depth interviews built on the findings of the preliminary electronic survey discussed in Chapter 5 Part I. The structure map of Chapter 5 Part II is presented in Figure 5.28.

Figure 5.28   Chapter 5 Part II Structure map


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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Part (II) 5.1 Introduction         │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│   Part (II) 5.2 Findings             │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.2.1.  IMC-strategic management │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.2.2. Managerial skills required in IMC │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.2.3.  Postgraduate curriculum │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.2.4. Current and future trends in IMC │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.2.5.Demand in which Thai sectors? │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
                  ↓
┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│ Part (II) 5.3. Conclusion and chapter summary │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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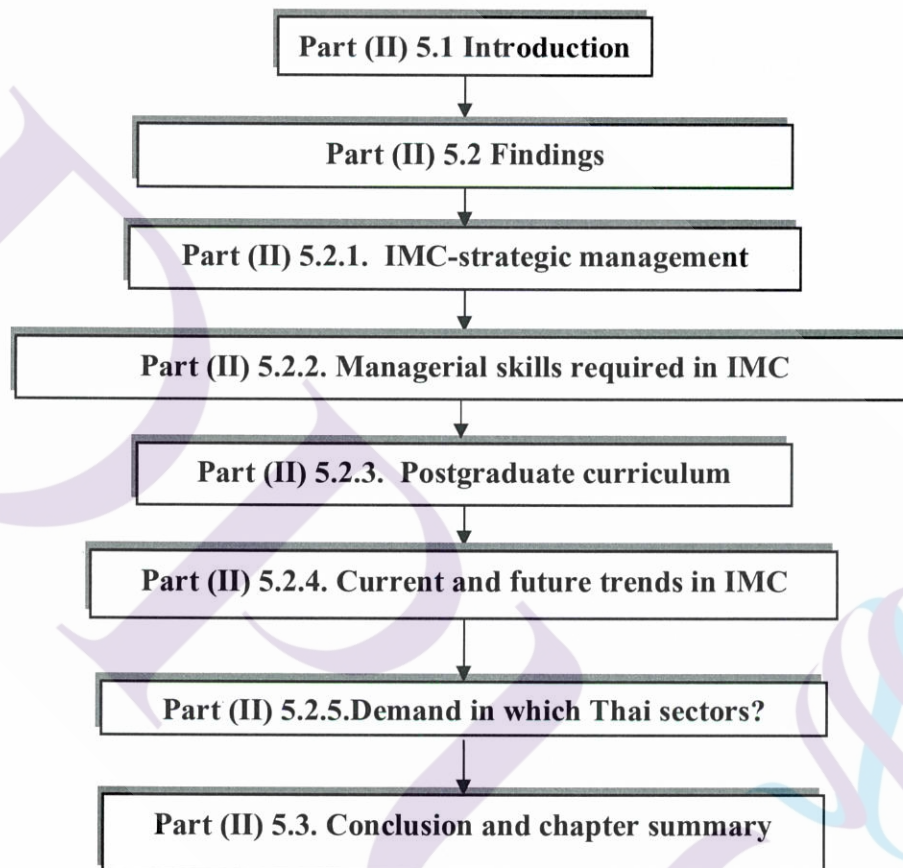
Source: Developed for this research

Interview transcripts were analysed against the conceptual framework to ascertain trends and themes to address the research questions presented in Chapters 1 and 4, respectively. For convenience, these questions are repeated below:

1. Is IMC a *strategic management function?*

2. What *managerial skills* must practitioners in IMC have (with postgraduate qualifications) to contribute to effective business management?

3. What should be added to postgraduate *curricula* in IMC to enhance these skills for professional practice?

4. What *knowledge* should postgraduates in IMC have to be effective in professional practice?

5. What are the *current and future trends* in IMC in Thailand?

6. In what Thai sectors (private, public or non-profit) will there be a *demand* for IMC?

Thai higher education was included as a "sample" group with the objective of ascertaining an understanding of the issues in higher degree curriculum considerations and design in Thailand.

The analysis of the interviews on the question "Is IMC a strategic management function?" is discussed against the literature review and conceptual framework presented in Chapter 2. The work of the authors in IMC, strategic management and management theory are central to the analysis is presented in Table 5.9.

Table 5.9: Authors whose work is used for analysis

IMC	Strategic management	Systems Theory	Complexity Theory
Kliatchko (2008) Anantachart (2001-2007)	Wheelan and Hunger (2008) Kreitner (1998) Hubbard (2000) Certo (2003) Ivancevich et al., (1994)	Littlejohn (1989)	Anderson (1999) and (Holland 1975)

Source: Developed for this research

PART II: 5.2. FINDINGS

Part (II) 5.2.1. QUESTION 1

IS IMC A STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT FUNCTION?

Before presenting in-depth discussion on this research question, a preview of evidentiary **excerpts** to the premise that IMC is a strategic management function is presented in Table 5.11 and the **themes** evident from the responses in Table 5.11.

The response from all four groups (professionals, agency executives, professional body executives and academics) to the above question was overwhelmingly positive and supported the views of Krietner (1998) , Certo (2003), Hubbard (2000), Wheelan and Hunger (2008) and Kliatcho (2005; 2008).

Table 5.10: Selected responses highlighting IMC as a strategic management function

- "It involves aspects of assessing current situations, using information to strategise, plan and implement programs to address situations for the success of the organisation."
- "IMC as a strategic management function is very important for organisational success"
- "It supports organisation financial gains. Its efficiency, profitability, costs less than doing advertising on the one side, PR on the other. You integrate it and get better results."
- "IMC is integral to organisational success in the new challenge of reading audiences"
- "IMC is a strategic management function used for brand management function and communication and as a business strategy to keep abreast of competition."
- "An outside-in approach to strategic management"
- "Operates efficiently in an open system."
- "Facilitates integration at all levels in an organisation."
- "Integrates finance, marketing, human resource and information management"
- "Important to both domestic and international Thai market because of competition"

Source: Developed for this research

The themes evident from the depth interview are identified below in Table 5.11:

Table 5.11: Themes evident from the interview responses

- is a component part of a business strategy
- is based on planning
- involves analysis
- is based on strategic thinking
- is strategy practice based
- involves implementation
- involves the integration of organisational and communication functions
- integrates (corporate, business and functional strategies)

- involves target segmentation
- is focused on customer and stakeholder relationship management
- includes media strategy: planning and buying
- focuses on brand management
- tracks competition (and facilitiates positioning within competition)
- uses branding to cut through clutter
- involves issues and crisis management
- is the custodian of reputation, image and perception management

Source: Developed for this research

Management functions are based around planning, organising, leading and controlling (Certo 2003, Ivancevich et al., 1994, Drucker, 1995 and Kreitner, 1998). The IMC-strategic management analysis (Question 1) in this study is based on Kliatchko (2008), Certo (2003), Wheelan and Hunger (2008), Kreitner (1998) and Hubbard (2000) whose works were discussed in Chapter 2.

Because of the diverse and developmental nature of IMC, while themes are evident, they are often integrated into and across other themes, for example, while one respondent may focus on branding as the most important return on investment, branding may be discussed by another respondent as a key strategy in addressing changing consumer behaviour, or yet another may regard branding as the most important component in brand message consistency. As discussed in Chapter 2, IMC strategies are custom-made and therefore the use of the IMC components may differ depending on the objective and purpose of the IMC strategy.

There was strong agreement among respondents that IMC is regarded as a strategic management function in the overall organisational strategy underpinned by the theoretical foundations of open systems, complexity theory and the inside-out

model espoused by Schultz (1999).Table 5.12 identifies the tenets of IMC identified by respondents.

Table 5. 12 Tenets of IMC identified by respondents

Open systems **Complex organisations** **Outside-in approach**

Source: Developed for this research

Evident from the responses is the relationship between complex organisations and the environment in which they operate IMC is regarded as a strategic management function and this is evident by comments such as "it involves aspects of assessing current situations, using information to strategise, plan and implement programs to address situations for the success of the organisation" implying that some organisations are complex. Comments from respondents such as "operates efficiently in an open system" and on an "outside-in approach", "facilitates integration at all levels in an organisation" and

" operates efficiently in an open system" indicate the alignment between open systems, complex organisations and with the strategic issues(identified in table 5.10)

Open systems: From the systems theory perspective, the theme that IMC operates most effectively in open systems was evident. Respondents were of the opinion that organisations that actively engage with their environment are sensitive to the needs of their stakeholders and the environment in which they operate. One respondent held the view that *"competition underpins IMC ...more companies,*

more product, more media and less boundaries [geographical] for consumers to purchase.... And where there is a low level of consumer confidence, it is more difficult to sell. As a strategic management function, IMC can address, review and track this situation. IMC focuses on issues management, an important strategic management function. IMC repositions the organisation and is most important in competitive markets." The respondent added that *"competition is very high and also in term of media, it's not working just only(sic) media at the moment. It's communication channel planning ... and IMC in that as well. So we do not function as media [only]. Overtime we're trusted advisors for clients, so we can also answer the question on IMC [to solve the problem]"* (idem).

Central to IMC practice was the respondent's observation "that competition is tough and rapidly increasing" and that IMC is essential to addressing competition. On international competition, Thailand experiences the cross-border movements of strong Asian-based companies as they enter new markets. Gale (2002) identified four "key market dynamics" confronting Asian-based companies, namely, "speed of modern trade development, modern retail formats, improved retail offers and increased competition"(idem). Competition in Thailand, especially from China, brings new challenges to management. Product differentiation, cheaper products, saturated markets and geographical changes confront management. Anantachart (2001) recommended that communication tool integration might facilitate Thai business in maintaining market share and relevance in the competitive marketplace.

Complexity theory: On the point of complex organisations, two points were alluded to; one that organizations are complex and that communication facilitates both proactively and reactively in the management of turmoil and disarray in

organization; and the other, that through branding, communication facilitates cutting through clutter in complex and crowded markets giving organizations stronger and higher visibility.

Outside-in-approach: Supporting the premise of the open systems and complexity theories, there was strong support for the IMC concept as the outside-in approach which underlies the premise that successful organisations are receptive and responsive to the environments in which they operate.

Focusing more specifically on professional practice in the IMC-strategic management function, Table 5.13 presents the main points of the responses and the explanation to the points follow.

Table 5.13 IMC: Responses to the question 'Is IMC a strategic management function?"

Research
Planning
Analysis
Strategic thinking
Problem resolution
Strategising for the media
Stakeholder management
Customer relationship
management (CRM)
Branding
Integration
Competitor analysis
Issues management
Reputation management
Crisis management
Change management
Creating awareness

Source: Developed for this research

The following discussion reports on the responses of the professional practitioners. Discussion on the theme includes planning and analysis, strategic thinking and management, openness to using IMC for problem resolution, media strategy, issues management, reputation, crisis and change management, branding, CRM and awareness.

Theme 1: Planning (Planning, decision making, information for decision making and strategising)

Planning and analysis: A strong trait identified by the respondents was based on their experience of undertaking research as information gathering.

One respondent remarked that research *"contributes to analysis, planning and implementation of strategies such as brand management and communication strategies."* Other responses were similar, clustering planning and analysis as management and strategic management functions as espoused by Kreitner (1998) and Hubbard (2000).

Another respondent said that *"we have to analyse everything especially for strategy development to address competition, reach target groups, create organizational and product awareness etc. That's why I think IMC strategy is very important for organisational success. It is an effective method for success."*

Strategic thinking and management: A respondent emphasised that IMC practice is subject to and based essentially on planning, creation and integration which is manifested in the management of campaigns, brands and image development. The view was extended in that the respondent regarded the collation of data as the source of information that informed the communication strategy and directed the branding

and image of the product or service. This view supports Pickton and Broederick's (2005) management process view that IMC is the process of integrating all information for analysis and decision making. This opinion also supports Ivancevich (1994) and Kreitner (1998).

Major themes of planning, analysing, integration and implementation emerged from another respondent who reflected the view that *"IMC is important to strategic thinking in relation to the big picture of the business. IMC is a strategic management function because it involves aspects of assessing current situations, using the information to strategise, plan and implement programs to address the situation for the success of the organization."* She continued by commenting that IMC integrates functions such as finance, marketing, human resources and information management through communication. She remarked that it *"is like a centre for coordination"* supporting the view of Katz and Kahn (1996) that communication is the neural system of the organization.

More specifically on strategy development, one respondent commented that *"strategy is a direction to develop [a]campaign. It's the first step. I think it relates to the management function because we have to collect all marketing needs and marketing briefs from clients, and then we merge with the communication aspect."* Part of the strategic process in the IMC practice in her agency was information gathering before strategy planning and development. Themes evident in this response are direction, leading (Creto, 2003), information gathering for decision making (Kreitzner 1998) and Hubbard's (2000) concept of integration and focus.

In terms of managing and directing strategies one respondent remarked that they *" brainstorm [with] every department – strategic, creative, and everyone in*

the same direction. So we decide to propose [to the] clients. If clients agree, so we go [in] this direction."

On the question of whether IMC is a strategic management function, the reply of another respondent was positive that IMC is a strategic management function; *"yes, actually, I think IMC in Thailand is very familiar with us. I [have] work[ed] with many, many agencies in Thailand. Actually, it's [an] international agency [and] IMC is practiced and [is known by] other names, for example, 360 degrees for some agencies. And another agency might call it 'total communication.' It's all the same thing – IMC."* The point made on the familiarity of IMC in Thailand supports the findings of the Anantachart (2001) study. The respondent added that as a strategic management function IMC *"answer[s] in term[s] of the communication objectives… [it is], expertise in order to help clients [for organizational success]." … … I mean, we have to understand very well the task that client[s] give us. So I think in term[s] of the [strategic] management view [which offers] better points of view… and a more integrated and effective solution."*

Yet another respondent said that *"I think it's a strategic function like in my company, they use IMC for building their brands or creating awareness. Yes, I think it's a strategic management function."* On probing on the function of IMC and its contribution to the strategic direction of the organization, the respondent was of the opinion that IMC contributed to *"planning and looking [to] the future."* In interpreting this point, the respondent agreed that *"IMC gives us a vision…. planning for the future…..like one year or five years, for a long future."* This supports Hubbard's (2000) long term planning in strategic management.

Openness to using IMC for problem resolution: In supporting

Anantachart's findings (2001), this respondent commented

> *"when I [began working] with [this] organisation, I think [it had] quite*
> *traditional thinking, but now I think they're quite more open [compared to]*
> *the past because they think about brand building and because every client*
> *likes the same [successful] future. So, now they look at image – how to*
> *enhance image, how to build brand."*

In explaining the strategic management function of IMC, the respondent noted that her clients *"always set a meeting for the presentation on IMC. So, they really take it as important because it reflects on the brand, on the products, everything. So, they [know] they need IMC."* In her opinion, IMC was used more on high involvement decision making situations, for example in the finance sector, in the automobile and airline sector where IMC was used in corporate communication and thereafter supported with campaigns and promotions to support the product range. On probing further on the application of IMC, she was of the opinion that IMC strategically integrates the various aspects of the job, for example organizational and product branding, reputation, image and perception management and motivating staff. These views support the tenets of management; Certo's (2003) planning and organizing; Kreitner's (1998) communication, and Hubbard's (2000) integration.

On brand building in Thailand, another respondent replied *"we do IMC [at] both above-the-line and below-the-line to brand building because some functions in above-the-line cannot do it. Like I handle event emphasizing CRM [customer relationship management). Above-the-line [alone] can't do it."* On a consumer focus, the respondent maintained that there is a strong focus on brand building

"because now consumers in Thailand have many different lifestyles. The products can develop the same features, the same benefits. So, when consumers decide to buy something like some products, they'll [be] concern[ed] [about] the image of themselves. Like a car, when you decide to buy a car, why people select Mercedes Benz better than Lexus? Because [of] brand building, because [of] brand image"(idem).

The respondent noted that there was a strong emphasis on brands and branding among Thais who were image and reputation sensitive. In terms of its core function of branding, positioning, reputation, perception and image management, IMC has a significant role to play in brand building and creating awareness of brands.

In supporting the above views, an agency executive's view was that *"consumers seem to use brands as a way of identifying themselves giving meaning, value, "philosophy" to a generation... contributing to a sense of meaning, feeling, thinking... and ironically an expression of self-differentiation through the mass, for example, the wrist band trend."* Relating this to the literature, in re-defining IMC within the realm of strategy, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) explained that the definition emphasizes the strategy of communication that is unmistakably linked to the mission, values and needs of the organization , but it also associates equally to brand mission, values, and needs. Management executives will need to develop character and quality in terms of brand distinctiveness, character and identity. They also suggest that brands and IMC will quintessentially give a competitive advantage (Kitchen and Schultz 2000).

Strategy - media: A respondent commented that the increase in the use and integration of below-the-line media strategies in Thailand has encouraged the use of IMC. The example of the Unilever Group was cited where she was of the opinion that the organisation had spent *"more and more money on CRM [customer relationship management] and experiential marketing."* The point that underlies this comment is that IMC operates through different tactical strategies but the strength of its integration contributes to organisational success, especially in competitive markets. In this milieu IMC is characterized by planning, creating, integrating, implementing and evaluating IMC programs for organisational success. This paradigm is synchronous with the models of management and strategic management discussed in Chapter 2.

Another respondent noted that *" media proliferation, the [large] amount of media now and the challenge of reaching audiences contributes to the growth of IMC as a strategic management function."* She added that IMC is integral to organizational success in the new challenge of reaching audiences. "In term[s] of mass audience, it's very easy, but in term[s] of communicating one-to one or [one to one] engagement is quite difficult. At the moment we may not need to achieve just only mass target but also we need to engage consumers to our brands, but it's very difficult." She extended her justification on the role of IMC to organisational success by including that "competition is very high and also in term of media, it's not working just only media at the moment. It's communication channel planning … and IMC in that as well. So we do not function as media [only]. Over time we're trusted advisors for clients, so we can also answer the question on IMC [to solve the problem]."

With regard to the IMC practices of issues, reputation, crisis and change management, it was noted that IMC strategically contributed to these functions as part of business strategy. These findings support Kreitner's (1998) planning feature, Kliatcho's strategic thinking and business management (2005) and his corporate and operational levels of management (2008) and Wheelan and Hunger's (2008) view that IMC is integral to strategic management.

Issues management: While issues management does not refer to regular organisation planning, for example, new product ranges, it is crucial to decision making and proactive management. Issues management identifies factors within or beyond organisational control that could negatively affect the organization. One respondent remarked that *"issues management personally gives me the chance to actually go through what has happen[ed] in the past, what's happening in the present, what's gonna [going] to happen in the future. And it gives us chances to bring in crisis management as well."* This view supports Kreitner's (1998) management imperative of long and longer term planning.

Reputation, crisis and change management: A respondent indicated that IMC is a custodian of reputation, in all matters, of the organization and that, crisis management, issue management and change management practiced in IMC are essential to strategic management as part of business strategy. He justified his view by demonstrating that a current international project on which he was working was initiated through findings in an issues management analysis which in Kreitner's view (1998) supports decision making through information gathering under planning in management.

Branding: The response of this participant illustrated how IMC was embedded in the culture of an advertising agency where the focus is on IMC plans and branding. It entailed the idea of using different components of IMC for strong message consistency (Kitchen and Schultz 2000). According to Kliatchko (2005) this agency's IMC focus would involve an extensive practice of brand communications, especially where brands are regarded as an asset. *Competitive advantage:* IMC is also regarded as a strategic contributor in keeping abreast of competition. One respondent was of the opinion that as a developing market, there is strong competition for Thai businesses within Thailand itself, within Asia and more broadly, internationally. The respondent was of the opinion that IMC can give an organization and brands a competitive edge in a cluttered market. From a strategic management perspective, IMC can contribute to Hubbard's (2000) business, corporate and functional strategies.

Stakeholder and customer relationship management*:* As part of planning, analysis and decision-making a respondent commented on the important role of IMC in stakeholder management and in keeping abreast of market changes and orientation (supporting the outside-in and the open systems view). Other significant points that emerged from this interview were that IMC is a strategic management function assessing current situations, using the information to strategise, plan and implement programs to address the situation for organizational success; that competition underpins IMC; and that there are now more companies (markets), more media, and less geographical boundaries for consumers to access products and services. Competition is robust, demanding constant organizational vigilance. Through its inventory of functions, IMC can contribute through environmental

scanning, boundary spanning or routine competitor analyses to minimize the risk of external competition.

One respondent gave a deeper level of insight, knowledge and understanding of the critical relationship between IMC and an open system and its relevance to business organisations in the national and international market place. Another strategic management responsibility espoused by this respondent was to understand the consumer and in particular, the target groups of the organisation. In his own job he was heavily involved in stakeholder analysis and management, reputation management and image management.

The respondent added that within the strategic management framework he analyses the problem, identifies the issues in the situation and recommends how it could be corrected.

"Yes, it is very successful because we have to plan how to solve or prevent the problem. But you have to prevent [it] because the strategy is very important to the top management to think about that. But most of the strategic planners are graduate[s] in Master's degree because you have to analyze the number[s], you have to analyze the competitor[s]. If you finish the analysis, you have to communicate it to every department and top management and how to solve the problem."

Other essential attributes of IMC in this organisation included strategic development to address competition, target segments, creation of organizational, product and service awareness. The respondent is of the view that IMC is integral to organizational success.

Efficiency (from communication integration) and profitability were important considerations in business, was the opinion of another respondent who believed *"it [IMC] gets a better result and probably cost[s] less than doing the advertising on the one side, PR on the other."* She agreed that at management level, IMC is highly regarded.

Creating awareness: IMC as a strategic management function was also appreciated for how it informs and how it creates awareness among target groups. A respondent commented that *"creating an awareness..... [is] the most important point of IMC."*

Strategic segmentation (target groups): As part of strategy development analysis on who the organisation is "talking to" is of critical importance, and integral to the "analysis" component of management functions.

Changing consumer behavior: In summarizing this point, a respondent agreed to the interpretation from this interview that *"Thais are becoming more and more conscious of image and brand; that Thais are a very image conscious society and that for as long as Thai society is image and reputation sensitive, brand building and awareness will be an important part of Thai life. And that the brand will have to communicate to get the attention of the Thais".* To this end, IMC will have a strong input through analyzing consumer shifts and developing and implementing strategies to address these shifts.

The themes that emerged from this participant confirmed that IMC is a strategic management function. The respondent was of the view that IMC was a known practice in Thailand, supporting the view of Anantachart (2001, 2003, 2007) where he suggested and alluded to IMC growth in all three sectors; private, public

and nonprofit.

The assertion that IMC is a strategic management function was based on the participant's opinion that IMC contributes to the vision, planning and strategic direction of the organization. *"The challenge for communicators today is to earn the attention of its target groups… consumers today multi-skill… and generally consumer behaviour has changed. Younger consumers seem to be questioning "Who am I?"… "What do I believe?"* The respondent added that consumers come first and today reaching them at their contact points is one of the foremost challenges for managers working on business, corporate and product strategy. The 'customer comes first attitude' has been put into today's practice as we can see that many companies regard contact points as one of the most important aspects in business planning. This reflects the notion that IMC is customer focused. Schultz (2003) viewed the "development of IMC to be customer centric – so that there is full understanding of target groups or segments. The respondent also expressed the importance of internal marketing and its role in strategic management. The perspective reflected the view of Mosley (2000) that profit and growth are due to both customer and employee loyalty and satisfaction.

In accordance with Medh and Makhijarni's (2007) longitudinal study, consumer needs in Asia are evolving continuously and organisations need to keep pace with the development, and brands must constantly evolve, reposition and differentiate on one of the key dimensions rather than trying to be superior or different in all dimensions (idem). IMC campaigns must be customized for specific objectives and within the overarching goals of the organization IMC will contribute to the strategic management functions. One of the current demands on management is to understand the rapid changes in consumer behaviour in terms of product choices,

information needs and psychological and physical needs. IMC facilitates the understanding of consumer behaviour through formal and "informal" research.

In his review (discussed in Chapter 2) on the development of IMC, Kliatcho (2005, p. 1) stated that *"rather than being considered as a revolution in marketing thought, IMC emerged as a natural evolution, brought about by drastic changes in at least three main areas: the marketplace, media and communications, and consumers."* He suggested that the growth of IMC was driven by drastic change in the marketplace, media and communications, and the growing sophistication of the customer. Other factors such as technology, the focus on branding and the trend of globalization also drove the need for IMC. In addition, the factor driving the IMC philosophy even further is the explosion in internet technology and e-commerce that facilitates the possibility of one-on-one interaction and two-way communication between sellers and buyers (Schultz & Schultz, 2003).

In combining the literature and the findings of this study, the evidence suggests that IMC contributes to the goals of business. It is also integral to firms with strong brand relationships which have significant advantages, including getting a higher share of wallet and obtaining price premiums, which both result in increased revenues. These firms achieve faster acceptance of new offerings; have less cash flow volatility and less risk, and keep their market share with fewer resources allocated to marketing and communication thus reducing costs. IMC contributes to the long term effects of building brand equity and shareholder value and contributes to business, corporate and functional strategies (Hubbard, 2000).

The views above from middle-management professionals offer evidence-based arguments that IMC is a strategic management function contributing to

individual, collective and organisational identity, stakeholder, issues, crisis and change management.

Theme 2: Leading (Team building, motivation, leadership, interpersonal and organisational communication)

Addressing interpersonal and organisational communication the following themes were apparent: organisational integration and alignment, creating awareness, integrating client and agency, positioning and stakeholder communication (internal and external).

Integration and alignment: In a somewhat contradictory approach, a respondent was of the view that IMC could not be used to "fix a problem." The respondent's opinion was that *"if we cannot use the strategy or think in [a]strategic way, we cannot fix the problem by using IMC."* In other words the aspects of creating advertising, or holding special events or promotions will not address the issue at hand unless it is underpinned by strategic analysis and management...and yet, the respondent reflected the view that IMC was integrated into every aspect of the business. Another respondent remarked that *"everybody has to communicate [with] each other to understand more about the company. And also this affects the company, [or contributes] to [for example] corporate image or the products of the company. They have their own work anyway, but there will come a stage or process where we have to be able to simultaneously interconnect our information...integrate and interact."*

Creating awareness: A respondent was of the view that through creating awareness, IMC could reduce or facilitate brand switching, whichever was the objective of the organization. Due to the intense competition in Thailand more

segmentation was required. IMC also facilitates in co-branding which grows strategic alliances, for example credit cards and airline alliances. The challenge of reaching customer contact points previously focused on above the line media but today the trend includes other below the line media such as co-branded and co-sponsored events and the through the line medium, the internet. IMC facilitates in the strategic integration of media to meet organizational objectives.

Integrating client and agency: Integration within the agency was highlighted by the comment that they *"brainstorm [with] every department – strategic, creative, and everyone in the same direction. So we decide to propose [to] clients. If clients agree, so we go[in] this direction"* (idem).

Positioning: A point strongly made by almost all respondents was the role of IMC in organisational positioning, supported by one respondent's remark that *"IMC repositions the organisation and is most important in competitive markets."*

Stakeholder communication: Internal and external communication: While communication in management models seem to emphasise internal communication, (see for instance, Kreitner, 1998) external communication is equally critical (Wheelan and Hunger, 2008, Hubbard, 2000, Kliatchko 2008). Communication with important stakeholders both "inside and outside the company" is integral to the success of business today. One respondent remarked that *"(y)ou have to communicate with the people, with the employees, and also communicate about the company to your target or your customer."* Communication with stakeholders both "inside and outside the company" is integral to the success of business today. This respondent's insight supports Kliatcho's (2008) view that "IMC is a strategic management function and Brown's (1997) definition that "IMC has stakeholder

emphasis and market orientation."

The role of IMC in internal marketing was evident where one respondent used the example of *"how to improve call center services and ensure staff motivation and organization approved behavior"* supporting the motivation aspect of leading.

Theme 3: Controlling (systems and operations)

Within this management function, the following were evident: technology, database management and organizational integration.

Technology: One respondent succinctly commented that it is *"very difficult, and also talking with one-to-one, we might talk about the emerging media like online, digital, that kind of thing. It's quite new and we are not born to be with technology but in term[s] of the market, it already goes that way"* suggesting that technology drives business.

Database management: A respondent also discussed the use of database management for segmentation indicating *"we have the whole database to see trend. They just buy from sales but never log into the website. But some of them, they would use the website, only call to sales. But some of them use website only, never call. So we have to address different groups. Actually we cannot reach that 7000 customer [base]. We have a mass communication by e-mail. But when you separate into small group[s], you have to say it in different messages. The one who never use[s] online, you have to get them [to] start using [it], not expect buying. The ones who's already using, would expect them buying more (sic)."*

Departmental integration: A respondent commented that *"executives are starting to see that there's a need for... breaking silo phases in the group...the*

need for integration. If we see a problem we can inform the marketing department or we can tell the financial people. [Through integration] it's like every department contributes to the solution. So that is why it is important for IMC as a strategic management function to sit on each department because we have to help [integrate] for organisational success. Through the principles of IMC the problem is analysed, a strategy developed to address the problem which is communicated to every department and top management."

Evaluation: Marketing, strategy, product evaluation and internal and other external environmental analyses were also regarded as a form of control and evaluation in IMC.

The above discussion represents the views of the twenty middle management professionals who interface directly between the organisation and customers or between the agency and the client.

The following discussion analyses the responses of five agency executives.

Agency views

Five agency executives were interviewed and there was strong consensus among four agencies that IMC is a strategic management function. Their views are discussed in more detail below.

Agency 1: At the time of this study, the president of this agency who was also the immediate past president of the Advertising Association of Thailand, emphasised the view that *"embracing IMC was unavoidable and crucial in the competitive Thai market"*. This observation supports the finding in Anantachart's

(2001) study in which he established that marketing and advertising professionals in Thailand had largely accepted IMC.

In supporting his opinion the executive believed that while the growth and sophistication of technology has impacted product differentiation, IMC was pivotal to reducing the "clutter" and enhancing brand differentiation. This point was made with reference to the changes in the marketplace, driven primarily by advances in information technology; an opinion also espoused by middle-management professionals. In part this supports Schultz's (2003) view that the market would change to a more customer centric, data-base driven milieu.

Agency 2: This participant viewed IMC from a narrower perspective, believing that it was a "*management thing*" with affiliation to the client side. "*From my side, I work in [an] ad agency. IMC is maybe on the client side. Somehow it's a management thing because there're different parts that work on it. And I work with [a] PR agency and event organizer, media agency.*" This opinion is perhaps underpinned by this agency's focus where there may be a stronger concentration on public relations, rather than the IMC integration model.

Agency 3: From this participant's perspective, IMC is practiced mainly in international and multinational organisations. However, the respondent did indicate that elements of IMC (database [management], customer perception management and media management) are considered when planning a public relations campaign. The examples identified by this agency executive support the following tenets of strategic IMC

- research (gathering information through databases)
- customer relationship management

- database management

- understanding the target group

- and media management

Agency 4: In this response it was evident that IMC played a central role in the agency and its client operations. Integration of research, message development and design and choice of media were important considerations in a competitive marketplace. IMC was regarded as an important component of strategic management especially as consumer media consumption habits change, and because of media proliferation. The participant also brought attention to the emerging youth target groups who are *"multi-taskers"* (indicating changing consumer behavior) and who challenge the profession in terms of gaining and maintaining brand attention. He added that the use of traditional media is no longer adequate and the spread of contact points and times at which to reach the target groups were most challenging to the profession. The respondent concluded by saying that "information needs are totally different today and the function of strategic management is to work through these challenges – he ended this point with a rhetorical question; *"how can IMC be left out?"*

Agency 5: The executive of this agency saw IMC mainly as a marketing tool and where IMC contributed through direct marketing.

Summary

In summing up the responses from the middle management level practitioners and agency executives, it is evident there was strong support for and alignment of the IMC-strategic management paradigm from the twenty middle management

professionals. However, the alignment of and support for the IMC-strategic management paradigm seem to be less compelling from the agency executives. It is plausible that one of the reasons for the differences in opinion is due to the difference in academic qualifications in IMC or a related area between both groups. One of the demographic characteristics of the twenty middle management level professionals was the completion of a master's degree in IMC or a related area; this was not a requirement for agency executives who were valued as a sample because of their high level positions and experience and were not required to have the level or type of qualification as the middle management professionals. However, it is also plausible that the differences in opinion between individual practitioners and the agencies on IMC is that practitioners use IMC in their operations, while agency executives tend to focus on what their agency specializes in. This was suggested, for example, by agency2. It is also possible that IMC was viewed differently because of the nature of the work, the background and services of the professional practitioners and that of the agency executives who operate at managerial levels.

This may explain why there was strong link between theory and practice among the middle management level professionals compared to the agency executives manifesting in relative differences in opinion on the IMC-strategic management paradigm.

Professional body views

Requests were made to five professional bodies related to IMC of which four agreed to an interview. The fifth, while the request was made four months in advance and followed up five times, was a non-response. Views ranged from IMC as

a strategic management function, to IMC contributing to strategic management, with the marketing professional body maintaining that while IMC does make a contribution, marketing is an accountable function, alluding to it being a "superior" function in the organization or as Anantachart (2007) stated, that marketing was less positive towards IMC. This study also supports Anantachart's (2007) finding that practitioners in advertising were more positive towards IMC.

The Marketing Association of Thailand

Inherent in the response from the president of the Marketing Association of Thailand was the view that IMC was important to marketing. However, the integration or the master plan was the important role of the head of marketing. The positioning of the product in the market was central to IMC. The challenging marketplace and the dynamic changing nature of the consumer were also essential attributes to consider in the IMC mix. "*Well, in my opinion I would say that, of course, it's important. IMC's very important. But who's the one who's getting all these function[s] integrated. At each function, there're more specialists in its own, but then at the end of the day, it's the head of the marketing who's really putting everything, connecting all the other parts into one.*"

Advertising Association of Thailand

At the time of this study, the immediate past president of the Advertising Association of Thailand was available to be interviewed. The view espoused by this professional body was that IMC was the "*grand strategy… …As a matter of fact, for*

me, I think that IMC is the strategy or the grand strategy or the master plan." The respondent emphasized that the consumer is better targeted by integrating research, understanding consumer decision-making, brand image and brand positioning where connectivity [integration] of these essential attributes of IMC are important. While stressing the importance of analysis and evaluation in strategic IMC, the respondent expressed some reservation on the difficulty of tracking for the purpose of analysis and evaluation in IMC campaigns, attributes and activities.

Thai Direct Marketing Association

The perceptions and understanding of this executive were that IMC was a strategic management function in the context of advanced technology and the dynamic business environment. The outlook was that IMC facilitated a better understanding of target groups, media fragmentation and proliferation and directions in consumer behavior.

Thailand Management Association

The representative of the Thailand Management Association (TMA) was of the opinion that IMC was *"a strategic management function – absolutely."* He reported that TMA's membership included top management who accept IMC as a strategic management function. He was of the view that the key ingredient of IMC was integration which brought resource efficiencies for the organisation. Therefore as an important contribution to business success, IMC was added to the professional development programs of the TMA membership. In offering a more international perspective, the respondent accentuated that as part of its international commitment,

TMA has many strategic alliances, for example, with the American Management Association (AMA) and the Japan Management Association which in his observation positioned IMC at the same level of importance as the TMA. Sound leadership, through communication, was considered an asset to any organization, intimating that IMC is intrinsic to organizational success.

Public Relations Society of Thailand

Despite early contact with and numerous requests to the President of the Public Relations Society of Thailand, an interview for this study did not eventuate.

In summary, the most encouraging support came from the Thailand Management Association with the following comments:

- *"a strategic management function – absolutely.*
- *integration which brought resource efficiencies for the organization*
- *IMC was added to the professional development programs of the TMA membership"*

The Advertising Association of Thailand was also positive which was evident in the following comments: *"IMC was the "grand strategy... or the master plan"; that the "consumer is better targeted by integrating research, understanding consumer decision-making, brand image and brand positioning where connectivity [integration] of these essential attributes of IMC are important"* (idem).

The Direct Marketing Association's view was also supportive and represented in the following comments: *"in the context of advanced technology and the dynamic business environment. The outlook was that IMC facilitated a better*

understanding of target groups, media fragmentation and proliferation and directions in consumer behavior."

While the Marketing Association of Thailand was not overwhelmingly positive, it is encouraging to note that from the marketing perspective, IMC is being recognized as an important function in organisational success.

Opinions of academics

All five academics who were interviewed agreed that IMC is a strategic management function which involves research, analysis, target segmentation, creative solutions, considered tactical implementation, strategic choice of media and evaluation. The academics saw the development of IMC as a strategic management function and two academics remarked that as such on a broader level IMC in Thailand is being used to position and reposition Brand Thai and Thai brands due to the strong competition from China. Again, more broadly another saw the strategic role of IMC in Thailand in addressing the low level of consumer confidence through understanding consumer behaviour, addressing and re-addressing consumer needs and reviewing and tracking consumer confidence. These views support the tenets of IMC.

Summary and conclusion of the section

The evidence gathered from the focus interviews confirms that professionals of all levels consider IMC as a strategic management function. Their perception of IMC as a strategic management function is encapsulated and summarised in explicit and implicit responses such *as "it is part of business strategy;*
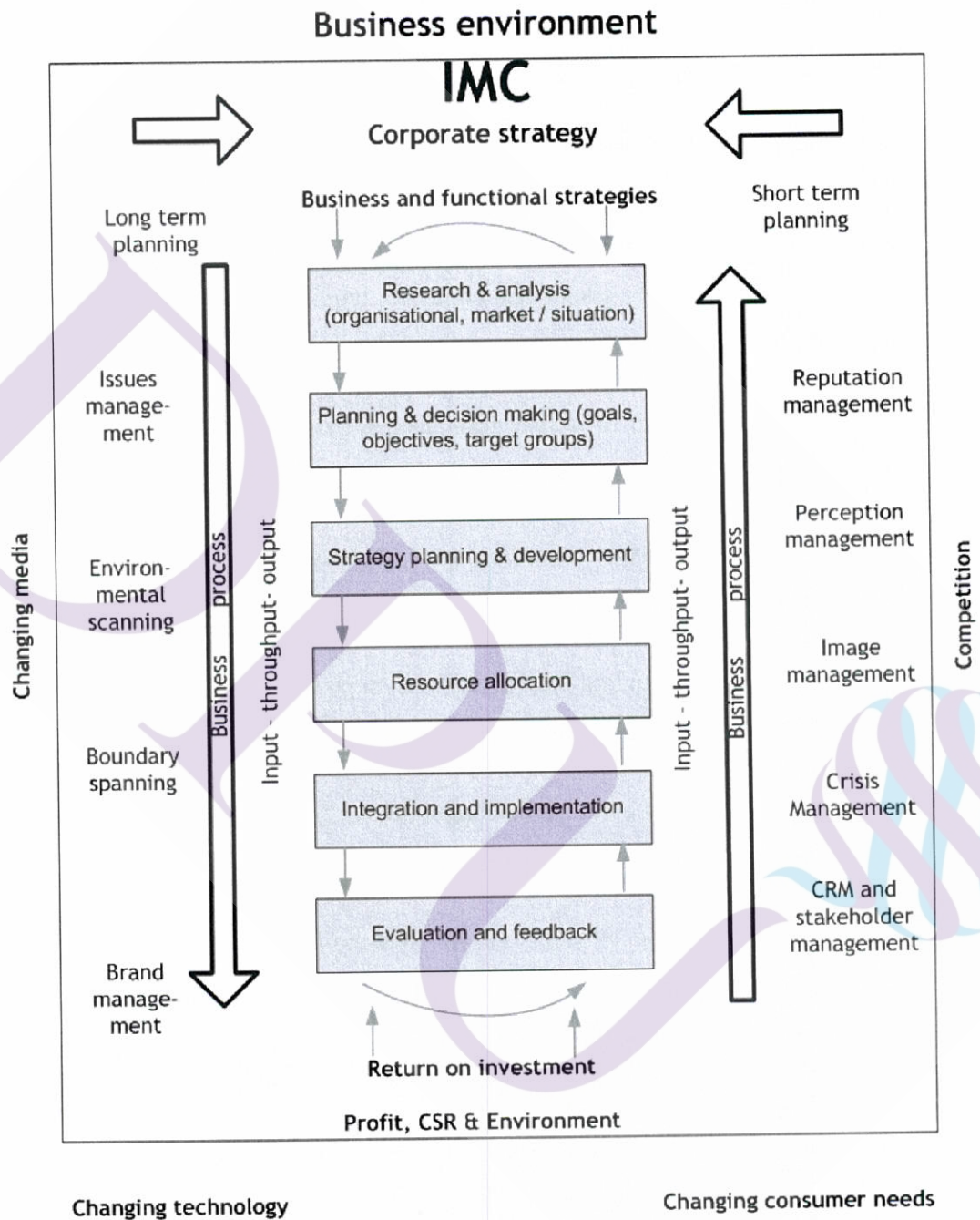
it is based on planning; it is strategic thinking; it involves implementation, it integrates corporate and business and functional strategies." These findings concur with the findings in the preliminary electronic survey presented in Part I of this chapter where strategy, planning, CRM, media, research and analysis were identified as primary aspects of jobs in IMC.

In interpreting the responses to this question, the following model has been developed illustrating the:

- central position of IMC within the corporate, business and functional operations

- integral role of IMC in research, analysis, planning, decision making, resource management, creativity, implementation and evaluation in an organization

- milieu in which IMC operates includes both internal and external environments

- contribution of IMC in long and short term planning

- broader environment of competition, changing technologies and changing media within which IMC operates.

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Figure: 5.29 IMC within business, corporate and operational strategies

Research, analysis, planning, strategy, creative, integration, implementation and evaluation

Business environment

IMC
Corporate strategy

Business and functional strategies

Long term planning

Short term planning

Changing media

Issues manage-ment

Environ-mental scanning

Boundary spanning

Brand manage-ment

Business process

Input - throughput- output

Input - throughput- output

Business process

Reputation management

Perception management

Image management

Crisis Management

CRM and stakeholder management

Competition

| Research & analysis (organisational, market / situation) |
| Planning & decision making (goals, objectives, target groups) |
| Strategy planning & development |
| Resource allocation |
| Integration and implementation |
| Evaluation and feedback |

Return on investment

Profit, CSR & Environment

Changing technology

Changing consumer needs

Source: Developed for this research

Part (II) 5.2.2. QUESTION 2

WHAT MANAGERIAL SKILLS SHOULD MASTER'S LEVEL GRADUATES HAVE TO WORK IN ("MANAGEMENT" LEVEL) PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE?

Introduction

This section of the chapter explores managerial skills considered imperative for IMC professionals. The first research question was answered in the preceding discussion and related to establishing whether IMC is a strategic management function. The second research question is "What are the managerial skills required for IMC professional practice? Responses to this question contribute to the development of a framework for managerial skills in IMC. In this study, managerial skills are defined as a set of skills including conceptual, analytical, decision making, people, technical and computer skills. A preview to the discussion that follows is that the findings in this study corroborate the alignment of the IMC-strategic management-managerial skills set.

Literature on management skills focuses mainly on conceptual, human and technical skills (see, for instance, Ivancevich et al., 1994, Kreitner, 1998, Certo, 2003). Invancevich et al., (1994) further classify these common three skills and add analytical, decision making and computer skills to their skill set. Skills identified in this study will be clustered against the suggestions of Ivancevich et al., (1994) as the additional three criteria allows wider classification for this study. At this point there is no postgraduate managerial skills configuration or framework in the literature for coursework IMC master level courses. The table below (Table 5.15) based on

Figure 5.29 positions IMC within the business, corporate and operational strategies of an organisation. The six aspects demonstrated in the horizontal boxes in the centre, portray the functions of IMC in these strategies. Core functions include research and analysis (information gathering), planning and decision making, strategy planning and development, resource allocation for campaigns, integration and implementation of organisational functions and media and evaluation and feedback. Complex, open and dynamic organisations interact with their environment by receiving information and giving back information to the environment through the input-throughput-output cycle. Toward corporate strategy in the business environment, IMC contributes to long and short term planning, environmental scanning, boundary spanning, issues and crisis management, brand management, stakeholder management and reputation, perception and image management.

Within the environmental demands of competition, changing technology, changing consumer needs and changing media, organisations must still be focused on managing strategically in the direction of their triple bottom line of profit, corporate social responsibility and the environment. In its capacity as a strategic management function, IMC is integral to the success of the organisation.

Ivancevich et. al., (1994) and which was presented in Chapter 2 is repeated for convenience.

(Idem): Managerial skills framework

Conceptual skills	See the big picture; goal focused; long range planning; changing environment
Analytical skills	Planning; diagnosis and evaluation; problem solving; develop a plan; forecasting
Decision making skills	Choice; Analytical
Technical skills	Techniques; measuring quality ;control charts; cause and effect diagrams
People skills	Leadership; effective communication
Computer skills	Use of software to perform a job; abilities in computer skills

Source: Ivancevich et al., (1994)

Skills are an essential part of the armoury that a manager brings to his/her position. It determines the level of effectiveness and efficiency of the manager's performance (Ivancevich et al., 1994). A skill is the "ability or proficiency" when doing a task (Ivancevich et al., 1994, p. 20).

Responses in this study were strongly positioned on conceptual and analytical skills, followed by decision making and people skills, and then computer and technical skills.

In summary, respondents from all categories, middle management professional practitioners, agency executives, professional body executives and academics identified managerial skills for professional practice. These skills are clustered and shown in Table 5.14 below. Policy makers in Thai Higher education also identified and emphasised the need for the same skills clusters, but for broader

application than professional practice such as to life skills. A summary of the themes evident in the findings are presented and discussed below.

Table 5.14   Managerial skills in IMC identified for IMC-strategic management function

Conceptual skills	Research, short and long term planning, problem solving, ability to strategise, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, understanding market and external competition, understanding consumer shifts, awareness of environmental changes, keeping pace with change, understanding whole and component parts, integration, insight
Analytical skills	Analysis, diagnosis and evaluation, problem solving, planning, strategy formulation, analysis of internal and external environments, competitor and gap analysis, B2B market analysis, analyzing consumer behaviour, analyzing market trends (B2C), reading reports, problem identification, forecasting
Decision making	Based on environmental scanning, strategy development and focus, creative ideas, alternate choices and direction
People skills	Leadership, team building and leading, team management, interpersonal skills, communication skills, negotiation skills
Technical skills	Formative, tracking and summative evaluation.
Computer skills	Software familiarity for great efficiency, better presentations, time management, tasks such as financial management, data mining and data base management

Source: Developed for this research

Conceptual skills

In this study the following skills were identified: research, long term planning, problem solving, creativity, planning, sensitivity to environmental changes such as consumer shifts, understanding whole and component parts, insight ,

integration and cost efficiencies were considered as conceptual. The following were apparent from the focus interviews:

Research skills: There was an overwhelming response on the need for research skills. This skill was highly regarded and deemed necessary at management level. The opinion was that the ability to carry out research is an important part of the repertoire in a manager's skill set to develop insight and understanding of the organization as a whole. As one respondent indicated that research gives direction and that the *"need to research and evaluate [contributes to] think[ing] about how's [sic] the way to go."* Kreitner (1998) indicates that failure to adequately provide for research could jeopardize and possibly lead to loss in national and international competitiveness. In other words, the health of an organisation is dependent on ongoing research which is expected in open systems. It is therefore imperative that professional practitioners have the essential research skills at the managerial level.

Undertaking research as information gathering was robustly identified by the respondents based on their experience. The respondents' view support the point made by Mazur & Miles, (2007, p. 161) that "today the tenets of IMC emphasise the in-depth understanding of a situation through sound research."

One respondent remarked that research *"contributes to analysis, planning and implementation of strategies such as brand management and communication strategies."* David (2008, p. 15) states that "strategic management allows an organization to be more proactive than reactive in shaping its own future." He records that the historical importance of strategic management was to devise and prepare stronger and sounder strategies through methodical and well-analysed strategic

alternatives. Research skills guide the location, identification and interpretation of relevant information for organisational and client problem resolution.

Long term planning: IMC contributed to *"planning and looking [to] the future."* In interpreting this point, the respondent agreed that *"IMC gives us a vision…. planning for the future…..like one year or five years, for a long future"* (idem).

Problem solving: Problem solving skills are essential for critical assessment on problems and to present effective arguments and for the ability to interpret client needs for the creative team.

Creativity: Focusing on consumers, a respondent maintained that *"there is a strong focus on brand building because now consumers in Thailand have many different lifestyles. The products can develop the same features, the same benefits. So, when consumers decide to buy something like some products, they'll [be] concern[ed] [about] the image of themselves"* (idem). Creativity enables the provision of ever improving value to the customer. It also enhances the organization's competitiveness. Creativity was also considered an important aspect of developing and presenting the big idea or for initiating new ideas; for developing effective and creative presentations, displaying creativity in presenting and negotiating with "top" management and clients.

Planning and entrepreneurial skills: The ability to be proactive and to be able to seek new clients or to have the ability to enter new markets was desired. Another point made under this skill category was the ability to identify new consumer contact points.

Understanding the market and external competition: as a conceptual skill, these were highly regarded and sought after. Practitioners, agency executives and professional bodies strongly emphasized this skill as being integral to managerial and corporate level practice.

Understanding consumer shifts: One of the challenges identified in IMC-strategic management practice was the sensitivity to and awareness of shifts in consumer behavior. As an organizational challenge, the ability to recognize, comprehend and appreciate consumer shifts was highly prized.

Environmental changes, awareness and keeping pace with change: One respondent extensively addressed this conceptual frame in stating that *"postgraduates have to meet [this requirement] as well because they have to keep up with trends and not just only media and also [the] market and consumer. Everything. Because everything changes a lot in term[s] of consumer, media, and marketing as well."* More broadly, these conceptual skills facilitate in keeping abreast of market developments (environmental awareness as in the political, economic, social and technological –PEST- descriptors), and dynamic adjustments and changes in consumer behavior, media and marketing demands. Keeping pace with changing trends in media and media consumption, and market development are considered in management. An awareness of environmental changes impacts short and long term planning.

Wheelan and Hunger (2004, p. 1) explain that "strategic management is that set of managerial decisions and actions that determines the long-run performance of a corporation. It includes environmental scanning (both external and internal), strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation, and

evaluation and control. Van Gigch indicates that "organisations must anticipate internal and external environmental changes and must proactively address these changes" (1974, p. 4).

Understanding whole and component parts: In terms of managerial skills that people in IMC should have, a respondent believed that they should have the ability to understand the *"big picture role of IMC"* (whole and component parts)."*IMC is important to strategic thinking in relation to the big picture of the business. IMC is a strategic management function because it involves aspects of assessing current situations, using the information to strategise, plan and implement programs to address the situation for the success of the organization."* She continued by commenting that IMC integrates functions such as finance, marketing, human resources and information management where IMC through its focus on communication, *"is like a centre for coordination"* (idem). In re-defining IMC within the realm of strategy, Schultz and Kitchen (2000) explained that the definition relates to the corporate mission and focuses on strategy where "corporate strategy is primarily about the choice of direction for the firm as a whole" (Wheelan and Hunger, 2004, p. 137). Based on the systems theory, today's managers are expected to understand the importance of the "big picture" (Kreitner, 1998). This implies the manager has to understand and control all aspects of the organisation. This embraces keeping pace with market trends, developing technologies and resource considerations.

Ability to integrate for message consistency: Integration is one of the most important tenets of IMC. The ability to effectively integrate departments, resources and media contributes to message consistency, cost efficiencies and cost

containment. In terms of integrating organizational and agency management, one respondent noted that *"negotiating with and [correct] briefing [to] an agency"* was also identified as an important skill. Another respondent commented that he*" just want[ed] the agency to focus or else we end up having mixed messages coming out …. And I want to work on strategically placed themes that…integrate."*

Insight: Insight into both internal and external environmental changes is paramount at managerial levels. Insight into consumer's relationship to brands and branding is also integral to IMC practice.

Ability to strategise*:* Another basic tenet of IMC is to strategise; it is a cornerstone of corporate, business and functional strategy. Roberts and Barnwell (2006, p.11) suggests that *"sound planning skills, good negotiation skills and good coordination skills are important for a successful career at a strategic management level in IMC."*

Analytical skills

A respondent commented that within the IMC-strategic management framework he analyses the problem, identifies the issues in the situation and recommends how it could be corrected. *"Yes, it is very successful because we have to plan how to solve or prevent the problem. But you have to prevent because the strategy is very important to the top management to think about that. But most of the strategic planners are graduated in Master's degree because you have to analyze the number, you have to analyze the competitor. If you finish the analyze [analysis], you have to communicate it to every department and top management and how to solve*

the problem." The respondent also alluded to the need for gap analyses in strategic IMC.

The most important skill another respondent identified was based in the comment *"I think analytical when you get the brief from the clients and you have to analyze what the clients need, and what we should do about the campaign. And also analytical skill in research."* The respondent also noted that in her opinion graduates should be able to read research reports..... *"The first need or requirement to get the good job must be [an] analytical mind and the skill to handle the problem, the problem solution. And work with group, team work. I think [of] the 3 things... the biggest problem is analytical skills..."*

In recapping, the respondent agreed that IMC is a strategic management function, and based on this envisaged a serious need for analytical and problem solving skills and teamwork. Writing and communication skills were considered important, but the "analytical-problem solving- responsibility –team work" skills were considered most important. *"I'm looking for the analysis thinking, and marketing metrics, evaluation metrics and statistic... If you can plan to hit the target, to [successfully reach] the target."* Analytical skills were also identified by one respondent regarding information management and the comment was *"we have "large" information, we have to be able to analyze [it] into smaller portion[s], like segmentation."*

Business-to-business (B2B) and business to customer (B2C) communication and CRM (customer relationship management): The importance of analysis of stakeholders needs was identified and discussed under the B2B and B2C relationship management model.

Presentation skill: Presentation skills are regarded important for proposal development including innovation, creative ideas and communication. *"For my company, it's not that important. Just writing the report. But it's very important how to analyze and how to present to the top management."* The ability to prepare and present effective and inspiring presentations is highly sought after in IMC.

Strategy formulation and strategic action: A respondent emphasised that IMC practice is subject to and based essentially on planning, creation and integration manifested in the management of campaigns and brands. The view was extended in that the respondent regarded the collation of data in relation to market needs and the client's brief as the information source that informed the communication strategy and directed the branding and image of the product or service.

Forecasting: IMC contributes to *"planning and looking [to] the future."* In interpreting this point, the respondent agreed that *"IMC gives us a vision…. planning for the future…..like one year or five years, for a long future."*

Decision making skills

As stated above, Wheelan and Hunger (2004) maintain that strategic management is based on management level decisions which affect the short and long term success of the organisation. Decision making skill is the ability to connect data, analyse and judge the options and potential outcomes of various alternatives.

Decisions may be made through results of commissioned research (primary) or secondary research, environmental scanning (both external and internal), strategy formulation (strategic or long-range planning), strategy implementation, and

evaluation and control. Analysis under decision making underpins the recognition of alternative choices, sound resolutions and new directions.

One respondent indicated that integral to managing and directing strategies was the *"brainstorming [with] every department – strategic, creative, and everyone in the same direction. So we decide to propose clients. If clients agree, so we go [in] this direction."*

People skills

Management skill: One of the fundamental managerial skills in IMC is to communicate with and manage people, both internal and external to the organization. One respondent stated that to be able *"to dissect their [management's] vision of how they want things to happen ...the ability to interpret management's vision"* was an imperative at the managerial level.

On good people skills linked by communication another respondent stated that *"you can work in a team, you can lead a team, and you can communicate, you can convince [others about] your idea, and execute the idea with the team."* In working with management *"you have to [be able to] breakdown and interpret the strategies , and "say this is what we think you're thinking.... To give it back to them in manageable, bitable, chewable portions."*
David (2008, p. 105) emphasises the role of communication in strategic management and believes that " communication may be the most important word in management."

Interpersonal skills: As customer and stakeholder management are central to IMC, people skills are also important for this aspect of the business. One respondent indicated that in his job communication skills, especially interpersonal

skills were important because he worked in client service *"so we have to cooperate [with] every department [organizational integration] so I'm middleman….communication with for example the research and creative areas. So, I have to convey the right message, so we get the right result."*

Negotiation skills: Negotiation skills are necessary for persuasive communication and co-operation. One respondent remarked that *"negotiation and people skills are critical to better manage clients and client needs. When you face the clients, you handle the clients – different kinds of clients, you have to know when to pull and when to push- negotiation."* Another said that *"I believe that one of the major [skills] is negotiation skills 'cause some people believe that it's partly presentation skills as well but you do need negotiation skills to be able to persuade at a personal level to try to be able to connect with who you try to negotiate with because presentation skill is more of a surface. But when you have negotiation skills, you're able to interact personally."*

Cultural sensitivity: A very important point (lengthy as the quote is) was made by one Thai respondent regarding cultural sensitivity and the role of negotiation in this regard. *" I think it comes down to negotiation because from what I experienced is sometimes when Thai people deal with foreigners, Thai people tend to be…not straightforward but…'a politeness"… …and there's almost a complexity where you may not agree but you will not say directly that you did not agree."* He added that **"***it has caused problems before when dealing with foreigners because you don't say that you don't want something from the beginning and then they come back and charge you for it. You say, no I didn't agree on this and they say yes and you say*

no. So, you know what I mean?…"I don't want [to] stereotype Thai people but most of the time people do deal like that."

On probing how this situation can best be handled, the respondent replied *"well, from my experience, there's a time when you state your case and then there's a time when you don't which means that when you're in a meeting, in a public meeting, when you're in the meeting that there're different executives and a lot of people, you don't say it. You don't talk up. But when you're in a private meeting or after the meeting, you can state your case (respect). Dealing with management is a very important issue."*

Leadership and managing: One respondent stated that "*the hardest thing I found is to negotiate with top management. Leadership skills, especially in managing teams is important, but I think you get better when you're on the job but it's better if you prepare.*" In IMC leadership skills include team leading and team building.

Communication*:* Sound communication skills are required to present the idea Mazur & Miles, (2007, p. 161). One respondent remarked that "I think *communication skills* [are most important] because you have to communicate both *internal[ly] and external [ly]*. Communication skill was regarded an important managerial skill noted especially for the purpose of negotiating and communicating both internally and externally. Another respondent focused on the importance of communication and said " *I think it's important for the presentation skill because once we have the plan for the idea, we have to sell it to the clients, and we have to make it clear and look reasonable for the clients….you don't need to put all the information in the presentation. Maybe conclude, or make it clear and*

understandable to the clients."

Schultz and Kitchen (2000) explained that the first focus of the IMC definition is on the strategy of communication relative to the overall corporate mission, values and needs and simultaneously and equally relates to the brand mission, values, and needs. Kliatchko (2005, p. 25) opines that "communication should not be considered merely as a support or a tactical activity, but as a strategic management tool seen in terms of investments, returns, and how it contributes to business results and the success of the organisation as a whole."

Technical skills

Technical skill is the ability to measure quality, to control projects through project management skills and be able to demonstrate cause and effect diagrams. A respondent saw technical skills manifest in "formative, tracking and summative evaluation in IMC which are integral to best practice IMC".

Computer skills

Computer skills were identified as an important managerial skill, and acknowledged for *greater efficiency, better presentations, time management, data mining and database management.*

Other comments included:

Updating knowledge on technology: Keeping up with trends in technology was considered an important contribution to professional practice as new technologies drive the communication sector, for example, new marketing information systems, databases and data mining and new media. A comment was

made by one respondent on technology and time management: *"If you understand the technology, then you can save your time during the day. Understanding and a sound awareness of software, the ability to keep pace with communication technology, good technology skills (to tap into the new generation as an emerging market).* She pointed out that an ability to *integrate digital media* into the practice is also considered a necessary skill. *"For example, these people should know about blogs and online social networking websites like hi5.com and facebook.com."*

Database management, analysis and data mining: Another computer skill that was identified as necessary at the managerial levels was that of database management, analysis and data mining.

Personal attributes

Within the definition, the research question, the literature review and the conceptual framework, personal attributes were not identified as a managerial skill because by definition it is not a managerial skill. However, it is worth noting the many comments made by the respondents. The following personal attributes were identified which were also identified in the survey.

Positive attitude: A positive attitude to work and keeping abreast of trends and business related issues.

Open attitude: The point made on positive and "open" attitudes is well illustrated by the quote of this respondent: *"one who has an open attitude will have more well-informed ideas. ....And you develop yourself. Maybe the learning attitude also for every profession, especially for us because we need to keep up with the change. And the change has gone so fast, so you need the learning attitude to be able*

to at least catch up." Another respondent remarked *"when I employ someone, I will check their attitude first. And if they have 'can-do attitude', I will hire them. So, after they have 'can-do attitude', they can learn. Yes, for my field, for my field of work, I think attitude is more important than skill."*

Responsibility and self-directed working ability: In combining knowledge and skill, the formula from this respondent was: *"Academic knowledge – analytical mind – responsibility…have to create this together"*

Independent and self-directed working ability: This view was implicit in the responses of all sample groups to the question on managerial skill requisites.

Continuous education: Continuous or lifelong education was identified as an important determinant of sound managerial skills.

Managing pressure: Managing pressure was also identified as a "managerial skill."

Time management: Time management was identified as an imperative "managerial skill".

Writing skills: In relation to the managerial skill of communication, good writing skills were essential.

A formula? One respondent summed up essential managerial skills by combining managerial functions and managerial skills and commented that " *the formula is -sound planning skills, good negotiation skills and good coordination skills are important for a successful career at a strategic management level in IMC."*

Agencies, professional bodies and academics:

The opinions of the above groups (agencies, professional bodies and academics) have been clustered, and with a comparison of the opinions of the middle management level professionals, is presented in Table 5.15 below. Selected points made by the agencies and professional bodies are explained after the presentation of the table.

Table 5.15 Managerial skills identified by middle management level professional practitioners, agency executives, professional body executives and academics.

Skills and attributes	Prof. Practitioners	Agencies	Professional bodies	Academics
Analysis	Understanding whole and component parts	Analysis, and ability to hypothesise Lateral thinking "Imagination-hypothesis-knowledge" "hypothesis-analysis-problem solving" Thinking 360 degrees Critical thinking	Analysis, and Lateral thinking Ability to interpret	Analysis, critical thinking
Research skills	√	√	Research skills, reading research, trends, interpreting information and discovering information	√
Planning skills	Planning, Entrepreneurial skills Forecasting	√	Understanding whole and component parts	
Problem solving	√ and insight	√	√	√
Making decision	√		√	
Strategising	Formulation and action			√
Consumer, Competition,	Understanding competition ,			

environmental changes	consumer shifts, environmental changes			
Creativity	√	Creativity, and idea generation; thoughtful, creative solutions	Creativity and the "big idea"	√
Ability to integrate	Integrate for message consistency	√	Integration at business, corporate and functional levels Integrating tools	
Evaluation skills	√	√		
Leadership skills	Managing people		And human resources	√
People skills	Managing people		√	
Communication skills	And interpersonal skills		√	√
Customer relationship management	√	√	√	√
Negotiation skills	√			√
Computer skills	√			
Team work	√		√	√
Writing skills	Writing skills, presentation skills			√
Attributes	Keeping pace with change Cultural sensitivity Positive, open, can do attitude Responsibility and self-directed working ability Continuous education Managing pressure Time management	Good listening skills Passion to communicate Good observation skills Less self-centredness Positive attitude Attitude to learn Motivation to discover Eye for detail	Self-learner Autonomous worker Positive attitude	Reliability Responsibility

Note: √ The tick represents agreement by the respondent group that the skill is needed.

Source: Developed for this research

In addition to the clustered results in Table 5.15 above, selected comments from agency and professional body executives are discussed for more insight into their opinions.

Selected comment for professional practitioners

Cultural sensitivity: It is worth noting that professional practitioners identified cultural sensitivity as a personal attribute. In general, 'intercultural communication competence' is often considered a "partly inherent but partly learned skill" (Chaisrakeo & Speece 2004, p. 269). This means that as a managerial skill under the "people" component (Ivancevich et al., 1994), this skill may be developed in a postgraduate program.

Selected comments from agencies

While the comments from the agencies have been summarised in Table 5.1, detail of the comments is worth noting as these may be considered as a skill set in the development of postgraduate attributes in a curriculum.

Good listening skills: This was considered a most important skill as listening is regarded as the platform from which one communicates, from listening to and understanding the customer, employee etc.

Passion to communicate: Passion was identified as a skill, but within this study it may be regarded as a personal attribute. Nevertheless it is worth noting as an attribute, similar to those attributes identified by the middle-level management professionals.

Good observation skills: This skill was linked to listening skills where observation would act as a method of information gathering and informed judgment upon which to base strategies.

The following skills were identified to develop lateral thinking:

Ability to hypothesize: This was linked to the ability to think laterally by *"using logic to justify and find the way."*

Imagination – hypothesis – knowledge: This was another "formula" for lateral thinking which was needed in the profession.

Hypothesis – analysis –problem solving: Another combination of skills for lateral thinking.

Less self-orientation: The comment was made that there should be less of what was termed self-orientation, meaning self-centredness; *"you have to communicate in terms of the listeners, not in your term (sic) especially within the IMC world, you don't dictate the term[s]. You have to earn the interest. You have to be part of the interests…that's why people [are] interested in your communication."*

Attitude: As with the middle level management professionals, attitude was also identified as an important attribute.

Selected comments from professional body executives

Undergraduate versus postgraduate level: The view here was that at the undergraduate level students are taught how to think; at the post graduate level students should be taught how to analyse. Case studies could be used, not just for discussion purposes, but for analysis where students are taught the procedure to analyse.

Self-learner: At the managerial level, incumbents must be self-learners, indicating that there must be autonomy, self-direction and self-motivation.

Reading research and trends, interpreting information and discovering information: These skills were discussed as a key part of analysis at the

managerial level and a skill that contributes to informed judgments for short and long term planning.

Creativity: The comment was made that creative thinking, creative as in the big idea, was a much needed skill at the managerial level.

Integration: The ability to integrate at the business, corporate and functional levels was also identified.

In concluding

The evidence gathered from the focus interviews indicates that managerial skills are essential to the strategic manager. Analysed against Ivancevich's e.al., (1994) managerial skills framework the responses from the interviews confirm that these managerial skills are integral to IMC as a strategic management function. These results concur with the findings in the preliminary electronic survey presented in Part I of the chapter. There are also similarities in the managerial skills identified by the four groups, the middle management level professionals, agency executives, professional body executives and academics (see Table 5. 17)

PART (II) 5.2.3 QUESTION 3

WHAT ARE THE CURRICULUM CONSIDERATIONS FOR ENGLISH MEDIUM POSTGRADUATE COURSEWORK PROGRAMS (MASTER'S LEVEL) IN IMC?

Introduction

In furthering the inquiry, respondents views to the third research question "What are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC? is presented with the objective of proposing a curriculum for post graduate coursework studies (master's level) in IMC based on the IMC-strategic management paradigm which was strongly aligned.

Analysis proceeds against the adopted definition of curriculum, the research question and the research objective outlined in Chapter 1 and the conceptual framework in Chapter 3. As a preview to the ensuing discussion on the findings, the study found that curriculum considerations align with the themes identified in the IMC-strategic management paradigm and managerial skills previously discussed.

The results in this section are presented in two ways; first, the "knowledge" topics, the managerial skills and the teaching and learning methods have been collated and are presented in Table 5.16; second, a selection of comments are presented with the objective of highlighting respondent's views to the research question.

While views on managerial skills were covered under a separate question in the focus interviews, respondents also included managerial skills in their responses to the question on curriculum. Table 5.16 is a collation of discipline and

topics areas, managerial skills and teaching and learning methods identified by the respondents.

Table 5.16 Topic area, skills, teaching and learning methods

Discipline area	Topic area	Skills	Teaching/learning curriculum
IMC	Knowledge of IMC Marketing communication Branding and brand management Understanding competition Business knowledge (general business knowledge; media agency; research agency) New media Evaluation(strategy, agency) Metrics Crisis management Issues management Organisational behavior Psychology Advertising strategy Strategic planning Creating action plans IMC strategy(research & analysis) Analysis (marketing, competition, gap, SWOT) Optional: PR for crisis & direct marketing	How to deal with people Understanding work culture and ethics Problem solving Strategic thinking Creative thinking Reading reports, graphs etc. Creative thinking Creative ideas Creative message Big idea Technique for lifelong learning	Relate practice to theory: Case studies & field work Guest from different industries to exchange opinions Internship and real experience Visits to agencies and organisations
Manage-ment	Topic areas: Human resource management, Management, Management/MBA? Economics, Billings, KPI, measuring profit		
Marketing	Topic areas: Marketing; Marketing theory; International marketing; Developing marketing plans; Consumer behavior; Marketing management		
Finance	Finance, Accounting, Economics, ROI Optional: Statistics (research and analysis)		

Source: Developed for this research

Note: On Finance, Accounting, Economics: There were mixed views about these subjects being offered as a compulsory subject, for example through questions such as "Can be learnt on the job? Can be learnt later? Maybe do it through a short course with a professional body?"

The discipline areas identified are IMC, management, marketing and finance (there were some reservation on finance, accounting and economics) and not the arts as was the birthplace and historical position of IMC. Respondents also provided information on managerial skills under this question. Selected comments and recommendations are presented to offer more insight into the views of the respondents.

Selected comments and recommendations

On courses (subjects)

Brand building and awareness: One respondent added that her education also taught her that brand building and awareness were the first steps then followed by tactics, which is something she continues to advise her clients.

Issues and crisis management- on problem solving: A point made in the interview was how the respondent used the knowledge she gained on problem solving, issues management and crisis management. *"When problems happen with the clients, how [the principles of issues and crisis management] would assist and "what information the advertising should be talking about to the clients."*

Finance and economics: With regards to subjects such as finance and economics, one candidate remarked that she thought *"maybe finance because if the marcom people can know… can understand what finance is, they can recommend [a] good solution for the clients to save money, save budget, whatever. But now I think the marcom people don't understand about the money…We have to know what the return on investment is… I think it's very important."* These comments alluded to

management issues and evaluation in marketing communication. Another respondent made the point that *"in [the]Marcom curriculum, we didn't focus on finance [but] up in the high level, we have to [be] concern[ed] about billing, KPI, to measure the profit ... I think this knowledge we missed."*

Management and related subjects: On the question for the need for management related subjects in the curriculum, a respondent replied that subjects on human resources management should be considered and justified this position by adding that *"because we have to work with people and you have to know how to manage them, how to manage different kind[s] of people...how to communicate with them."* One respondent studied management in an undergraduate degree and believed it is an important body of knowledge and that master's level units in management should be offered in IMC postgraduate degrees.

Analysis and strategic planning: The respondent recommended a subject on *"strategic planning is important in [a] postgraduate curriculum because in Thailand there are only [a] few universities [providing] strategic planning subjects. That's why it's very difficult to learn that....because if you have to be a good strategic planner, you have to learn by experience or ask colleagues or friends or teachers"* (idem).

The respondent added that the objective of these reports is *"to prevent problem[s]. ...have to fix [these] before [it occurs]. These analyses are used to analyse and project for the next 3 months... how can we grow... [how we can reach our goals] in the [next] 3 months? And [from this] we have to learn about the economic and marketing [situation] to create a strategy and provide [it] to top management to make decision[s]."*

Strategic planning: Strategic planning and *"the actual strategic plan" and how you implement it…[how you reach] the target audience.. the primary, secondary, tertiary audience"* was considered most important to this respondent…adding *"but the thing that I don't normally use is the creative side. The actual campaign."*

He uses the principles of creative message design because *"[he has] to be able to brief the agencies so that they have a clear cut view of what message you wanna [want to] send across, mean creative, I don't mean out of this world. I mean strategically….how…to [contribute to]the triple bottom line…profit, CSR [corporate social responsibility] and the environment….because I believe it's not enough to create awareness anymore. …create awareness on what [sic]? It creates awareness on responsibility as well. That's the triple bottom line."*

The respondent mentioned that he uses formative research extensively *"in terms of knowledge needed in professional practice, the planning stage there's one area where it talks about evaluation [formative evaluation] how it is measurable and creating action plans."*

Thought leadership: A somewhat different point brought up by a respondent was on thought leadership and explained that thought leadership is used *"when you [want to] raise a profile of your company in terms of leadership, innovation, or whatever. Thought leadership as a strategy is very important because it tells people that your executive has the ability as an opinion leader… And as [one] says that economics is important and [to] understand what's going on around the world is very important because when you're in the company and you wanna be a leader in your industry, you have to be able to come up with thought leadership strategy"*

He added, *"I believe that thought leadership might be an interesting topic for IMC because it's a way of helping to raise not only your corporate profile but [also] the profile of your executives that are leading. I brought it up because it has worked for GE with Jack Walsh. It works for Samsung. The reason why I said it [is] because I had the personal experience to visit these leadership centers and it has raised the persona of GE. Everybody wants to work for GE because they teach you the leadership skills. That's why people [want] go work there. And because GE plays that theme as well on leadership; they play the theme of leadership, innovation. If you wanna [want to] look at how GE communicates you just have to go to their website. And it's 3 themes: environment, innovation, leadership. And they repeat it…"*

Business planning: One respondent's opinion on business planning was that in "IMC [one has] to know about business planning and principles including macro business and finance. Accounting is not a requirement. As to what should be added to the curriculum, she stated that most people in IMC had already studied subjects like media planning and research in the undergraduate level, therefore, these courses would not be necessary.

New media and strategy development: Training and skills development on new media was emphasized and a *wider selection of strategy development* should be offered to students.

Business management: *"There should be business or management [subjects]. Because when I work in the business, we have to talk to other department or the management people. We have to know about it. Because IMC is a part of company and it reflects on the ROI or the KPI on the unit"* said another respondent.

Analysis (and deeper learning) *:* On teaching students how to analyse, one respondent suggested that *"…. When we get the paper or the assignment on some topics, we have to write an essay. I think we have to research and look at the book, look at the website or something and analyze it. This is one way to develop the analytical skill."*

Another respondent recommended that analysis should be taught *"Teach how to analyse, for example, information searching. For example, internet, secondary data, primary research if you need formal, informal. ….Then I have to analyze it and how it can be useful for my case or my campaign and take that to analyze and maybe conclude about the key points….. First I have the broad field for all the information when I analyze. And I may take some key points and then go deep inside that point."* She added that with applying theory to cases, students could be given a case, or could choose their own case but she strongly commented that *I think the students can choose the case but at the end we have to apply some theory or the knowledge of the IMC to the case."* The comment on "some theory" is an important linchpin in this study; while professional practice is heavily weighted in this study, it in no way suggests that the content of theory in curriculum should be decreased, minimized or diminished. The professional practice of application of theory to professional practice must be based securely on theory.

Business models *:* On business models, another respondent commented that *"I'm not sure it's good or not to put the finance subject in the marketing communication because some students may be scared. A master's qualification together with finance and marketing knowledge…I think for me it's enough"*

Economics, mathematics: *"Economics is like something that [one] has to*

be aware of but you don't have to learn. You can have a basic knowledge about economy but if you have to take economy subject, business management subject... Yes, because students who take... who apply for marketing communication is like... actually they don't like mathematics, so they tend to learn about art, ..so you can put that subject in the optional. This comment reinforces the stereotype that students who study communication related programs are averse to working with numbers. The challenge to higher education is to develop courses that may be more user-friendly to students who need a basic understanding of these areas.

Marketing and marketing management: one respondent suggested that *"it's much better if we study marketing in term[s] of marketing management or basic[s] of marketing or something like that. So that's why we can shape our point of view, like when we deal with marketers, it's easier, I think....because marketers normally speak [about] profit".*

Marketing plan: One respondent shared that he was asked to write a marketing plan, but he wrote a communication plan which provided insufficient information for the company. He saw the marketing plan as a more comprehensive and inclusive plan... and commented *"you know, they need to know more"* implying that a marketing plan was more comprehensive than an IMC plan.

International marketing (and current affair): An interestingly point made by one participant was *"like I never know about the process of joint venture or the way they invest in other countries. It's like it's not the knowledge that I can find.....About the cultural gap factors....or explain the business? I have to learn about the social development in any country. And when I understand, it becomes my base of knowledge to develop strategy...when I was doing bachelor's degree I have one*

*subject that's called **current affair.** At that time I don't know much of Thailand but when I start the subject, I start learning so much. And I found that oh my god, I missed a lot [of] information. I don't even know my country economy [sic]. I don't even know [the] problems that already occurred."*

New media: A respondent expressed the need to constantly *"find new media, new contact points"* which was challenging and that students should be taught the skill of how to keep abreast of new media developments.

Digital media: About the knowledge that the postgraduate practitioners should have, a respondent said *"they should be multi-skilled in terms of digital media. These practitioners already have their business knowledge, so it would be advantageous if they could keep themselves updated, learn about other areas on their own, and link their knowledge with past experiences and bring it to work."*

Managerial skills

Creativity, creative thinking, creative ideas, creative message and its link with strategy: a respondent commented that *" Like a big idea. Strategic thinking .Strategic thinking about like when we have to develop the campaigns, so we have to... I think strategic thinking in terms of how to develop it creatively. I think it relate[s] together – strategic thinking and creative thinking because we got to differentiate idea from competitors, from other products.*

On the development of analytical skills: one respondent said that *"I have got [my] analytical skill from[an overseas] IMC program and compare to master's program in Thailand, I think we were not taught by that way... so management skill*

how to handle problems that face us. And how to do analysis, I think those skills I have got from IMC program" intimating the foreign program.

On lifelong skills: On the point of awareness and the continual development of analytical skills, one respondent shared that *"I always read some magazines and the news from the internet and have to think about and try to search some problem and then think about it. What is going on? It means I can practice myself."*

Presentations: With regard to presentations, a respondent remarked that *"we have to[create] order in the presentation. You have to make it like a system or...methodical and sequential? And make sure that you didn't give a too short or too long information [presentation] for the clients. Make it clear, short, and understandable."*

Teaching and learning

Internship on teaching strategy: Regarding teaching strategy a recommendation was made to *"encourage some internship or anything that you have your students to have real experience from the job....[where] you have to learn how to manage people, how to use all the subject that you study."* Another respondent suggested that part of knowledge building should include *"people from different industries, so we can exchange opinion[s]."*

Case studies: *"I think it's very good to practice on how to provide the case studies from many countries, many fields, many companies that has the problem and provide the student to solve the problem[sic] and how would they think. I think it's very good to improve or develop our strategy...many cases in many subjects...*

you can find many cases from your country and then bring it up and let me know about how to present and how to solve the problem. I think that's very good to help the student to find out the source and to find out the facts." This view was strongly felt by other respondents as well.

Ethics: Only one respondent discussed the topic of ethics and had a strong opinion that ethics should be taught at the postgraduate level. While it is the view of only one respondent, it is an important view to note as the profession is a self-regulated one and ethical considerations and conduct are critical to the success of the profession.

Postgraduate training: One respondent believed that her post-graduate education had sufficiently educated and trained her and she said " *I think what I studied help[ed] me to know how to handle the job, how to deal with the people....Let me grow up and teach me what to do with this situation."*

The comments above succinctly bring together the new responsibility that higher education is now challenged with. It also critiques university offerings. In terms of Thai education, the findings support Samakoses (2008) and Sinlarat (2007) on the need for analytical thinking.

How do these findings compare with the Kerr et al., (2008) and Sauber et al., (2008)?

In Chapter 3 the results of the Kerr et al., study were presented. In Table 3.1. the following strategic management functions, in terms of Kreitner's (1998) model, were identified; situation analysis, planning, consumer behavior, branding, objectives, budget, creative, implementation and measurement. In the courses

analysed, the following picture emerges:

- On situation analysis and planning: only 4 of the six courses included the study of situation analysis and planning in their courses

- On consumer behavior, branding, budgeting and measurement : these subjects were taught in all six countries

- On objectives and creative strategy: these were included in the studies in 5 countries, and

- On implementation: only two countries included this in their curriculum.

The emphasis on planning, decision making, organizing, staffing, communicating, motivating , leading and controlling were not strongly visible, perhaps as a result of the data being combined with the undergraduate courses. In the case of Sauber et al., (2008) the content of the program included brand development, creative strategy and media planning only (and not short and long term planning), campaign strategy and ethics and regulations. Both studies do not strongly represent the tenets of the IMC- strategic management paradigm, nor the managerial skills required nor the topic areas identified by the respondents in this study.

Thai Higher Education

The responses from the three Thai Higher Education respondents included issues on governance and leadership, research, teaching and the quality of program offerings, curriculum concerns and the relationship between universities and professional practice.

Governance and leadership

In this study, the reporting of the governance and leadership response is a broader issue and is not related to IMC education only. However, cognisance should be taken of the issues alluded to, for example,

- repositioning of Thai postgraduate education as it is in this milieu that the postgraduate IMC program sits

- reviewing entry requirements (to make it more stringent) so that the marketing of IMC programs may be sought after

- strengthening relationships with IMC related professional bodies for educational quality benchmarks

- strengthening relationships with industry bodies to create an awareness that the IMC profession seeks more qualified personnel.

Quality: Research, teaching and academic programs

There was concern raised on the lack of research output among Thai Higher Education academics. Research was viewed as inextricably linked to teaching and therefore linked to the quality of teaching. It was the view that academics need to develop teaching methods and examine their role as lecturers. The role of the student as learner was also of concern and the respondent summed up by saying that "the most important problem was quality of student and teaching [sic]." However, one senior member did discuss the imbalance of high teaching workloads and the high expectation of research output.

On the quality of academic programs, one respondent was of the view that Thai higher education must develop a sense of accountability and should have a

"strong organisation to control quality.... and that quality should not be determined nor controlled not by civil servants."

Curriculum

Concerns were expressed on the imbalance of curriculum design and learning outcomes. University autonomy and internal quality assurance was supported, but there was also support for well-researched and informed national principles as a guideline within a national quality framework. Contrary to this view, one respondent believed that Thai higher education should be encouraging autonomy. One respondent was of the view that the Thai curriculum was "fashioned for the west" alluding to Thai curricula not being designed sufficiently for Thai needs. Another view was that curricula were revised every five years with minimal change.

Another view expressed was that only basic education is taught, not creative, analytical nor innovative skills. Often a curriculum was not well integrated and was developed *"too piece meal."*

A curriculum should be fully designed and reviewed by the university based on sound research and should avoid complicated processes. A point made strongly by one respondent was that the quality of programs and the curriculum *"should be fundamental to developing self-directed learning"*

On attributes the of postgraduate students, the view was expressed by one member that the attributes should have the dimensions of what was described as *"progressive – creative- analytical"* where progressive included lateral thinking. The respondent also recorded the view that *"Thai education only trains followers, a pre-World War II model and has not yet moved to a post WWII model of research and*

knowledge generation which underpins autonomous thinking.... Students are too quiet....not interactive...not critical....no critique...." Other points made on curriculum were that it should be designed to include studies on the content of the respective area and ethics, and from a skills perspective, cognitive, communication, and interpersonal skills.

There was a strong view from one respondent on seriously addressing plagiarism in Thai higher education.

Professional practice

On professional practice, one respondent was of the opinion that the academic-professional weighting should be 60%-40% respectively. She was also of the opinion that a consultative model between academic and professional practice will enhance teaching and learning and learning outcomes. Co-operative education, experiential learning and work integrated learning (WIL) was strongly supported. Supporting this view, another opinion was that a closer relationship between professional practice and education should be encouraged. However caution was expressed that university postgraduate education should not become "checklist education" and must be based on a strong theoretical framework. A second respondent was of the opinion that university postgraduate education should be what she described as *"a springboard for self-directed learning."*

In concluding, the views of the three senior policy makers in Thai Higher Education supported the findings of this study regarding the need for research, analysis and what one professional called "out of the box" thinking.

Curriculum design and structure

This study presents seven considerations for curriculum development and design:

1. The requirement for IMC-strategic management practice and the managerial skills required which were identified in this study;

2. The curriculum structure (Donnan 2008)

3. The subject structure (University of Otago, 2007)

4. The capacity of programs to cover the matrix of topic areas in limited semester/teaching time, the financial implication for the institutions in terms of staffing and other logistics

5. That it is ambitious to anticipate that the extensive matrix of subjects could be offered in a single program. However, based on student profiles, theoretical foundations and professional practice needs, program outcomes may be achieved with the support of other education stakeholders. By definition, a curriculum includes the total experience, through learning content, practice, academic support, socialisation and other experiences at a higher education institution and therefore due consideration must be given to enhancing learning through other avenues, such as the professional body, professional practice, student clubs and societies, the student associations, embassies and high commissions, who through diplomacy often host visiting scholars and guests from their countries.

6. In curriculum development in Thailand, in addition to the managerial skill set identified by Ivancevich (1994), cognizance must also be taken of the views of Samakoses (2008), Sinlarat (2007) and the senior policy makers in Thai higher education. Among other issues, there was strong recommendation that graduate

outcomes in Thai higher education *"must embrace ethics, skills (in the range of "being able to work in one's profession to being able to work accurately (2004), and thinking and knowledge."*

7. Within this study, the structure of the curriculum is set against Donnan's model (2008).Chapter 6 presents the considerations in curriculum against Donnan's (2008) model.

In summarising

The subjects identified by respondents were based in the disciplines of IMC, management, marketing and finance. Subjects in the IMC discipline included brand and brand management, business knowledge, strategy planning and development, research and analysis and evaluation. In management, subjects related to human resource management, management, management and MBA related subjects, economics, billings, KPI and measuring profit. In the marketing area, marketing theory, international marketing, consumer behavior, marketing management and marketing were recognized as requisite subjects and under finance, accounting, economics, ROI and finance. A rendering of the challenges for curriculum management in Thai higher education was discussed and concludes with seven considerations for curriculum development and design.

PART (II) 5.2.4 QUESTION 5

WHAT ARE THE CURRENT AND FUTURE TRENDS IN IMC?

Introduction

Responses to this question were short and respondents referred to their comments in the IMC-strategic management and skills questions. The responses matched those that were recorded in the electronic survey and there was agreement on the current and future trends across the four sample groups. This question was not posed to the Thai Higher Education policy makers.

Current demands

Current demands for practice were seen mainly in the private sector and for managerial skills the following trends were identified; strategy planning and implementation, branding IMC in environmental awareness campaigns and addressing new targets as consumer needs change. The prediction is that the current sector demands are in the private sector, and in terms of management contribution, the current demand is on research, analysis, decision making, strategy, planning, creative, implementation and understanding of technology.

On managerial skills the current demand is for abilities in research, analysis, strategy development and planning.

Future trends

One respondent commented that *"with food prices going up, the energy [shortage], the fuel [shortage], other energy issues with global warming that IMC would be used really much more than ever before*

because there's going to be [stronger] competition. And because everything is expensive and resources are scarcer that you have to have the awareness there, that brand recall. So, more than ever now as we needed it in post WWII, we're going to need IMC to keep us in the mind of the consumer to get the consumer to spend their dollars on our companies and our products.... If you're going to survive nowadays, you have to communicate consistently. And if you think that by cutting cost you're going to cut communication, you're cutting blood line. It'll effectively ruin what you built yourself up for."

The future trends that were identified are tabulated below:

IMC will be integral to:

- Below the line marketing communication
- Consumer protection (for example, if a consumer is treated unfairly by a company, he/she would go directly to consumer protection center. This means that organisations must communicate better and IMC could help in that future)
- Internal and external communication
- Competition (will grow and IMC will be integral to positioning organizations and products)
- Niche markets
- Brand creation, brand management, brand awareness, brand loyalty
- Image management
- Media relationships and management
- New media/digital media
- Strategic development and implementation
- Integration
- Convergence – internal and external environments.

In summary, the current and future trends identified are in the private sector.

PART (II) 5.2.5. QUESTION 6

IN WHAT THAI SECTORS (PRIVATE, PUBLIC OR NON PROFIT) WILL

THERE BE A DEMAND FOR IMC?

Introduction

As in the responses to the preceding question, there was unanimous agreement among all sample groups (the question was not posed to the Thai Higher Education policy makers) that IMC will grow in the private sector, especially in agencies. In other private sector organisations, IMC will grow where brands become integral to business success and where integration is seen as an efficient method for brand management, message consistency and cost containment. Another area that was identified is where CSR is regarded as an important organisational outcome. Competition was yet another reason for justifying the growth of IMC in Thailand. Growth was envisaged in the retail sector, especially the fast moving consumer goods (FMCG).

In terms of the public sector, a comment was made on the growth of IMC in social marketing and political campaigns but with the caution that public policy for communication is too conservative and that in the developing world, IMC is thought of as public relations; and that the public sector is not knowledgeable on IMC.

The role of integrating media for effectiveness and consistency will be strongly demanded and IMC can play a role in redressing the rapid media proliferation and the continual launch of new media and growth in consumer information needs will impact the use of IMC. Supporting the above sentiments, in

the electronic survey, the responses to the question "sectors in which IMC makes a strong contribution in Thailand (for example, business, government or nonprofit organisations)" was that one hundred percent (100%) of respondents believed that IMC makes a strong contribution to the organisation in the private sector. For both the government and non profit sectors, only 10% believed that IMC makes a contribution. This may be because IMC is not practiced much and the public and non profit sectors are "not knowledgeable on IMC."

In the electronic survey, the 5 top requirements to meet current demands were described in a mix of knowledge and attributes identified as follows:

- Education in IMC
- Strategy and implementation
- Creativity
- Environmental scanning
- Team work

Part (II) 5.3 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the results obtained through the electronic survey and focus interviews. Data gathered from both were analysed against the conceptual framework and compared with the definitions adopted for this study to confirm concurrence and validation for each of the research questions in the study.

The first research question "Is IMC a strategic management function" was answered in the affirmative by all groups. The data from both the electronic survey and the focus interviews confirmed that IMC is a strategic management function. This

confirmation also concurred with the definitions and concepts on IMC and strategic management. In addition the respondent's current job responsibilities and their perception of IMC in the focused interview as "part of business strategy" are based on planning and "it integrates corporate, business and functional strategies" served as confirmation of the IMC and strategic management relationship. The objective of advancing a model for IMC as a strategic management function was achieved and presented in Figure 5.29.

In terms of the second research question in this study, "What are the managerial skills required for management level IMC professional practice", managerial skills were identified and aligned with the IMC-strategic management tenets. While the findings concurred with the definition and relevant concepts, personal attributes that were deemed necessary at the managerial level were identified. There was confirmation across the responses given in the electronic survey and focus interviews. The responses analysed against Ivancevich et al., (1994) managerial skills framework and compared to the definition for skills adopted in this study concludes on the essential managerial skills required for IMC-strategic management practice. The results obtained confirms that managerial skills are essential to the strategic manager, implying this result also serves as further confirmation that IMC is a strategic management function. The framework for managerial skills in IMC was presented in Table 5.14.

The responses to the third question on "what are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC" resulted in the development of a framework of topics, managerial skills and teaching and learning strategies for English medium postgraduate curricula (master's level) in IMC. Respondents also

identified skills and teaching and learning strategies. The results on all three research questions also confirmed the alignment of the IMC-strategic management function, the managerial skills required and the considerations for a curriculum to develop the managerial skills presented in Table 5.17.

Table 5. 17 Alignment of IMC-strategic management, managerial skills and curriculum

IMC-strategic management functions	Managerial skills	Curriculum
Planning such as: setting future course of action **Decision making such as:** Alternate decision, choices, direction **Organising such as:** delegation of responsibility **Staffing such as:** recruiting, training and development **Communicating such as:** internal and external communication and for feedback **Motivating such as:** meeting staff needs and satisfaction **Leading such as:** role modeling and leaderships **Controlling such as:** Evaluation, tracking and controlling	**Conceptual skills such as :** Research, short and long term planning, problem solving, strategising **Decision making such as:** Based on environmental scanning, strategy development and focus, creative ideas, alternate choices and direction **Analytical skills such as:** Analysis, diagnosis and evaluation, problem solving, planning, strategy formulation, analysis of internal and external environments, competitor and gap analysis **People skills such as:** Leadership, team building and leading, team management, interpersonal skills, communication skills, negotiation skills **Technical skills such as:** Formative, tracking and summative evaluation. **Computer skills such as:** Software familiarity for great efficiency, better presentations, time management, tasks such as financial management, data mining	**Disciplines:** IMC Management Marketing Finance **Topics such as:** Research and analysis Brand management Business knowledge Metrics and evaluation Issues management Strategic planning Competition, market and gap analysis New media Finance **Skills such as:** Research skills Analytical skills Planning skills Problem solving skills Strategic thinking Creative thinking Techniques for long life learning Dealing with people (people skills) Communication Leadership **Teaching and learning:** Visits to agencies and organizations Field work Case studies Real life cases Internship Guest lecturers

Source: Developed for this research

The findings on the question "what are the current and future trends in IMC?" and in "which Thai sectors (private, public and nonprofit) will there be a demand for IMC?" concurred with the responses on the first three questions.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion on the findings of the study against the research questions, the research objectives and the research focus. There are three areas of discussion; first, on the IMC-strategic management paradigm; second, on the framework for required managerial skills in IMC, and third, on curriculum considerations for English medium IMC postgraduate coursework. Against the research questions and research objectives, discussion is presented on what was investigated, and based on the findings, what gaps were filled in the literature; recommendations for further research follows. Limitations of the study and concluding comments complete the thesis.

In summary, all three research questions were answered and the three research objectives accomplished; characterising IMC as a strategic management function, and identifying both the managerial skills required and the possible inclusions in postgraduate curriculum in English medium coursework master's programs.

Figure 6.1. illustrates the sections in the chapter.

Figure 6.1 Structure map of Chapter 6

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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│           6.1 Introduction          │
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┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
│        6.2 Summary of findings       │
└─────────────────────────────────────┘
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┌───────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  6.3 Study contribution: Heuristic and applied value  │
└───────────────────────────────────────────────┘
                    │
                    ▼
┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│  6.4 Part A: IMC-strategic management function and further research  │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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│   6.5 Part B: Managerial skills and further research   │
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│  6.6 Part C: Considerations in postgraduate curriculum and further research  │
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│           6.7 Limitations of the study          │
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│  6.8 In conclusion: Contribution and critique of IMC and  │
│              contribution of this study                │
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Source: Developed for this research

6.2 Summary of findings

In summary, the study is built on and contributed to three aspects of the literature.

Firstly, theoretically on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, from the point where the IMC literature was presented as a strategic process (Kliatchko, 2008) to now being positioned as a strategic management function suggesting that a gap has been filled in the literature on the growth of IMC since 2008 to a strategic management function. Table 6.1 outlines in summary the outcome based on the first research objective, IMC is a strategic management function.

Table 6.1. Summary of outcome on research objective 1: IMC is a strategic management function

Research objective	Survey findings	Focus interview findings
IMC is a strategic management	Main aspects of job: Research and analysis, strategy, planning, CRM, media Current demands: Strategy, IMC, branding, consumer behaviour, environmental awareness, education in IMC.	Research Planning Analysis Strategic thinking Problem resolution Strategising for the media Stakeholder management Customer relationship management Branding Integration Competitor analysis Issues management Reputation management Crisis management Change management Creating awareness

Source: Developed for this research

Building on Kliatcho's view (2008) of IMC as a strategic process, this study has established that IMC is a strategic management function based on the findings from the survey and focus interviews. The responses from both the survey and focus interviews reveal that IMC includes, among others, strategic development, research, analysis, planning, creativity, crisis planning and branding. These responsibilities are core functions performed by corporate, business and functional

strategic managers making IMC an executive function and responsibility. Clearly, the evidence from this study is significant in validating the first research objective in this study that in Thailand IMC is a strategic management function.

Secondly, in terms of its professional posture, managerial skills were assessed against Ivancevich et al.,'s (1994) skills framework. The results add to the literature and therefore fill a gap by identifying the managerial skills for IMC as a strategic management function by establishing the competencies to work at this level in IMC. These findings also align the IMC-strategic management function and required managerial skills. Table 6.2 outlines in summary the outcome based on the second research objective; to build a list of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice.

Table 6.2 Summary of outcome on research objective two: To build a list of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice

Research objective	Survey findings	Focus interview findings
To build a framework of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice.	Strategy development , creativity, strategic thinking and planning, interpersonal communication, presentation skills, critical thinking, digital IT skills, financial and budgeting, negotiation skills, data base management, problem solving skills, relationship management,	**Conceptual skills:** Research, short and long term planning, problem solving, ability to strategise, creativity, entrepreneurial skills, understanding market and external competition, understanding consumer shifts, awareness of environmental changes, keeping pace with change, understanding whole and component parts, integration, insight **Analytical skills**: Analysis, diagnosis and evaluation, problem solving, planning, strategy formulation, analysis of internal and external environments, competitor and gap analysis, B2B market analysis, analyzing consumer behaviour, analyzing market trends (B2C), reading reports,

	management skills	problem identification, forecasting
		Decision making skills: Based on environmental scanning, strategy development and focus, creative ideas, alternate choices and direction
		People skills: Leadership, team building and leading, team management, interpersonal skills, communication skills, negotiation skills
		Technical skills: Formative, tracking and summative evaluation.
		Computer skills: Software familiarity for greater efficiency, better presentations, time management, tasks such as financial management, data mining and data base management

Source: Developed for this research

In pursuance of research objective 2, Ivancevich et al., (1994) skills framework was used to categorise the focus interview responses for the skills required for IMC practice. The outcome revealed a significant concurrence of the managerial skills needed for IMC practice as shown in Table 6.2 above. This outcome, in confirming research objective 2, also provided further validation that IMC is a strategic management function.

Thirdly, in aligning the IMC-strategic management paradigm, a discussion of the requisite managerial skills and the curriculum which supports the IMC-strategic management model is presented in this chapter against Donnan's (2008) model. The findings contributed to the body of knowledge, or filled a gap, by identifying an enhanced curriculum that includes strategic management and managerial skills. The findings builds on the work of Kerr et al., (2008) and Sauber et al., (2008) where the

findings focus more on tactical subjects. Table 6.3 summarises the findings in relation to research objective 3; to propose a managerial level skills based curriculum for a postgraduate English medium curriculum.

Table 6.3: Summary of outcome on research objective three: To propose considerations for a managerial level skill based curriculum for a postgraduate English medium curriculum.

Research objective	Survey findings	Focus interview findings
To propose a managerial level skills based curriculum for a postgraduate English medium curriculum.	Business and management skills, analytical skills, branding, CRM, knowledge of media, digital IT, Interpersonal communication, strategic thinking and planning, finance and budgeting, problem solving, CSR, Ethics, leadership and psychology	Subjects from IMC, management, marketing and finance were identified. Among others, Knowledge of IMC, branding and brand management, metrics and evaluation, strategic planning, research and analysis, Competition analysis, creating action plans Human resource management, MBA type subjects, economics, KPI's and profit measurement, billings Marketing , consumer behaviour, marketing management Accounting, ROI, economics

Source: Developed for this research.

The responses from the focus interviews were analysed against the contributions of Kerr et al., (2008), Sauber et al. (2008), Donnan (2008) and

University of Otago (2007). The subjects identified as part of the curriculum corroborate with the managerial skills required in IMC-strategic management.

The evidence-based findings on the three research objectives affirm the alignment between the IMC-strategic management paradigm, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula.

The special outcomes from this study include the following:

- A new order for IMC has been established and advances the theoretical framework

- The study included three extensive areas of investigation; this investigation illustrated the alignment of IMC-strategic management, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula

- While barriers to the adoption of IMC such as lack of awareness and training were identified in the study, IMC best practice in Thailand is evident among the organisations sampled in this study.

While there are criticisms levelled at Thai higher education, there are professionals whose commitment has brought IMC to the new order, leading world-wide in professional practice and curricula. A committed fraternity, both academics and professional practitioners are developing the field, contributing to it and challenging it's development.

6.3 Study contribution: Heuristic and applied values

Heuristically, this study contributes to the literature and body of knowledge primarily in IMC, but also makes a contribution in strategic management literature as it repositions IMC in the IMC-strategic management domain. While more particularly the findings build on the work of Kliatchko (2008), it also adds to the contribution of Kreitner (1998), Ivancevich et al., (1994), Hubbard (2000) and Kerr et al., (2008) and specifically to the recent work of Kliatchko (2008). As research grows and adds to the body of knowledge, IMC by its nature will draw from multi-disciplinary theoretical foundations. Evidence is illustrated in this study which was based on a multi-disciplinary conceptual framework.

There are two applied values in this study: first, in the repositioning of IMC as a strategic management function, IMC has grown in professional posture from a tactical to a management function. To this end a model identifying the managerial skills required in the IMC-strategic management function was developed contributing to literature on professional practice; second, based on the IMC-strategic management paradigm and the required managerial skills, a model in the form of a matrix of topics, managerial skills and teaching and learning recommendations was ascertained, contributing to education in IMC. This curriculum contributes to curriculum design in IMC.

6.4 Part A: IMC-strategic management function

Chapters 1 and 2 reviewed the literature on IMC which traced the development of IMC from a tactical to a strategic management process. An analysis on the following theories and approaches was presented with the purpose of establishing a conceptual framework for this aspect of the study; the systems theory, the complexity theory, approaches to strategic management and IMC were discussed. The systems theory and the complexity theory focus on the dynamic nature of organisations operating as open systems in complex environments. The literature on IMC and strategic management confirmed that both areas of business are preoccupied with similar organisational goals and are synchronous.

From this analysis it was established that there was an opportunity (a gap) to determine whether IMC was a strategic management function. Research was undertaken through quantitative and qualitative research, the results of which suggest that IMC is a strategic management function and is validated by the following findings:

This study repositioned IMC as a strategic management function, implying that IMC can no longer be perceived or regarded as a onlooker in strategic management. For example, in Figures 5.11 and 5.12 in the survey the most common areas of practice identified by the respondents were strategy development, research and analysis and planning. In addition to the above list, research, creativity, digital communication, crisis management, event management, database management and media planning were also identified. Table (5.2) presented the demands in IMC practice in Thailand, where the highest percentage of respondents identified strategy planning and implementation, followed by IMC in management and branding. Other areas that were identified included the role IMC in environmental awareness, its

contribution to consumer behaviour, budgeting, resource management and evaluation (controlling) and internal communication. These are the tenets of IMC strategic management identified in Table 2.5, Figure 2.3, and Table 2.11.

While there was a positive response to the research questions in this study, evident in responses were concerns on the barriers to adoption of IMC as a strategic management function. The points made are presented below.

Barriers to the adoption of IMC

The key barriers to the adoption of IMC are funding constraints in the implementation of IMC, the lack of awareness of IMC and lack of training in IMC.

Funding constraints and lack of awareness: A concern rose from one respondent that "*IMC [is] only taken seriously in private sector [and] not [the] public or non-profit.*" She was of the opinion that funding constraints, institutional culture and more so the lack of awareness of the strategic role of IMC may be reasons for the absence of IMC in the public sector.

Lack of training: Another concern raised by a respondent was that there is a dire need for "more training in IMC, more practitioners [are needed], and more IMC practice." On extending the discussion, she thought that "*organisational culture may still be [fraught] with silo mentality, only using marketing or advertising or public relations. Not integrating.*"

Growth of IMC: While a respondent agreed that IMC is a strategic management function, concerns were raised about the continued growth of IMC as a strategic management function in that some agencies ...*"Right now they don't work*

much on IMC to propose clients or if they work on IMC, I think it's not so good in term of recommendation in order to answer client's objectives."

With the objective of shedding light on the point, the researcher queried whether the interpretation of the point above was that IMC is not being used, not being applied and not being offered to clients through the agencies. The respondent replied *"Yes, currently I don't see much."*

One respondent seemed to have a non-traditional or different view of strategic management. While on the one hand she reported that she worked mainly with marketing directors, managers, presidents or managing directors, her responses focused on the technical aspects of IMC rather than the strategic. In her conclusion she said that *"it [IMC] can be initiated from other functions but finally the one who make[s] the decision would be the manager."* Pettigrew (2000) asked the question "If IMC is so good, why it isn't being implemented?" He saw many barriers to its implementation in corporate America and posited that "the theory of IMC, while theoretically pragmatic, ultimately fails because of significant structural-functional barriers to its implementation."

Another respondent, despite the rich availability of electronic data, and the application of IMC principles to the business, had a limited view of IMC, and more so of IMC as a strategic management function. His work focused mainly on business to business communication (B2B communication) and he did not see the value of IMC, but saw IMC as 'wide", meaning to include integration across the entire organisation.

In comparing the **definitions** of IMC and strategic management (in Chapter 1), it is evident that IMC and strategic management are synchronous. As

business functions both use identical business, corporate and functional strategies and tools to enhance business outcomes, market share, competitiveness and profitability.

In terms of the first **research question** posed in this study "Is IMC a strategic management function?", the evidence corroborates that IMC is a strategic management function. With regard to the **objective related to this research question**, the data does advance the argument towards the development of a model IMC as a strategic management function (Weick, 1995, Sutton, 1995) . The **research focus** relative to the research question was adhered to and has established that IMC is practised as a strategic management function. Based on the findings from the focus interviews to the research question, and analysed against the **conceptual framework** identified in chapter 2, a model of the IMC-strategic management paradigm was presented in Figure 5.29 depicting IMC within the corporate, business and functional strategies and within the wider organisational environment.

Recommendations for further research

In terms of the theory on the IMC-strategic management paradigm, suggestions for research that may be undertaken are:

While many research issues have been identified, the following are deemed priorities:

1. Longitudinal (tracking) studies on the definitions, key constructs and tenets of IMC

2. Based on theory, the development of case studies on relevant types of research, analysis, strategising and planning

3. Close examination on the contribution of IMC as a return on investment

4. Based on theoretical frames, research should be undertaken on the different types of IMC strategies and its impact on organisational success

5. The barriers to the adoption of IMC identified in this study should be investigated with the objective of developing solutions to overcome the barriers

6. Further research may be undertaken among professional practitioners who had obtained their postgraduate qualifications in the United States and other countries to ascertain if their views differ from those found in this study on the professional practice paradigm, managerial skills and considerations for curricula.

As IMC matures, research will be imperative to reposition IMC and to ensure its rightful place in organisational success and behaviour.

In concluding this aspect of the study, a most important question was answered with a resounding affirmative response, bringing a new focus to the determination of the function of IMC as a strategic management function. The study has advanced IMC from a strategic management process to a strategic management function, filling a gap by recognising the high level contribution of IMC and that it is aligned with the strategic management function.

6.5 Part B: Managerial skills

Against the **definition** adopted in this study, the respondents' views on the requisite managerial skills indicate strong agreement and concur with the **conceptual skills framework** of Ivancevich et al., (1994). In answering the **research question** on

managerial skills, the evidence suggests that managerial level skills should include conceptual, analytical, decision making, people, technological and computer skills. Respondents also identified positive and open attitudes, independent and self-directed working ability, managing pressure and time management as "managerial skills".

Based on the research objective of building a framework of managerial skills related to "management" level IMC practice, this study has advanced the literature where the focus was on tactical skills, to a new focus on managerial skills in IMC, filling a gap in the literature by presenting a new framework of managerial skills based on the repositioning of IMC as a strategic management function.

Recommendations for further research

Based on the findings of this study (and other related studies), the following on managerial skills for IMC may be explored:

1. Based on a longitudinal study, what are the developing issues in professional practice and how should these be addressed?

2. What are the challenges in the adoption of IMC as a strategic management function?

3. Based on the three sectors, private, public and not for profit sectors, research should be undertaken on sector specific IMC needs; further investigation into why IMC is not practised in the public sector? Further investigation into why IMC is envisaged to grow in the agency (private) sector?

4. Based on a needs analysis, investigate how current practitioners could be "re-trained" with managerial skills and competencies identified in this study

5. Since there was a non-response from the Public Relations Society of Thailand, further research may be undertaken to ascertain the perspective of the public relations fraternity on the IMC-strategic management function, managerial skills and needs for postgraduate curricula in English medium postgraduate coursework master's programs.

6.6 Part C: Considerations for postgraduate coursework curricula: Towards management capability and proficiency

The research question "What are the considerations for postgraduate English medium curricula in IMC" garnered responses where four discipline areas were identified that would enhance learning and develop competencies for IMC practice; IMC, management, marketing and finance. Topic areas that were identified ranged from research and analysis, strategy development, brand building and management, IMC related areas, psychology through to marketing, management and finance. In addition there was a call for skills to be developed that would include conceptual, analytical, decision making, people, technical and computer skills. This has added to the "technical" type subject focus in the Kerr et al., (2008) and Sauber et al., (2008) recommendations and filled a gap in the literature for curriculum considerations in postgraduate English medium coursework master's programs.

The findings in this study open new challenges to program designers and policy makers in higher education. The views espoused by Samakoses (2008) and Sinlarat (2007) succinctly bring together the new responsibility higher education is now confronted with. While their work critiques Thai higher education, arguably it also critiques university education generally.

In terms of the search for alignment between IMC-strategic management, managerial skills and post graduate curricula, this study also revealed that the disciplinary birthplace, home and historical position of IMC seems to be moving from the Arts to the Humanities and the Social Sciences indicating the development towards business.

In applying Donnan's (2008) model to curriculum, discussion follows on its application to the research objective on the curriculum in this study. Donnan (2008), discussed nine criteria for curriculum development; profiling the learners, clarifying course aims and learning outcomes, clarifying course aims and learning outcomes, selecting the teaching methods, optimising learning and teaching within the course delivery mode, identifying learning resources and appropriate media, promoting deep student learning and assesses appropriately, orientating to professional practice and [managerial skills], and evaluating the curriculum.

In profiling the learners

Based on the IMC-strategic management paradigm and the managerial level skills required in IMC, master level learners may be profiled as "students" who already possess an undergraduate degree (at the least) or an equivalent qualification.

In summary, in terms of the needs of the profession practitioners are expected to have a knowledge and understanding of organizational behaviour, various levels of strategy, management, business, research, analysis, problem resolution, decision making, creative ideas and message construction, communication, implementation, evaluation, stakeholder and customer relationship management and branding and brand management. These aspects, in the main, incorporate the

principles of Krietner (1998), Kliatchko (2008), Hubbard (2000) and Wheelan and Hunger (2008) and by deduction, profile the learner.

Clarifying course aims and learning outcomes

The course aims and learning outcomes could be to deliver a program based on the IMC-strategic management model incorporating aims and learning outcomes based on IMC-strategic management theory, and its application to professional practice and managerial skills.

Knowledge, course content and competencies

In answering the question posed in this study on what knowledge postgraduates in IMC should have in order to be competent in professional practice, the findings reveal a combination of content from IMC, management, marketing and finance related disciplines. Topics such as research, analysis, business knowledge, strategy planning and development , understanding competition, gap analysis, metrics and evaluation were identified. The findings on curriculum presented below in Table 6.4. are categorised by discipline and topic area, required managerial skills and teaching and learning recommendations. These findings contribute to course content and structure.

Table: 6.4. Disciplines, topic areas, skills and teaching and learning considerations in curriculum development in English medium IMC postgraduate coursework master's programs.

Disciplines	Topic area	Required managerial skills	Considerations for Curriculum Teaching/learning
IMC	Knowledge of IMC Marketing communication Branding and brand management	How to deal with people Understanding work culture and ethics Problem solving	Relate practice to theory: Case studies & field work Guest from different industries to exchange

	Understanding competition Business knowledge (general business knowledge; media agency; research agency) New media Evaluation(strategy, agency) Metrics Crisis management Issues management Organisational behavior Psychology Advertising strategy Strategic planning Creating action plans IMC strategy(research & analysis) Analysis (marketing, competition, gap, SWOT) Optional: PR for crisis & direct marketing	Strategic thinking Creative thinking Reading reports, graphs etc. Creative thinking Creative ideas Creative message Big idea Technique for lifelong learning	opinions Internship and real experience Visits to agencies and organisations
Marketing	Marketing Marketing theory International marketing Developing marketing plans Consumer behavior Marketing management		
Management	Human resource management Management Management/MBA? Economics Billings, KPI, measuring profit		
Finance	Finance Accounting Economics ROI Optional: Statistics (research and analysis)		

Source: Developed for this research

Selecting the teaching methods

In addition to the traditional teaching methods of lectures, seminars, workshops, consideration could be given to the recommendations in Table 6.1 on learning and teaching that will enhance learning, engage learners and encourage more reflective learning. Teaching methods could include contributions from other stakeholders as identified in the discussion under curriculum structuring, for example professional bodies and student societies. These recommendations may be considered in the selection of teaching methods.

Optimise learning and teaching within the course delivery mode

While this was not directly investigated in the study, it is deduced from the findings that depending on the mode of teaching, (face to face, online or blended learning modes), there may be a choice of role play, guest lecture workshop with case studies where emphasis is on teaching students how to analyse, rather than discussing the case (a recommendation from the president of the Thailand Marketing Association). Industry visits, real life cases, projects from organizations for assessment pieces may be included to optimize learning and teaching within the course delivery mode. Industry based monitoring through online sites may be possible and logistically acceptable for professionals and postgraduate students alike.

Identify learning resources and appropriate media

While this was also not within the scope of the study, by deduction, resources could be aligned, with the curriculum. Online media and useful tools such as blogging could be used to allow interactive, self-directed learning. This is especially helpful for postgraduate students who are often working part or fulltime. While pedagogy determines learning resources, the target group as mature learners may facilitate in the choice of learning resources and appropriate media.

Promote deep student learning and assess appropriately

One respondent remarked on the need for assessments that encouraged research, analysis and strategy development. Of particular interest was her comment on teaching students how and where to look for information, how to retrieve it and how to analyse it. This may be one way of integrating topic areas, skills development

and reflective learning encouraging a deeper level of learning.

Orientate to professional practice and [managerial skills]

While Donnan (2008) discusses graduate attributes (as in undergraduate study attributes), this study focuses on postgraduate managerial skills. In a postgraduate curriculum, the managerial skills identified by Ivancevich (1994) and aligned with the IMC-strategic management practices may be adopted. These are conceptual skills, analytical skills, decision making skills, people skills, technical skills and computer skills. It is suggested that due consideration of these will orientate to professional practice.

Evaluate the curriculum

This was not investigated in the study; however, based on the Donnan (2008) model suggestions for evaluation may include the review of all the steps in the Donnan (2008) model. For example,

- Were the learners correctly profiled?

- Were the course aims and learning outcomes correct? Did the aims and learning outcomes meet the needs of the profiled learners?

- Did the course comment and structure meet pedagogical standards? Was the course content stimulating? Did the course content enhance learning? Was the course structure conducive to meeting the established aims and learning outcomes?

- Was the selection of teaching methods advantageous and favourable for student learning?

- Was learning and teaching within the course delivery mode optimised?

- Were beneficial learning resources and appropriate media identified?

- Did the course promote deep student learning and was it assessed appropriately?

- Was there sufficient orientation to professional practice, for example, managerial skills?

- What other aspects of curriculum should be evaluated?

In addition, the subject framework offered by University of Otago (2007), presented in Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3 or another evaluation framework, may be used to evaluate the subjects in more detail.

Recommendations for further research

In terms of further research in postgraduate curriculum development for English medium postgraduate courses in IMC, suggestions for further research include:

1. Curriculum evaluation through other evaluation models to determine appropriate pedagogy, content, structure, and content

2. The determination of professional practice needs and relevancy through research among alumni

3. Critical evaluation of how research and analysis is taught

4. The exploration of how professional bodies may contribute to a curriculum and fund research on IMC related topics

5. Through a needs analysis, the determination of the training needs of current professionals in the private, public and non profit sector, and the possibility of short

course delivery through professional programs at universities or through professional bodies

6. Determination of the "IMC-strategic management knowledge" needs of professional practice and produce IMC-strategic management texts to meet these needs

7. The tracking of research on the movement of the disciplinary home of IMC as an indicator of the contribution of IMC

8. The investigation of the practice of "deep learning" and how this could be manifested in curriculum

9. The investigation of a structured methodology for inter-institutional curriculum reviews

10. The investigation of the possibility of creating special interest groups who are interested in exploring special topics on IMC curriculum

11. The exploration of the possibility of creating prospective research groups

12. The exploration of the possibility of increasing the body of knowledge through academic and student research

13. The investigation of a multi-country analysis of curriculum

14. The investigation of the possibility of time focused goals and strategies to work towards a professional body for IMC

15. The investigation of the role of student clubs and societies in curriculum development

16. On the use of online forums, the following are suggestions for research: Investigation of online forums for:

- o Peer discussion on pedagogy and epistemology

- o Review of curricula

- o Revamping subjects, syllabi and design matrix of subjects

- o Brainstorming on IMC education related issues

- o Conferring and deliberating on ongoing development issues in IMC

- o Developing online sites for regional deliberations on curricula

- o The feasibility of self-regulation and accreditation, in the absence of professional bodies and other accrediting bodies, exploring the use of online national, regional, inter-regional and global forums

6.7 Limitations in this study

There are seven identifiable limitations in this study:

1. The study was not intended to be sector specific, but most respondents in this study were employed in the private sector therefore findings cannot be fully extrapolated by sector in the public or non-profit sectors.

2. The study was not based on industry specific sectors or clusters for example hospitality, health, automobiles, fashion, performing arts, etc.

3. Within the scope of the study there was no in-depth focus on research, evaluation and metrics, and ethics, three current issues of concern in professional practice

4. While curriculum involves the total learning experience, this study focused on the syllabus and within its scope was unable to explore the role the other recommended stakeholders, for example, the professional bodies.

5. Some confusion was evident in the interpretation of the concepts of attributes, skills and managerial skills and knowledge and curricula. Should the study be replicated, close attention must be given to the correct interpretation of these concepts. In this

study the researcher interpreted the responses in accordance with the conceptual and theoretical underpinnings identified in the study.

6. While two of the academics that were interviewed qualified in the United States, more than fifty percent of the professional practitioners who voluntarily participated in this study obtained their qualifications in Australia. Unfortunately there were no respondents among the professional practitioners who had graduated from a university in the United States where IMC education originated.

Challenges to the adoption of findings in this study

While the results of this study are encouraging there may be challenges to the adoption of the findings. The IMC-strategic management paradigm sets a new benchmark in theory and practice and it may take time to be adopted. If the IMC-strategic management paradigm is not embraced, the need for the managerial skill competencies may not be recognised, and may even be refuted. With regard to the inclusion of the findings in postgraduate curricula, incorporating subjects across a multi-disciplinary spectrum may be difficult, especially on territorial academic borders.

In terms of the adoption of the IMC-strategic management paradigm, the challenge is to create an awareness of the capacity of IMC to organisational success, encourage adoption of the function as a strategic management function, and introduce it into the three sectors with stronger strategies for adoption in the public and non-profit sectors. The identified barriers to adoption must also be addressed.

If the IMC-strategic management paradigm is adopted, then the need for managerial skills will be inherent. Based on practice-led curricula, the recommended inclusions in the curriculum will be intrinsic to teaching and learning.

6.8 In conclusion: Contribution and critique of IMC and contribution of this study

In concluding, while some scholars extol the virtues of IMC in business success, others deprecate IMC. Some see it as a compelled, ill-fitting, component of organisational practice; others argue that it does not work (Pettigrew, 2000). While these arguments bring rigour to the debates and developments in the field, it also facilitates in the pre-paradigmatic state of academic study and professional practice adding to a critical mass of research on the topic. In addition to this the antecedents from classical, emerging and interpretive management theories will significantly add to the developing epistemology of IMC. While IMC draws on a wide variety of intellectual antecedents, in its own right, it is developing a critical mass of research on its positive contribution to organisations in all sectors. This study illustrates that IMC is no longer a bystander in strategic management, managerial competencies, and in curricula for management capability and proficiency.

In summary, the findings in this study contribute to the literature of the IMC-strategic management paradigm shift, managerial skills identification in IMC, postgraduate curricula, and in the alignment of IMC-strategic management, managerial skills and postgraduate curricula.

IMC-strategic management function - paradigm shift: As studies in the alignment of the IMC-strategic management paradigm, the links between professional

practice, postgraduate attributes and curricula were yet to emerge; this study analysed and highlighted the elements of the triad.

Managerial skills identification: Results from this study has identified the managerial skills required for "management" level practice in IMC.

Curriculum contribution: Findings from this study contributes to dialogue between professional practice and academia for best outcomes in practice, curricula, learning, teaching and more broadly, the profession.

Heuristic and applied value: The study contributes to the literature in IMC. The applied value will make a contribution to professional practice, curriculum development and management level education.

Extrapolation: While the study is based in Thailand, selected aspects may be extrapolated to other situations or countries and the study may be replicated with amendments. Benefits from this study include the positioning of IMC as a strategic management function and the possibilities of its application in Thailand in all three sectors; private, public and not-for-profit.

Assessing and establishing the synergy in the triad: The outcome of this study established the alignment among all three components in the triad.

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List of Appendices

Appendix I

Phase I - Electronic survey

Letter of invitation to prospective participants

March 2008

Dear colleague

Doctoral research participation

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research. I appreciate your input into this study.

This study attempts to make a contribution to the profession through establishing if IMC contributes at a management level in organizations and how this impacts on postgraduate curriculum.

There are three objectives to the study: To establish

1. **if IMC is practiced as a strategic management function (rather than a technical one), and if it is,**
2. **what skills are required at the management level in IMC, and**
3. **how does management level IMC influence postgraduate curriculum in IMC?**

There are five sets of participants in this study: professional practitioners (account executives), agency executives, executives of professional bodies, academics and policy makers in Thai higher education.

The first part of the research (Phase I) is the self-completion of an electronic questionnaire, the second, Phase II, an interview with you. Participation is voluntary and should you wish you may opt out at your volition.

Responses will remain anonymous.

Thank you for your contribution to my research. I look forward to your completed questionnaire and meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Raveena Singh

Doctoral student

Dhurakij Pundit University International College

Appendix II

Depth interview: Phase II:

Letter to middle-management professionals, agency executives and executives of professional bodies

July 2008

Dear colleague

Doctoral research participation

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my doctoral research. I will contact your office for an appointment.

There are three objectives to the study: To establish

1. **if IMC is practiced as a strategic management function (rather than a technical one), and if it is**
2. **what managerial skills are required at the 'management' level, and**
3. **how does this influence postgraduate curricula in IMC?**

There are five sets of participants in this study: middle-management level professionals (account executives), agency executives, executives of professional bodies, academics and policy makers in Thai higher education.

Individual responses will remain anonymous. Should permission be granted by professional bodies, the institution will be identified. You may opt out of the interview at any time.

In terms of the application of my study I hope to make a contribution to the profession by firstly, establishing if IMC contributes at a management level in organizations and, secondly, what management skills are required for management level work in IMC, and thirdly, establishing the how this development impacts postgraduate curriculum.

Thank you for your contribution to my research. I look forward to meeting you.

Yours sincerely

Raveena Singh

Doctoral student

Dhurakij Pundit University International College.

Appendix III

SurveyMonkey questionnaire

IMC in Thailand

1. Section A: Demographic Information

This section aims to collect your demographic details

* 1. Your name

2. Your contact details

Email

Telephone (W)

Telephone (H)

Telephone (Mobile)

Postal Address

3. What would be the best time (Thailand time) to make telephone contact with you from Australia?

Thai time: Morning

Thai time: afternoon/evening

* 4. Are you contactable through Skype?

◯ Yes

◯ No

5. If yes, what are your Skype contact details?

* 6. With regard to your undergraduate study, please indicate the institution at which you studied, your degree title and the year in which you completed your study.

Institution

Degree title

Year completed

* 7. With regard to your postgraduate study, please indicate the institution at which you studied, your degree title, the year in which you completed your study and the number of years for your Master's level study.

Institution

Degree title

Year completed

Number of years

* 8. What is your current designation (job title) at work?

* 9. Based upon the amount of time you spend on different aspects of your job, please list the main aspects of your current job

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

* 10. How many years of working experience do you have?

* 11. With regard to your current job, which organisational type do you work for? (eg. agency, manufacturing, FMCG's, government, education etc.)

* 12. Is this organisation a local, national, multinational or transnational organisation?

* 13. Based on your working experience, please list three of your previous positions and designations

Year	
Designation	
Brief description of these positions	
Year	
Designation	
Brief description of these positions	
Year	
Designation	
Brief description of these positions	

2. Section B: Your professional opinion

The aim of this section is to collect data on IMC practice in Thailand

* 14. Currently, what are the main demands on IMC professional practice in Thailand? Please list in order of priority.

1 [   ]
2 [   ]
3 [   ]
4 [   ]
5 [   ]

* 15. What do you believe will be the most important demands in the next ten years on professional practice in Thailand? Please list in order of priority.

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]
4. [   ]
5. [   ]

* 16. In what area and practice do you think IMC makes a strong contribution in Thailand? (eg. business, government or non-profit organisations)

[ ] Business   [ ] Government   [ ] Not for profit organsiations

Comment

[   ]

* 17. In terms of organisational culture, how do Thai organisations support IMC practice?

[   ]

* 18. In which area/s do you envisage the growth in IMC practice?

[ ] Manufacturing

[ ] Retailing

[ ] Government

[ ] Marketing communication agencies

[ ] FMCG's

[ ] Health

[ ] Education marketing

3. Section C

Attributes for professional practice

* 19. In your professional opinion, what are the most important personal attributes needed to work in IMC in Thailand?

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]
4. [   ]
5. [   ]

* 20. What are the most important skills required to work in IMC in Thailand.

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]
4. [   ]
5. [   ]

* 21. Related to Question 1 above, in terms of personal attributes, what do you believe were missing in your postgraduate course of study regarding your training for the job market? Please list your responses

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]

* 22. Related to Question 2 above in terms of skills, what do you believe were missing in your course of study regarding your training for the job market? Please list your responses

1. [   ]
2. [   ]
3. [   ]

Curriculum design and professional practice

* 23. Please name the subjects or areas of study which you undertook for your Master's program.

* 24. In your professional opinion, do you think the subjects/areas of your postgraduate study you undertook prepared you well for the job market?

○ Yes   ○ No

25. If yes, which were the subjects/areas of your postgraduate study that are most relevant to the demands of your workplace? Please list.

1.

2.

3.

26. If no, which are the subjects/areas of study that are of least use in your work? Please list.

* 27. What subjects/areas of study do you think should have been included in your course of study? Please list.

* 28. Based on the demands of professional practice, what are the main areas of study that should be included in postgraduate curriculum in IMC? Please list in order of priority.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

* 29. Is there anything else that you can think of that could be included in postgraduate curriculum so that it better equips graduates for the business world? Please list.

* 30. Do you think that the Master's program in IMC should have more business and management related subjects as in the Master of Business Administration (MBA)?

○ Yes   ○ No

31. If yes, what subjects/areas of study do you think appropriate for this course of study and professional practice?

32. If no, why?

* 33. Based on the question above, do you think that the Master's program in IMC should have the title of Master of Business Administration (Marketing Communication)?

○ Yes

○ No

Graduate attributes

* 34. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1=not at all; 2=somewhat; 3=well trained; 4=very well trained; 5=exceptionally well trained), rate the following in terms of how well you were trained for job market demands in these areas during your course of study. Please tick the relevant box.

1. Communication: To be able to express

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
knowledge in your professional field	○	○	○	○	○
ideas in your professional field	○	○	○	○	○
opinions in your professional field	○	○	○	○	○
orally	○	○	○	○	○
in written form	○	○	○	○	○
with confidence	○	○	○	○	○
with clarity	○	○	○	○	○
ideas effectively	○	○	○	○	○
present arguments effectively	○	○	○	○	○
actively listen to the ideas of others	○	○	○	○	○
actively respond to the ideas of others	○	○	○	○	○
negotiate effectively	○	○	○	○	○
create new ideas	○	○	○	○	○
present new ideas	○	○	○	○	○

* 35. Information and literacy: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
locate information	○	○	○	○	○
identify information	○	○	○	○	○
collate information	○	○	○	○	○
analyze information	○	○	○	○	○
evaluate information	○	○	○	○	○
interpret information	○	○	○	○	○
present information	○	○	○	○	○
understand numerical data	○	○	○	○	○

* 36. Information and communication technology: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
select appropriate information	○	○	○	○	○
use appropriate information	○	○	○	○	○
select appropriate communication technology	○	○	○	○	○
use appropriate technology for relevant information	○	○	○	○	○
use appropriate technology to present information	○	○	○	○	○

* 37. Problem solving: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
identify problems in your professional area	○	○	○	○	○
analyze main problems in your professional area	○	○	○	○	○
apply appropriate problem solving process(eg. arguments)	○	○	○	○	○
implement strategies for the resolutions of problems	○	○	○	○	○
evaluate strategies	○	○	○	○	○
anticipate new problems	○	○	○	○	○
solve new problems	○	○	○	○	○

* 38. Working with others: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
work with others as part of a group	○	○	○	○	○
take responsibility for agreed tasks	○	○	○	○	○
be aware of roles of group members	○	○	○	○	○
evaluate group performance	○	○	○	○	○
demonstrate leadership	○	○	○	○	○
respect the rights of others, irrespective of their: cultural background, race, gender	○	○	○	○	○

* 39. Effective workplace skills: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
demonstrate entrepreneurial skills	○	○	○	○	○
initiate new ideas	○	○	○	○	○
implement decisions	○	○	○	○	○
cope with uncertainty	○	○	○	○	○
function in a multi-cultural environment	○	○	○	○	○
function in a global environment	○	○	○	○	○

* 40. Professional ethics: Ability to

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
act responsibly	○	○	○	○	○
act ethically	○	○	○	○	○
act with integrity in your profession	○	○	○	○	○
respect obligations to society	○	○	○	○	○
appreciate your profession in terms of its social context and its cultural context	○	○	○	○	○

* 41. Social responsibility

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
a commitment toward improvement in society	○	○	○	○	○
within an international perspective, to have a basic understanding of economics, politics, social systems and environmental systems	○	○	○	○	○
act in environmentally sustainable ways	○	○	○	○	○

✱ 42. Lifelong learning

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
an independent self-directed learner	○	○	○	○	○
motivated for lifelong learning	○	○	○	○	○
aware of your best learning methods	○	○	○	○	○
ability to assess own performance critically	○	○	○	○	○
understanding of the application of your knowledge to different contexts	○	○	○	○	○

✱ 43. Personal attributes

	not at all	somewhat	well trained	very well trained	exceptionally well trained
independent thinker	○	○	○	○	○
an agent for change	○	○	○	○	○
confidence to challenge existing ideas	○	○	○	○	○
commitment to ongoing self-development	○	○	○	○	○
respect differing views	○	○	○	○	○
value differing views	○	○	○	○	○
confident in your skills	○	○	○	○	○
confident in your knowledge	○	○	○	○	○

Appendix IV

Listed attributes needed to meet current demands of professional practice in IMC in Thailand
(Raw data for table 5.4.)

First identified attribute	Second identified attribute	Third identified attribute	Forth identified attribute	Fifth identified attribute
IMC Education and training (21%)	IMC Education (5%)	IMC Education (23%)	IMC Education (18%)	IMC Education (20%)
Strategy (16%)	Implementation of marcom plan (5%)	Strategy (6%)		
Creativity (10%		Creativity (12%)	Creativity (12%)	
Ability to work (10%)	Ability to work + multitask (5%)		Enthusiasm (6%) Fairness (6%)	
Work experience in marcom (10%)	Work experience in marcom (5%)			
Good level of confidence (10%)	Good level of confidence (5%)			
Accountability (5%)				
Environmental scanning (research) (5%)	Environmental scanning (Research) (5%)	Environmental scanning (Research) (6%)	Environmental scanning (research) (18%)	Research (7%)
Ability to work under pressure (5%)	Ability to work under pressure (15%)			
Understanding Thai culture (5%)	Understanding Thai culture (5%)			
	Working in teams (10%)	Working in teams (12%)	Working in teams (12%)	Friendly disposition (7%)
	Good communication skills (10%)		Good language skills (6%)	
	Critical thinking (5%)			
	Attention to detail (5%)	Curiosity (6%) Open-mindedness (12%)		Independent thinking
	Financial knowledge (5%)			
	Flexibility (5%)	Flexibility (11%)	Flexibility (12%)	
	Punctuality (5%)	Punctuality (6%)		Punctuality (20%)
		Social responsibility (6%)	Social responsibility (6%)	Social responsibility (26%)
			Time management (6%)	
				Ethics (13%)

Source: Developed for this research

Appendix V

Skills required in IMC professional practice in Thailand (raw data for Table 5.6)

First skill	Second skill	Third skill	Forth skill	Fifth skill
Knowledge of media (17%)				
Digital/IT skills (13%)	Digital/IT Skills (10%)	Digital/IT skills (5%)	Digital/IT skills (22%)	Digital/IT skills (8%)
Strategic thinking and planning (13%)		Strategic thinking and planning (5%)		
Interpersonal communication skills (13%)	Interpersonal communication skills (10%)		Communication skills (14%) Language skills (7%)	
Application of knowledge (8%)	Application of knowledge (5%)			
Presentation skills (8%)	Presentation skills (10%)	Presentation skills (5%)		Presentation skills (8%)
Financial and budgeting skills (8%)	Financial and budgeting (14%)			
Creativity (4%)	Creativity (5%)		Creativity (22%)	Creativity (8%)
Analytical skills (4%)	Analytical skills (10%)	Analytical skills (21%)		Analytical skills (8%)
Writing skills (4%)	Writing skills (5%)			
Negotiation skills (4%)	Negotiation skills (5%)	Negotiation skills (5%) Persuasion skills (5%)		Negotiation skills (8%)
Ability to work under pressure (4%)	Ability to work under pressure (5%)			
	Management skills (10%)			Management skills (15%) Relationship management (8%)
	Language skills (5%)			
	Active involvement (5%)			
	Responsibility (5%)			
		Management skills (16%)		
		Business development skills (11%)		
		Ability to work in teams (5%)		
		Database management (5%)		
		Continuous learning skills (5%)	Continuous learning skills (7%)	
		Research skills (5%)	Research skills (7%)	
		Friendly disposition (5%)		
		Persuasion skills (5%)		
			Problem solving skills (14%)	Problem solving skills (8%)
			Advertising (7%)	
				Knowledge and skills in psychology (8%)
				Branding (8%)
				Direct marketing (8%)
				Ethical practice (8%)

Source: Developed for this study

Appendix VI

Detailed responses to Questions D1, D-3, D-5, D-6 and D-7

Legend:

A. Classification and subject

B. Number who undertook the subject in Master's program (Question D-1):

C. Number who regard subject most relevant to demands of workplace (Question D-3):

D. Number who believe the subject should be included in PG curriculum (Question D-5, 6 and 7)

A. Marketing Communication	B.	C.	D.
Direct marketing	1	1	
Advertising: General	2		
Operations	2	1	
*Strategy	7		
Public relations *Practice	3		
General	2	1	1
*Strategy	6		
Sales promotion	2	1	
Personal selling	Nil		
Research Project	1		
Marketing com.	12		
Media	1	6	3
*Marketing	1		
Theory (Marketing com.)	14	7	1
Strategy Corporate	1		
*Advertising	7		
Marketing com.	12		
*Public relations	6	10	6
*Creative	2		
Segmentation	1		
Practice Marketing com.	3		
*Public relations	3	1	
*Creativity and creative strategy	2		5
Foundation subjects in Marketing com.	4		
Marketing communication	2	1	
IMC	2	2	1
Integrated campaigns	11	6	1
Seminar	10	5	1
International marketing com.	12	6	
Internal marketing	1	1	

*Branding	1	1	9
Customer relationship management	1	1	1
Independent study/Project in IMC	1		
Practicum	1		4
Management			
Management (Communication management)	2		
Strategic management	1		
Research and statistics for management	2	1	
International business management	1		
Marketing			
Marketing (General)	6	1	2
Marketing management	1	2	2
Consumer behaviour	3	3	1
Consumer insight	1	1	3
Consumerism	1		
Relationship marketing	1		
*Branding	1	1	9
E-marketing	1		
*Marketing research			1
Finance and Economics			
Finance	1		3
Economics	1		5
Management accounting and business analysis	1		
Business			
Entrepreneurship	1		
Human resources	1		
E-business	1		3
Business writing	1		
Business administration	1	1	2
Information technology			
Information technology	1		
Other subjects that should be added to the PG curriculum			
Digital media			2
Digital/new media strategy			1
Presentation skills			2
Negotiation skills			3
Message delivery			1
Trend analysis			1
Business management			6
Writing			1
Finance and budgeting			5
Event marketing			1
Problem solving			1
Ethics			1
Corporate social responsibility			2
Leadership and practice			1
Psychology			1

Source: Developed for this study

Note: Subjects with * have appeared more than once in the categories (marketing communication, management, marketing, finance and economics, business and information technology)

ไม่มีเอกสารจากต้นฉบับ

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