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Source-Message-Receiver in Integrated Marketing Communication: A Study of U.S. Institutional Advancement

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SOURCE-MESSAGE-RECEIVER IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF U.S. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

by

Sharee LeBlanc Broussard

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

SOURCE-MESSAGE-RECEIVER IN INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION: A STUDY OF U.S. INSTITUTIONAL ADVANCEMENT

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Because integrated marketing communication (IMC) research has traditionally been problematic, this study used an existing scale to determine that higher educational institutional advancement (alumni, marketing-communications, development) is an appropriate venue to study the process model. Responses from practitioners representing every department within advancement, every regional accrediting body and each of the baccalaureate to doctoral Carnegie Classification levels indicated the IMC process model is both understood and its tenets practiced by practitioners at all sizes and levels of institution. The study was of interest to the practitioners as more than half of the respondents requested a copy of the results. Additionally, because IMC is criticized as theoretically weak, this study demonstrates the multi-dimensional construct of IMC can be examined through a Source-Message-Receiver lens, thereby contributing the basic underpinning of much communication theory as a possible core for studying the process model. The study attempted to assess if relationships exist between organizational complexity (size as well as horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional complexity), practitioner engagement in professional development activity (communities of practice, comparative activity, personal engagement) and higher scores on the adapted four-construct, 18-item IMC scale. A second scale was developed to assess practitioners' comparative activity (e.g. benchmarking). The study collected and analyzed descriptive data regarding the function of institutional advancement within U.S. institutions of higher education and its practitioners. Practitioners representing baccalaureate institutions agreed most to the IMC dimensions of differentiated communications and database-centered communications. Practitioners representing doctoral institutions had the highest agreement on the dimension of unified communications and those representing master's institutions had the most agreement on the relationship-fostering dimension. No statistically significant relationships were detected between the variables of organizational complexity, practitioner engagement and the dimensions of IMC. While the practitioners reported increases in success indicators commonly collected within institutional advancement, statistical significance between these and the IMC dimensions was not detected. Limitations are examined.

DEDICATION

A line from Coelho's *The Alchemist*, "when you want something, all the universe conspires in helping you achieve it," seems appropriate here. Though this dissertation and this terminal degree have my name on them, they are not individual achievements. I therefore dedicate this work and this degree to my wonderful husband of 20 years, Karl, as well as our three sons Evan (15), Alec (13) and Seth (11) because both represent an entire family's effort. I also dedicate these to my parents, Janet and the late Presley LeBlanc as well as my siblings for cultivating core values that helped get me through the process. I must also acknowledge the great work of current and former teachers at every level, including graduate-level faculty and *especially* the members of my doctoral committees, but specifically Beryl Buck (EHS) and the late Dr. Virginia Cromwell (UL) – both of whom believed in me so intently that their effort on my behalf charted my course in life, from the initial decision to attend college to subsequent decisions like advanced degrees, the adaptation of strategic planning as a lifestyle and professional accreditation. Next, I'd like to thank my friends and colleagues in civic and professional organizations as well as at Spring Hill College and the University of Louisiana for their support and encouragement. Thanks, too, to many of my students for making full-time faculty service so rewarding. More than anything, I pledged to myself that I would not give up any facet of life to achieve this degree. Therefore, it is my hope that changing careers and returning to graduate school after 13 years in the midst of a life filled with significant personal/professional/civic commitments helps demonstrate the rewards of setting and achieving goals that contribute to life's richness.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study represents an exploratory effort to determine the state of integrated marketing communication (IMC) practice in U.S. baccalaureate to doctoral institutions and whether organizational complexity and practitioner engagement may contribute to practitioners following that process model. It began with these broad questions: Is IMC practiced in U.S. Institutional Advancement? and Can IMC metrics be examined through a source-message-receiver lens? Through secondary research, it was determined that advancement practitioners understand the concept and have generally embraced the model to varying degrees. Though IMC should seem to represent a common sense approach to marketing communication activity, integration in theory is much easier than integration in practice. This study attempts to determine which types of institution and practitioner are more likely to respond positively to the various components within the model. It is of interest to university practitioners, because IMC has been much discussed in institutional advancement communities of practice for decades, yet some practitioners and institutions still do not practice in the holistic manner suggested by the literature. This study should contribute to the body of knowledge by using the base of much communication theory, Source-Message-Receiver, as a fundamental underpinning of the IMC process model.

Higher Education

Higher education is complex and competitive. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2008), there are more than 8,000 accredited colleges or universities in the U.S. as certified by the six primary accrediting organizations: Southern Association of

Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Colleges and Schools, Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges and Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. This number includes all postsecondary schools whose students are eligible for federal financial aid. It includes multiple types of institutions, from for-profit career-training schools to specialized schools like legal and medical.

Higher education in the U.S. is big business. Trade associations, such as the Big Six (American Council on Education, American Association of Community Colleges, American Association of State Colleges and Universities, Association of American Universities, National Association of State Universities and Land-Grand Colleges and the National Association of Independent Colleges and Universities) represent large numbers of very different types of institutions of higher education. More than 2.7 million people were employed by colleges, universities and professional schools in 2007 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2008). Expenditures of postsecondary educational institutions in 2006-2007 were $373 billion or about 3 percent of the U.S. gross domestic product (National Center for Education Statistics, 2007). Even though the federal government describes education as a state and local responsibility, the Bush administration's final budget request, prior to the economic stimulus package, included $2.1 billion for higher education programs and approximately $95 billion for student financial aid in the form of loans, grants and work-study assistance to more than 11 million students (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Additionally, almost all federal departments and agencies, offer research and other performance-based grants (U.S. Government, 2008) and legislators have long had the option of earmarks, which they frequently use for buildings and other college and university programs and projects. Therefore, hundreds of millions of dollars in each annual federal budget are directed toward baccalaureate to doctoral degree granting colleges and universities beyond the Department of Education's regular spending. As an example, according to the Office of Management and Budget, in the 2008 federal budget, for the state of Alabama alone [NOTE: alphabetical selection], there was approximately $53 million in legislative appropriations that specifically named colleges and universities (2008). Any Bush or Obama economic stimulus funding directed toward institutions of higher education was in addition to the figures stated above. Within both stimulus packages, there were major increases for Pell grants, work study grants, research funding and facilities/infrastructure: "taken together, the education-related elements...would double the budget of the education department" (Lippincott, 2009, p. 10). Similarly, though state funding has not kept pace with federal funding, states are supportive of higher education initiatives. The bottom line is that external funding of all sorts is a necessity because tuition revenue simply cannot support all activities of institutions of higher education.

Strong endowments are important in higher education, primarily because they enable institutions of higher education to be less tuition-dependent and less dependent upon financial aid and other state and federal funding. The National Center for Educational Statistics reported the value of the nation's 120 largest college and university endowments was almost $270 billion as of June 30, 2006, a 14.5 percent increase over the amount reported for June 2005 (Digest of education statistics, 2007). The value of endowments at the top five schools alone – Harvard, Yale, Stanford, the University of

Texas System and Princeton – was more than $87.3 billion. Though the economic downturn greatly impacted investments throughout the U.S., prior to 2008, the trend was toward unprecedented growth as endowments supporting institutions of higher education consistently experienced double-digit increases most years (Fast facts, 2007). Since the economic downturn, only schools with endowments greater than $1 billion have shown growth. Overall, endowment losses for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 averaged -3 percent and the first five months of fiscal year 2009 showed a decline of an additional 22 percent (National Association of College and University Business Officers & Commonfund Institute, 2009). According to Lippincott, "current gifts and earnings on past gifts provide 40 percent of annual revenues. It is the single largest source of funding for these institutions" (2009, p. 14). Therefore, at the most fundamental level, from endowments to annual giving to data to relationships, institutions of higher education rely on the resource-cultivating work of those who perform the institutional advancement function.

Advancement

The advancement function includes alumni relations (friendraising), communication, marketing and development (fundraising). Depending upon how individual institutions define the function, it may also include: advancement services (usually database support), government affairs/lobbying, community relations, the institution's Foundation and other offices. Some in the field refer to advancement as a three-legged stool consisting of alumni relations, communications and fundraising. According to John Lippincott, president of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE): "Advancement is the set of functions at an educational institution dedicated to the management of long-term relationships with key constituencies, including: benefactors, alumni, opinion leaders, decision makers, current and prospective students, faculty and staff" (2006, p. 4). In short, advancement units are responsible for constituent relationship management generally with the exception of current students who are typically served by student and academic administration units.

Institutional Advancement is not a new phenomenon. It has been practiced for centuries to promote institutions and acquire resources. For example, the first known U.S. higher education fundraising campaign, featuring both personal selling and supporting materials, is credited to Harvard when it embarked upon its "begging mission" to England in 1641 and subsequently printed *New England's First Fruits,* a brochure for the campaign in 1643 (Cutlip, 1997, p. 17). What's more, trade associations for higher education practitioners began to appear in the first quarter of the 20th century as organizations for those engaged in alumni relations and public relations emerged about the same time. The university functions of alumni relations, fundraising and public relations began to come together under the umbrella of Institutional Advancement in the 1950s. According to Buchanan, "the signal event in the advancement profession" occurred in 1958. The Greenbrier Conference report "recommended that the various functions and activities performed in the academy to develop understanding and support from all constituencies should be directed and coordinated by a senior administrative officer reporting to the campus chief executive" (2000, p. 6). In 1974, the trade organizations of the American Alumni Council and the American College Public Relations Association officially merged and became CASE, the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE, 2004).

Institutional Advancement as IMC

The term Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) was popularized by Schultz, Tannenbaum and Lauterborn in the late 1980s and became a buzzword in business and industry in the 1990s. A generally cited definition of IMC is:

> A concept of marketing communications planning that represents the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines – general advertising, direct response, sales promotion and public relations – and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency and maximum communication impact. (Caywood, 1997, p. xiv)

By the mid- to late-1990s, university administrators were using the term IMC with great frequency and still do. IMC discussion and study regularly appeared in trade training such as CASE Summer Institutes and conferences. At that time, *CASE Currents* magazine began publishing case studies, how-to, as well as pro and con articles on higher educational institutions adopting an IMC approach. As an example: "The day we closed the news bureau: How Indiana University survived the switch from promotions-oriented PR to integrated marketing" was published January 1998 and detailed that university's 1996 internal realignment.

In the third *Handbook of Institutional Advancement*, editor and renowned industry expert Buchanan compared an earlier definition of advancement to a definition of IMC and states unequivocally: "Ironically, these definitions of different fields, developed more than a decade apart, sound similar. This leads me to believe that our field of advancement is evolving into what we call today integrated marketing" (2000, p. 67). Edmiston (2007), the CASE 2008 Best Dissertation winner for research related to institutional advancement, found IMC is practiced in higher education. What's more, whether the IMC process model is followed seems to impact the institutions of higher education. Horrigan (2007), using a case study approach, found one institution adopted IMC and was able to improve its *U.S. News & World Report* ranking over a five-year period. Hobson (2008) surveyed 237 community colleges and found that those practicing IMC were more likely to improve their enrollment than those who do not, excluding negative external variables.

Problem Statement

Though some of its proponents refer to it as a theory and even its own academic discipline, IMC is criticized as weak because it is a process model, though its primary tenets incorporate best practices espoused by advertising, marketing and public relations. In each discipline, descriptions of high-level practice include leadership support, coordination and appropriateness of message and message delivery, two-way communication, strategic planning, research, evaluation, and participation in organizational decision-making/inclusion among the dominant coalition. While researchers have searched for theoretical support for IMC, perhaps the fundamental base of communication theory (SMR) can serve that purpose. After all, multiple practitioners are encoders for the SOURCE. The MESSAGE must be strategic, targeted and distributed appropriately. Finally, interactivity with/feedback from the RECEIVER should be present through relationship management techniques.

Research Questions

RQ1: Which Carnegie classifications of institution are more likely to have lower mean scores (higher agreement) on the dimensions of the IMC model?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between measures of organizational complexity (size, horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional) and the dimensions of the IMC model?

RQ3: Is there a relationship between variables of engagement (communities of practice, comparative activity, and personal engagement) and the dimensions of the IMC model?

RQ4: Will institutions with higher scores on the dimensions of the IMC model be more likely to self-report improvements in common advancement success indicators (enrollment, good addresses, volunteers, attendance, donors, gifts, members)?

Preliminary Definitions and Assumption

For the purpose of this study, Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of higher education will be used. These classifications were developed by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education in 1970 and represent "the leading framework for describing institutional diversity in U.S. higher education" (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2008). In the U.S., there are 4,391 Carnegie-classified institutions of higher education in the broad categories of Associate's Colleges, Baccalaureate Colleges, Doctorate-granting Universities, Master's Colleges or Universities and Special Focus Institutions. These institutions have a combined enrollment of more than 17.5 million students (Carnegie Classifications data file, 2009).

Within this study, the term *practitioner* refers to any staff member responsible for primary functions within institutional advancement: alumni relations, marketing, public relations, development and etc. The term *senior manager* refers to whoever is responsible for the overall coordination of the advancement function within the institution of higher education. Actual titles may vary (Vice President, Executive Director, Director, etc.), but the commonality is that he or she reports directly to the president of the institution and has oversight responsibility for all advancement units.

The primary assumption this study makes is that the institutional advancement function is practiced by all nonprofit institutions of higher education. Though it may not be called *advancement*, every college or university must have its own version of the "three-legged stool" comprised of alumni relations, marketing/communication and development to survive and thrive in higher education's competitive arena.

Justification

Institutional advancement is an important endeavor that helps sustain nonprofit institutions of higher education. Practitioners frequently seek to learn from one another, work to determine best practices and look for other ways to continuously improve the advancement model. However, throughout professional literature, particularly within CASE, practitioners find that the variability in size and scope of institutions as well as the variability in practitioner sophistication make it difficult to settle on any one absolute form of practice.

The IMC model and the advancement model share much commonality; therefore, it is appropriate to use an IMC approach to study institutional advancement. Though there is much research regarding the practice and process of IMC, it has little theoretical support in the literature.

This study will examine the practice of IMC within advancement units in U.S. institutions of higher education for two purposes. First, using the fundamental core of communication theory, Source-Message-Receiver, as a base of analysis for the IMC process model may help to provide theoretical support for the concept. Second, it is an attempt to inform practice. IMC is much discussed among advancement practitioners and there is evidence that IMC and institutional advancement are, in some ways, synonymous. Still, it is not practiced at all institutions of higher education. Therefore, this study will examine if organizational complexity and practitioner engagement are moderators to practitioners' usage of the IMC process model. Ideally, the contribution of this study will be two-fold: 1) provide theoretical support for the IMC model and 2) determine if organizational complexity and practitioner engagement in professional development activities impact whether IMC is practiced in institutional advancement.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

No matter what type of organization (corporation, small business, nonprofit, institution of higher education, etc.) integration in practice is necessary because of the pace at which the marketing-communication (MarCom) and media landscapes are changing. It is even more important for colleges and universities that are attempting to recruit teenagers who have never known a world without a plethora of cable channels and who grew up with the Internet and/or non-traditional students who are seeking their degrees on their own terms, a movement fueled by technology. Neither a traditional news bureau model nor a one-way advertising model of information distribution is sufficient in today's 24/7 media climate and among the diverse constituencies with whom colleges and universities must build rapport (Ahles, 2006).

This chapter covers findings related to the process model of integrated marketing communication. It indicates how the base of communication theory S-M-R (source-message-receiver) can provide a theoretical underpinning for IMC. It also introduces the variables of organizational complexity and practitioner engagement.

Integrated Marketing Communication

Descriptions of IMC are continually evolving. In the late 1980s, the American Association of Advertising Agencies introduced IMC as a concept featuring coordination and consistency of messages and communication channels (frequently referred to as *one sight/one sound*) and using the tools of a variety of academic disciplines to work synergistically based upon a comprehensive plan. Researchers in the 1990s introduced and reinforced the idea of IMC being a process that focuses on consumers and prospects as well as relationships and loyalty. They added that IMC should result in profitable relationships and expanded the scope from merely customers to all other stakeholders and emphasized that IMC is a strategic business function that should include measurability and impact multiple internal and external markets (Kliatchko, 2005).

One of the more recent definitions of IMC is "a concept under which a company systematically coordinates its multiple messages and many communication channels and integrates them into a cohesive and consistent marketing communication mix to send the target market a clear, consistent message and image about it and its offerings" (Lee & Park, 2007, p. 223).

At its core, IMC represents a shift in thinking away from an organization's wants and needs (inside-out perspective) and a more diligent focus upon consumers' wants and needs (outside-in perspective). While not synonymous with Charles Coolidge Parlin's famous "the customer is king" declaration in the early part of the 20th century, work by Lauterborn demonstrates this paradigm shift to customer focus by transferring the Four P's of marketing to his Four C's of IMC:

- *Product* becomes the *Consumer's solution*
- *Price* becomes understand the consumer's *Cost* to satisfy that want or need.
- *Place* becomes *Convenience* to buy.
- *Promotion* becomes *Communication.* (Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1994)

In short, IMC is not a hard-sell approach. It is a more communication-based approach for managing relationships with all stakeholders (Duncan & Moriarity, 1998). It is about meeting individuals where they are with information they are able digest on their own terms, in media of their preference.

Two practically synonymous terms are important for understanding information dissemination within an IMC framework: contact and touchpoint. The term *contact* refers to "any information-bearing experience that a customer or prospect has with the brand, the product category or the market that relates to the marketer's product or service" (Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1994, p. 51). The term *touchpoint* refers to "interactions with a brand required during the process of buying or using that brand" (Duncan, 2005, p. 119). As reflected in the mantra of Sergio Zyman, former chief marketing officer for The Coca-Cola Company: "Everything communicates!" (Zyman & Brott, 2002). For advancement practitioners, this means not only mastering and using traditional media, it means mastering and using nontraditional media as well: the Internet and social media, events and venues, guerilla (surprise or unexpected) tactics, employee training and other approaches. In essence, practitioners should attempt to control all messages that are controllable, whether the contacts/touchpoints are planned, unexpected (such as word of mouth) or customer-initiated, so they can enhance favorable communication and offset unfavorable communication (Duncan, 2005; Schultz, Tannenbaum, & Lauterborn, 1994).

Therefore, a highly coordinated, multi-pronged, multi-departmental approach is important because today's effective practitioners must attempt to harness the power of every possible contact/touchpoint available through the spectrum of new and traditional media as well as personal communication. Advancement practitioners must prepare high quality materials and messages for their own communication vehicles as well as for those they do not control in order to build relationships with resource-bearing constituencies. They must make sure the institution's employees and various constituencies have appropriate information with which to serve as its advocates. They must make sure face-to-face activities such as special events are immersive experiences that leave attendees spreading positive messages about the institution. They must anticipate needs and make sure information that may be sought out is available in any medium any person searches. Though controlling all possible contacts/touchpoints is, in reality, impossible because of physical and financial constraints as well as the evolving nature of Internet communication, it should nonetheless be envisioned as a target for practitioners who can use technology to incorporate both transaction-based data and relationship-oriented data into a more strategic form of practice (Peltier, Schibrowsky, Schultz, & Zahay, 2006).

Stages/Dimensions

Much published IMC literature, focuses on hierarchical stages of integration. Caywood (1997) offers six stages of integration: 1) awareness, 2) image integration, 3) functional integration, 4) consumer-based integration, 5) stakeholder integration and 6) utopian integration. Sirgy and Rahtz (2007) offer seven stages of integration: 1) awareness of the need for integration, 2) image integration, 3) functional integration, 4) coordinated integration, 5) consumer-based integration, 6) stakeholder-based integration and 7) relationship management integration. Hutton and Mulhern state that integration occurs at nine levels: 1) tactical level, 2) strategic level, 3) business- and marketing-mission levels, 4) organization level, 5) education and training level, 6) interpersonal level, 7) theoretical level, 8) process level and 9) consumer level. They conclude "the very best marketing communications are integrated at every level – not just at the tactical level to create a unified, cohesive, effective program" (2002, p. 8). Others, such as Kitchen and Schultz (2003) suggest a four-stage description of IMC.

Adapted from Schultz and Schultz (2004), Table 1 describes IMC as having four stages as determined by the frequently-cited American Productivity and Quality Center's 1998 Best Practices Report: 1) coordination of tactical communication efforts, 2) redefinition of the scope of marketing communication, 3) application of information technology and 4) financial and strategic integration.

Table 1

Stages of IMC adapted from Schultz and Schultz (2004)

Stage	**Key indicators**
1. Tactical Coordination	• Tactical coordination of diverse outbound MarCom elements • Achieving consistency and synergy between functional areas • Development of overall communication policies and practices • "One sight, one sound" via MarCom
2. Redefining scope of marketing communication	• Dynamic and ongoing marketing communications • Incorporate stakeholder insight at all points of contact • Scope broadens to align internal and external MarCom programs

Table 1 (continued).

3. Application of information technology	• Apply empirical data to identify, value and monitor the impact of integrated internal and external programs on key stakeholders over time • Integrate various sources of key data to obtain a richer and more complete view of the stakeholder relationship
4. Financial and strategic integration	• Emphasis on using the skills and data generated in earlier stages to drive strategic planning using information • Use planning and evaluation to determine return on investment and other measures

Researchers have repeatedly classified IMC as a multi-dimensional construct. This approach attempts to more holistically examine the IMC process model in an effort to inform practice and help establish normative rules or best practices. While message, media and audience are important to IMC, Nowak and Phelps (1994) indicated three cores of practice: 1) one voice, 2) integration/coordination and 3) consistency. Through factor analysis, Phelps and Johnson identified a five-dimension structure for IMC, which included: 1) direct marketing, 2) one voice, 3) coordinated marketing, 4) increased responsiveness and 5) response goals (1996). Duncan and Moriarity (1998) developed a frequently-cited 20-question mini-audit to determine an organization's level of integration along the five dimensions of 1) organizational infrastructure, 2) interactivity, 3) mission marketing, 4) strategic consistency and 5) planning/evaluating (as cited in Duncan, 2005). Klaitchko (2005) offered three pillars of IMC, strategically managed as a complete brand communication program: 1) Audience-focused (multiple markets: consumers, dealers, trade, etc.), 2) Channel-centered (multiple channels: advertising, customer relationship management, public relations, etc.) and 3) Results-driven (financial measurement: customer valuation, return on investment, etc.). Similarly, Reid (2005) defined three constructs of IMC: 1) interactivity, 2) mission marketing and 3) cross-functional strategic planning, which, he determined, lead to the three performance constructs of 1) brand advantage, 2) sales performance and 3) customer satisfaction. [NOTE: these dimensions are again referenced in Table 2]

Keys to Success

With about 20 years of academic, trade and business publications about IMC, including dissertations with the term in their titles beginning in the mid-1990s (Owen, 1996), it appears to be more than a fad or shift in semantics. Throughout the literature, the commonality in recommendations regarding keys to success are understanding and using interdisciplinary and evolving MarCom tools, senior management's acceptance, complete organization buy-in, coordinated internal systems, research-based planning, focus on constituents and interactivity. Specifically within colleges and universities, Edmiston (2007) found that the keys to success were leadership's commitment to integration, formal communication mechanisms such as a campus-wide marketing committee and an open systems perspective that would effectively allow the departments within the advancement function to collaborate.

The American Productivity and Quality Center's 1998 best practices report on IMC, authored by Schultz and others, offers multiple keys to success. It is summarized in Schultz and Schultz (2004, pp. 25-28):

- Integration requires interpersonal and cross-functional communication within the organization and with outside suppliers. It cannot be driven by formal policies and procedures alone.
- The integration process is run by the organization, not by ad agencies or other suppliers.
- Organizations must gather extensive information, using primary and secondary research sources, and use that information in the planning, development and evaluation of MarCom activities.
- Best practice organizations create a variety of feedback channels to gather information about customers; they use this information and share it throughout the organization.
- Best practice organizations maintain a greater number of data sources and their personnel have greater access to the data for planning MarCom programs.
- Best practice organizations are more likely to use finance-based approaches to targeting and segmentation.

A Kitchen, Kim, and Schultz article grew from a multi-national study that compared IMC in the U.S., U.K. and Korea. The study found some national differences in the priority order of the IMC concept, and, similar to earlier work by Swain (2004, 2005) they found some differences along the respondents' area of focus (advertising or PR, agency or firm). A key finding was, "many U.S. PR and advertising agencies consider IMC to be a mechanism around which they actually can organize marketing business" whereas practice in other cultures is simply "coordination of communication disciplines" indicating IMC may be more advanced in the U.S. than in other cultures (2008, p. 538).

Criticisms

There are many criticisms of IMC, though it has its supporters who use the terms theory and discipline quite frequently to describe it. Primary criticisms are that IMC has no one agreed-upon definition and there are no generally accepted standards for its measurement or evaluation. Another criticism is its lack of theoretical underpinning. Published IMC studies are frequently case studies or revolve around its practice (see for example work by Swain, 2003, Kitchen & Schultz, 2003, Eagle & Kitchen, 2000, and others). Most do not offer a theoretical underpinning or they revolve around its hierarchical stages of integration, which indicates some support for a hierarchy of effects underpinning as used by Lee and Park (2007). Others apply an open systems perspective to IMC study because its core requires interdependence among those responsible for the marketing and communication functions (e.g. Edmiston, 2007) and because the organization exists within its larger environment.

Kitchen, Brignell, Tao, and Spickett-Jones reviewed detractors' arguments over the first 10+ years of IMC publications and found the following were the most common: the term is a euphemism and simple repackaging of what full-service advertising agencies have offered for decades, IMC represents encroachment and marketing imperialism to many public relations purists, IMC lacks a consistent definition and it possesses significant measurement/evaluation issues (2004). They also explained that IMC never progresses beyond the tactical/lower level stages of "one sight/one sound" in many organizations. Kitchen, Kim, and Schultz reiterated these same criticisms in a more recent article which asserted that IMC practice continues to lead theory, concluding that integration in execution is more common than in planning/evaluating: "If IMC theory is unable to make this needed shift [to a new and higher level], it will remain in the domain of tactics and its earlier promise will likely fade away" (2008, p. 544).

Many IMC authors, including the thought leaders' summit white paper (Duncan & Mulhern, 2004), ask the rhetorical question: Who would be silly enough to argue against integration? Shiffman offers a summary answer to that question: "Marketers talk of *integrated programs*, but if programs need to be integrated, that means they were designed as stand-alone, separate activities – and that's where the trouble starts" (2008, p. 156). This is why IMC study is important. The IMC model offers a holistic form of high-level practice, yet many of those responsible for the MarCom function continue to practice as tacticians rather than strategists. This sentiment is and has been expressed in literature from advertising, marketing, public relations and other disciplines for decades.

There are many challenges to IMC adoption. The APQC report's attempt to assess the practice of IMC even included criticisms, including: Organizations use a variety of tools to measure the effectiveness of MarCom activities, but few incorporate financial measures into the evaluation process. "While organizations may claim to be customer focused, relatively few have fully grappled with the strategic and organizational implications of such a focus" (Schultz & Schultz, 2004, p. 32). Aligning internal practices and processes with external communication programs is a challenge to integration. These assessments are supported by Swain's work (2003, 2004, 2005) as well as the latest study by Kitchen, Kim and Schultz (2008).

In a 2002 book, Klaitchko offered the view that IMC may be considered conceptually old, but operationally new because fundamental principles of integration/coordination and consumer orientation are old but technology has made it possible to put these into practice (Kliatchko, 2005). Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborn and other researchers and authors of business books such as Ries and Ries (2004) have expressed this idea as well.

However, Gould offered an interesting view of IMC as a poststructuralist set of practices or discourses, "which suggests that people construct their views of things in their practices in particular situations at particular times" (2004, p. 68). This means that IMC practice can be considered unstable in that it is highly localized and dependent upon the practitioner and the needs of the organization. He argued that understanding IMC from a theoretical perspective requires examining the particular ways it is applied, identifying practices and discourses, and attempting to develop a multi-term, multi-meaning view of it. The outcome for knowledge would be "less a one-size-fits-all situation than a map of these varying situations as they are understood at any one time" (2004, p. 70).

Growing Together

The fundamental core of communication (Source-Message-Receiver) and fundamental principles of marketing (Segmenting-Targeting-Positioning) seem to have grown together into the concept of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which essentially comprises best practices from the disciplines of advertising, marketing and public relations. Though it can be argued that advertising and public relations are some of the tools used to fulfill the marketing tenet of promotion, each is its own function, has its own activities and is an academic discipline.

At present, it is quite difficult to tell advertising, marketing and public relations texts apart from one another (see for example: Advertising: Belch & Belch, 2005, Marketing: Kotler & Keller, 2006 and Public Relations: Cutlip, Center, & Broom 2006). A white paper emerging from a thought leaders symposium on IMC found teaching advertising and promotion in colleges and universities in an integrated manner is more reflective of today's marketplace of media convergence (Duncan & Mulhern, 2004). Additionally, applied and basic research from each discipline is readily applicable to the others, further indicating an assimilation of best practices and what may be considered a blurring, if not a potential merging, of the disciplines.

As supported by the literature existing in the various disciplines, including work by Kotler and Keller (2006) and Belch and Belch (2005), Hutton and Mulhern (2002), Caywood (1997), Harris (1998) and others, advertising, marketing and public relations draw upon persuasion and frequently use the same tactical elements, but each has its own core or essence: Advertising: creative/persuasive message delivery. Marketing: exchange/value. Public relations: media relations/crisis communication. Narrowing the complex, relationship-building functions of advertising, marketing and public relations to this degree is obviously an oversimplification, but doing so illustrates that an IMC approach is where the functions of all three intersect (Fig. 1). Figure 1 is a graphic created by the researcher to illustrate how advertising, marketing and public relations are

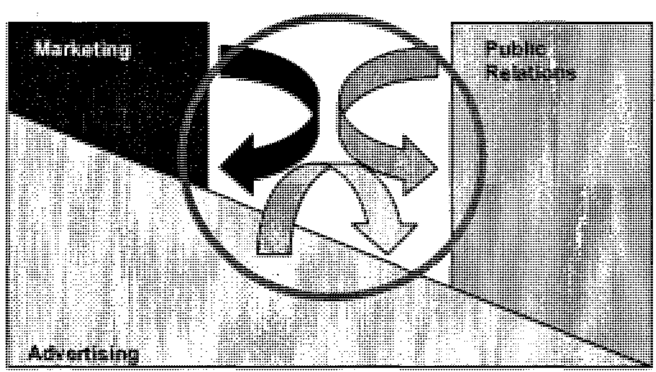

Figure 1. IMC as the intersection of advertising, marketing and public relations

growing together into IMC. The size and placement of the advertising triangle in the illustrates that advertising is used more for marketing purposes than it is for public relations purposes – though many organizations undertake institutional/image advertising. In short, marketing will occur with or without public relations and advertising efforts; what's more, public relations can exist outside the marketing realm. As Cutlip, Center, and Broom explain, marketing is a line function, which consists of "profit- and product-producing functions" and public relations is a staff function that exists to "advise and assist line functions" (2006, p. 58).

IMC represents the evolution of what those, who envisioned two-way communication between an organization and its various stakeholders as the norm, were able to accomplish with technological enhancement. Interestingly, many of the principles and best practices associated with IMC were espoused by its various disciplines in the decades preceding the term's adoption. For example, Edward Bernays distinguished strategic public relations from more tactical publicity in the early part of the 20th century with descriptions of practitioners ranging from technician to counselor – a high-level function, not dissimilar to the institutional advancement senior manager position advocated by the Greenbrier Report. In advertising, greats such as Bill Bernbach rose to prominence by advocating the use of teams made up of people with varied individual strengths (Sivulka, 1998). In the 1970s, Bartels traced the history of marketing thought and placed emphasis on the essence of marketing as the *combination* of factors that were involved in sales and promotional activities (Hermans, 2007). Not only have the disciplines of advertising, marketing and public relations recognized the value of assuming best practices of each, they have similarly recognized high-level practice from low-level practice, placed emphasis on planning, strong leadership, participation in organizational decision-making, strategic rather than tactical practice, proactivity rather than reactivity and two-way rather than one-way communication.

While interdisciplinary encroachment is a concern academically: advertising into PR through brand-building activities, PR into marketing with marketing public relations and marketing into PR through holistic marketing and customer relationship initiatives, the movement is not new. Small to mid-size organizations with limited staffs have traditionally practiced this way out of necessity. What's more, throughout history, combined approaches using all existing media have been effective at generating results. Cutlip (1997) explains how Samuel Adams and other revolutionaries mastered the art of integration and proved six truths about effective communication: 1) the necessity of organization for the implementation of a campaign, 2) symbols are easily recognizable and arouse emotions, 3) slogans compress complex issues so they are easy to remember, 4) staged events catch public attention and crystallize public opinion, 5) the importance of getting your story to the public first so your interpretation of events is the generally accepted one and 6) the necessity of a sustained, saturation campaign using all available media. Additionally, Belch and Belch (2005) acknowledge Benjamin Franklin as a superb direct marketer. Even industry greats like P.T. Barnum practiced this way, combining display advertising and publicity for undisputed effectiveness.

Effectiveness in MarCom activities is important for organizational success; particularly in today's increased competitive environment and among increasingly media-savvy prospects. Institutions of higher education are not exempt from competition for students, funding and other resources. There is pressure to make lists, such as *U.S. News*

& World Report, Forbes and other college rankings, to offer increasingly generous scholarships to high-achieving students, to woo and win high-dollar donors, to earn state and federal funding and much more. Uncoordinated, disjointed MarCom activity will simply not yield the resources necessary to keep colleges and universities afloat in the 21st century.

IMC pioneers such as Schultz and Barnes (1999) and industry leaders like Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006), Belch and Belch (2005) and Kotler and Keller (2006) affirm that the absolute foundation of good planning and the base of high-level practice, is the establishment of measureable objectives that are specific to the practitioners' efforts. These should be research-based. Lindenmann lists uses of research to plan and evaluate specifically within the institutional advancement function:

- To collect information that professionals need to do their jobs more effectively;
- To obtain benchmark data regarding the views of key target groups;
- To plan, develop, or refine an institutional advancement program or activity;
- To track or monitor programs, activities or events that are important to the institution;
- To evaluate the overall effectiveness of the institutional advancement program or activity by measuring outputs and outcomes against a pre-determined set of objectives;
- When facing a sudden and unexpected crisis, to put the issues involved into proper perspective through emergency monitoring or polling;

- When circumstances allow, to provide appropriate support in publicizing or promoting a specific program, activity or event. (2000, p. 129)

In short, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to research, planning, implementation, measurement and evaluation in IMC practice, generally and as applied to institutions of higher education because of the nature of the practice and because of the ever-changing media and MarCom landscape. Shiffman stated: "We can no longer write a marketing plan at the beginning of the year and execute against it over the year" (2008, p. 25). Generally, however, points of consensus across disciplines are that planning should occur and that objectives should be SMART: "specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-bound" (Mullins, Walker, & Boyd, 2008, p. 489). Continued work by many researchers and practitioners on the effective measurement of MarCom objectives illustrates Gould's previously-mentioned idea about measurement remaining in a state of flux because planning and executing are undeniably institution and context specific. For example, according to Calvert: "CASE's Commission on Alumni Relations voted in 1993 that alumni relations professionals should decide for themselves how to measure alumni relations, instead of being subject to external judgment" (2000, p. 43). The organization attempted, but did not complete, the Alumni Support Index of best practice measures, has published several books and articles on best practices in all advancement areas and is in the process of creating online tools that allow advancement practitioners access to best practice information on programs, planning, implementation and measurement.

IMC within institutional advancement then is a blend of advertising focus on message strategy and delivery mixed with marketing focus on segmentation, targeting, positioning intertwined with the public relations processes which directly relate to institutional advancement as described by Kelly's five-step public relations process for nonprofits: research, objectives, program, evaluation and stewardship (1998).

Source-Message-Receiver

Though communication theory goes back thousands of years to the ancient Greek and Roman study of rhetoric including Aristotle's fundamental logos, pathos and ethos; Lasswell's 1948 work introduced a very basic question for communication research: Who says what in which channel to whom with what effect? (Severin & Tankard, 1997) The *who* is the source or gatekeeper for messages. The *what* examines the message itself. The *channel* examines its delivery mechanism. The *whom* is the receiver. The *effect* of the message can be either behavioral or attitudinal outcomes.

Mid-20th century Yale experiments "focused on variables related to the communicator, the content of the communication, the audience and responses made by members of the audience" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 386). These studies, led to multiple models, including Hovland, Janis and Kelly's 1959 Instrumental Model of Persuasion which examined some S-M-R variables. A summary of their findings is provided by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975): source factors include expertise, trustworthiness and likability; Message factors include order of arguments, type of appeal, one-sided vs. two-sided communication and explicit vs. implicit conclusion; Audience factors include persuasibility, initial position, intelligence, self-esteem, and personality. These progress through stages of Attention → Comprehension → Acceptance and can bring about attitude change in the form of opinion change, perception change, affect (emotional) change and/or action change.

Much communication study centers on effects. Effects models, which attempt to illustrate message dissemination, reception and subsequent behavior, often place importance on the source or the message or the receiver. For example, in the early 20^{th} century, the receivers were considered weak in comparison to powerful media as evidenced by the Hypodermic Needle theory or Theory of Uniform Influence. Later, researchers such as Klapper expressed that the receivers had much more control via moderating factors such as selective perception, exposure and retention. Research examining message tends to use information theory (e.g. McGuire's information processing model) and/or general semantics/semiotics and/or delivery mechanisms/media (e.g. Technological Determinism and/or CMC: computer-mediated communication). What's more, effects models tend to be linear, such as various Hierarchy of Effects models like AIDA (attention → interest → desire → action) or Lavidge and Steiner's 1961 Hierarchy of Effects Model: awareness → knowledge → liking → preference → conviction → purchase. Similarly, other theories, such as Diffusion of Innovations, Agenda Setting, Priming and Framing ascribe varied weights to the media, gatekeepers and interpersonal components such as friends, family and experts (Holmes, 2005; Severin

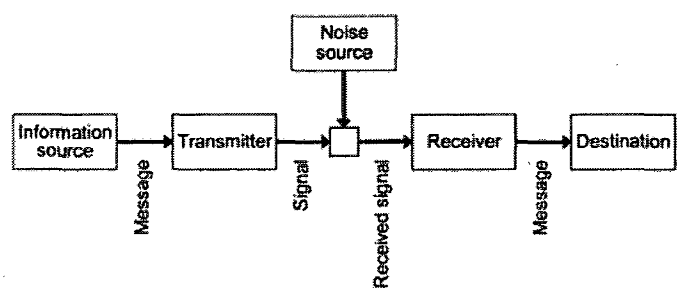

Figure 2. Shannon and Weaver's Mathematical Model of Communication
from Heath & Bryant, 2000, p. 64

& Tankard, 1997; Lowery & DeFleur, 1995).

However, much communication study centers on processes within the communication act, the *who* (S), says *what* (M), and *to whom* (R). In 1949 Shannon and Weaver (Fig. 2) introduced the frequently-referenced mathematical model of communication through which the source, encodes the message and transmits it through a channel to the receiver who then decodes the message. Though the Shannon and Weaver model is very linear, it recognizes that noise may prevent the receiver from decoding the message as the source intended.

In the 1950s, Wilbur Schramm increased the complexity of basic communication study by introducing, through a series of models, the concepts of the feedback loop, encoder/decoder as interpreter and field of experience to the mathematical model of communication, thereby incorporating dynamic human complexity and each individual's accumulated life experiences (Fig. 3). He explained meaning can only be communicated

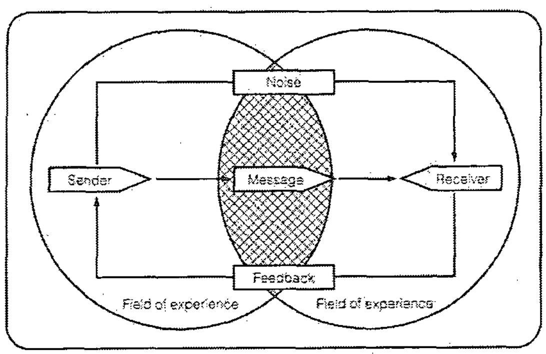

Figure 3. Schramm's Communication Model
from Schultz, Tannenbaum & Lauterborne, 1994, p. 27

via commonality between individuals because varied experiences led to differences in understanding. As Schramm's models progressed, he explained that communication is actually a process in which both the source and the receiver are simultaneously encoding and decoding messages through feedback and the continuous loop of shared information. Schramm's insertion of the feedback loop elevates the process of communication to "a functional system as opposed to Shannon's structural system – that is, [it] can learn" (Severin & Tankard, 1997, p. 54). As such, it includes not only the signals and channels of information but also sources, encoding, transmitters, receivers, decoding and destinations.

Consideration of Source-Message-Receiver necessitates brief discussion of one-way vs. two-way communication, because as a functional system, communication requires feedback. One-way communication is source-generated and distributed to receivers via some channel. The receivers may or may not be exposed to the message, attend the message or process the message. There is no feedback to indicate that the message has been received, understood or acted upon. Two-way communication, on the other hand, is source-generated but feedback is present. It represents more of a dialogue between the source and receiver. Though two-way communication can be present in traditional media, through various response vehicles (e.g. in-bound mailers and phone numbers; face-to-face communication) as Janoschka (2004) explains, two-way communication is prevalent on the Internet in the form of a hybrid between one-to-one and one-to-many communication. She demonstrates the exchange of the online message between the sender/user and audience/user through the medium of the Internet as both a mass communication and interpersonal communication event (Janoschka, 2004). As such, dialogue or approximated dialogue via technology is present. This assertion is supported by much popular and scholarly literature regarding online communities as well as bloggers and social media experts who advocate transparency from and crave dialogue with organizations (see for example Shiffman 2008).

Long before the IMC movement, Webster encouraged: "an integrated research attack to determine those characteristics of sources, messages, and receivers that influence response to industrial marketing communications" (1968, p. 428). Similarly, when an organization is examined as source, particularly in regard to IMC, factors include the amount of information created by the source and others as well as the quality of information, such as accuracy, consistency, thoroughness and the credibility of the source itself, Messages must be targeted to the receiver and distributed through channels to which he or she attends. This means that the source must maintain a presence in both traditional and nontraditional media. A complete campaign cannot simply include print, broadcast and Web – it must also be cross-platform within the myriad of online communities and social networks (Shiffman, 2008). According to Soberman,

> Major improvements in the quality and quantity of consumer information (due to information technology) and the growth of targeted media vehicles (due to media fragmentation and new communication channels) imply that firms now have the know-how and the means to target advertising precisely to segments of consumers within a market. (2005, p. 420)

The feedback loop from the receiver to the source is fueled by technology as well. Much in IMC is database driven. Throughout the IMC and advancement literature, practitioners are encouraged to collect, manage, mine and use data to generate new relationships and to foster existing relationships. According to Lordan, if the goal of public relations is mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and its various publics, then practitioners "should embrace this increasing movement toward interactivity" (2006, p. 29) because audience participation in the feedback loop and data-driven communications will allow much more focus on the receiver.

In an S-M-R examination of advertising, Stern (1994) found multidimensionality in the source, message and receiver. Three dimensions of source: (commissions the ad, pays for it, approves it, is legally responsible for it); author (message creators) and persona (within-ad communicator/organization). Three dimensions of message: autobiographical revelation (spokesperson reveals information), third-person narrative (off camera narrator imparts message) and dramatic enactment (using actors). Three dimensions of receiver: implied consumers (the ones presumed within the ad), sponsorial consumers (the sponsor's representatives who determine whether the ad runs) and actual consumers (the ones who exist in the real world). Multi-dimensional receivers are not passive and take part in meaning construction. "Interactive consumers add yet another layer...they are expected to move beyond decoding of meaning to behavioral acts that take place afterwards" (Stern, 1994, p. 10). Miles built upon Stern's work and placed heavy emphasis on expanding her model to include the concept of interactivity, particularly as technological advances have expanded the concepts of source and receiver as both recipients and creators of information. "Interactivity, of any type and between any element of the advertising production and reception matrix is founded upon the principle of feedback" (2007, p. 308).

Various hierarchy of effects iterations have been used to underpin the IMC process model (see for example Lee & Park, 2007, Reid, 2005, multiple works by Kitchen and Schultz); however the linear nature of these models tends to explain a progression from one stage or level of practice to another. The complexity of IMC, including multiple encoders for the source, multiple messages distributed via a multiplicity of channels to varied receivers seems to require a basic, yet non-linear explanation, after all "functional systems cannot be understood in the same way as causal systems" (Hancock, 1999, p. 110). A Source-Message-Receiver examination of the IMC process model considers the majority of Lasswell's famous question, including: *who*, says *what*, in which *channel* and *to whom*. If these are taken into consideration in the practice of institutional advancement, then the general effects of a cohesive, planned and consistent application of the IMC process model should be evident 1) via standard higher education sustainability metrics such as number of students, number of donors, number of members, gift frequency and amounts, event attendance, attitudinal and other metrics currently collected by institutions of higher education and 2) within metrics established by the practitioners themselves via SMART (specific, measureable, attainable, relevant and time-bound) objectives established within the IMC planning process for general MarCom efforts.

A Systems Perspective

Originating in the biological sciences, a system is generally thought of as a set of interdependent forces. Each action or inaction by one component of the system has an impact on the balance of the system's parts. Ackoff and Gharajedaghi explain that organizations are much more complex than cells or even animals. Organizational structure is multidimensional; units are defined by their function, their output and/or their users. As a system, an organization uses interactive planning toward its idealized design, including resources, implementation steps, monitoring/control and evaluation of the plan.

The organization also possesses a decision support system that helps learning and adaptation (Ackoff & Gharajedaghi, 1996).

A systems view is nonsummative. It is similar to the premise of gestalt, or the idea that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. According to Dainton and Zelley, systems theories can be used to explain nearly all communication contexts, including interpersonal, small group and organizational communication. "The core of all systems approaches is a focus on the interdependence that develops whenever people interact with each other" (Dainton & Zelley, 2005, p. 52). In the context of institutional advancement, interdependence between people, departments and functions is crucial to the success of the advancement unit as a whole because members are dependent upon one another to fulfill their own roles in support of the larger organizational mission (S). The practitioner uses a toolkit of best practices derived from advertising, marketing and public relations, which is attuned to as many organizational contacts/touchpoints as possible (M) to reach and then receive feedback from multiple constituencies (R). This is much more likely to be effective in the 21st century than single-discipline approaches or insular-departmental approaches; after all, adjustment and adaptation fundamentally underpin advertising, marketing, public relations and subsequently, IMC.

Cutlip, Center and Broom believe that being an effective high-level practitioner requires a systems perspective. They define system as "a set of interacting units that endures through time within an established boundary by responding and adjusting to change pressures from the environment to achieve and maintain goal states" (2006, p. 176). The interacting units are the organization and its publics, which are defined depending upon goals and can be internal or external. The authors specifically give an institutional advancement example illustrating the variability of MarCom activity when discussing how student recruitment and a capital campaign each require differing publics with differing goals for each, implemented with differing tactics. "Because organizations exist in dynamic social setting, they must modify internal processes and restructure themselves in response to changing environments" (p. 179). Further, they differentiate between subsystems, systems and suprasystems. As applied to institutional advancement, functional units (such as alumni relations, development, public relations, advancement services, and etc.) are each systems. They are also part of the larger institutional advancement system, which rests within the larger system of the organization, which rests within the higher-order suprasystem of the economic, social-cultural, natural, technological and political-legal environments in which the organization rests.

Cutlip, Center and Broom define institutional advancement as an open system because institutions of higher education are inherently sensitive to their environments. They state that a system's goal is survival: "Paradoxically, open systems must continually change to remain the same, an enduring set of interacting units" (p. 182). Further, they explain that systems "adjust and adapt their goals, structures or processes, depending on the kind and amount of feedback" (p. 183). Differences in inputs from the source yield differences in the types and frequency of feedback from the receiver. What's more, choices on how to adapt should be made with strong consideration given to strategies that are most effective in helping the system maintain or achieve its goals within the context of environmental pressures. A systems perspective underscores the importance of boundary spanners (such as alumni, marketing-communication and development practitioners who perform advancement functions) as those who straddle an organization

– "looking inside and outside of an organization...[Serving as] go-betweens, explaining the organization to its stakeholders and interpreting the environment for the organization" (Lattimore, Otis, Heiman, & Toth, 2007, p. 46). Cutlip, Center and Broom attempted to establish systems theory as a general framework for high-level practice because it supports the planned, interconnected and adaptive nature of professional communicators' work and Edmiston (2007) used an open systems perspective to underpin her study of IMC in institutional advancement.

Systems thinking is important to whether the tenets of IMC are embraced within institutional advancement because interdependence among various practitioners who comprise the source, coordination of message and acquiring feedback from various receivers are fundamental to integration.

S-M-R in IMC

This expanded definition of IMC was developed by Northwestern University and underscores the relevance of S-M-R to IMC:

> Integrated marketing communications is the process of developing and implementing various forms of persuasive communication programs with customers and prospects over time. The goal of IMC is to influence or directly affect the behavior of the selected communications audience. IMC considers all sources of brand or company contacts that a customer or prospect has with the product or service as potential delivery channels for future messages. Further, IMC makes use of all forms of communication which are relevant to the customers and prospects, and to which they might be receptive. In sum, the IMC process starts with the customer or prospect and then works back to determine and

define the forms and methods through which persuasive communication programs should be developed. (Percy, 1997, p. 2)

This definition is perhaps too long for general use, but it underscores that IMC is communication-based, and it effectively echoes Lauterborn's Four C's of IMC. If, at its core, IMC is a communication based model, then it is possible to examine it through an S-M-R lens and break its previously identified components into either source, message or receiver.

Source-Message-Receiver in IMC is shown below in Table 2, which represents a summary and adaptation of the various stages, dimensions and constructs from the IMC literature (see for example works by Caywood, 1997, Sirgy & Rahtz, 2007, Kitchen & Schultz, 2003, Lee & Park, 2007, APQC, 1998, Nowak & Phelps, 1994, Phelps & Johnson, 1996, Duncan & Moriarity, 1998, Klaitchko, 2005, Reid, 2005).

Table 2

S-M-R in IMC

	Stages	**Dimensions**
Source	• Awareness/need for integration • Image integration • Coordinated tactical efforts • Financial integration • Integration on the Tactical/ Strategic/Mission/Organization/Education & Training/ Interpersonal levels	• Unified Communications • Consistency (one voice) • Coordination • Organizational infrastructure • Cross-functional strategic planning (planning/evaluation) • Results-driven

Table 2 (continued).

Message	• Functional integration • Stakeholder integration • Redefinition of the scope of marketing • Integration on Theoretical/Process levels	• Differentiated Communications • Mission marketing • Targeted message • Channel-centered
Receiver	• Consumer-based integration • Relationship management • Application of technology • Integration on the Consumer level	• Database-centered & Relationship Fostering Communications • Increased responsiveness • Direct communication • Response goals • Interactivity • Audience-focused

Practitioners who incorporate the best practice tenets of the IMC process model should plan for and practice coordinated encoding on behalf of the source (S); plan, implement and appropriately distribute message content (M); and actively solicit feedback from receivers of the messages (R) through multiple channels using technological support such as databases and interactivity for two-way communication. This corresponds to the hierarchical stages of IMC established by the APQC, thought leaders and other sources, including Lee and Park (2007), whose 18-item scale examines the four IMC dimensions of:

1) unified communications for consistent message and image (SOURCE),

2) diffierentiated communications to multiple customer groups (MESSAGE),

3) database-centered communications for tangible results, and 4) relationship fostering communications with existing customers (RECEIVER).

While controlling all potential contacts/touchpoints is still important and should be a practitioner's goal, the IMC tenet of a shift in locus of control from the source's to the receiver's communication needs is important because it underscores the shift away from mass marketing and mass communication to the individual (see for example Schultz, Lauterborn & Tannenbaum, 1994). "It is critical at this juncture that …organizations accept the cultural change and transfer of power. This is the era of the individual and even the wealthiest and most successful marketers must negotiate unusual waters" (Shiffman, 2008, p. 137)

The best practice information in IMC literature is echoed and duplicated in advancement literature – see for example, the second and third *Handbooks of Institutional Advancement* by Rowland (1986) and Buchanan (2000) respectively, as well as works by Lippincott (2006, 2008), Warwick (2000) and Burdenski (2003). In institutional advancement, the SOURCE is the staff, volunteers and others working to fulfill alumni relations, MarCom, development and other advancement functions through the consistent application of strategy. The MESSAGE, though created by multiple individuals representing different departments or functions within the institution, should be clear and targeted to the constituency with whom the institution is communicating (alumni, current or prospective students, parents, friends, elected officials, media, donors, community, etc.) and it should be delivered through multiple channels (print, broadcast, Web, social media, events, etc.) to the RECEIVERS who provide feedback to the institution (face-to-face, online, mailed response vehicles, donations, event attendance, commentary, membership, volunteering, etc.) in order to advance the enterprise.

This study does not attempt to determine causality. It examines the process model of IMC through the lens of S-M-R with the primary subject being institutional advancement in an effort to contribute that the base of much communication theory can provide support for the study of IMC. Additionally this study attempts to assess whether organizational and personal variables affect how practitioners respond to questions regarding their understanding and practice of IMC. In short, is the ability of practitioners to encode on behalf of the source impacted by their organization's complexity and/or their own personal engagement in perfecting their crafts and honing the message for the receivers with whom they are trying to build relationships through two-way communication and other facets of the feedback loop inherent in the institutional functions of alumni relations, development and marketing-communication? Because institutional advancement occurs within an educational setting and because the parts of the three-legged stool have multiple, thriving professional development organizations, it would seem logical that practitioners themselves are highly educated and involved in the discovery, implementation and sharing of best practices from the disciplines and organizations supporting the advancement function. Organizational complexity and practitioner engagement are discussed next.

Organizational Complexity

Organization size, scope and other factors impact the complexity of interactions and the ability of the practitioners responsible to carry on the activities required within institutional advancement. On multiple levels, a single-campus baccalaureate degree granting institution is very different from a multi-campus very high research activity doctoral degree granting institution. There are tremendous differences in every possible resource-generating facet of institutional operations within higher education, including: number of students, number of donors, level of community support, number and size of research grants, pool of students/alumni/friends/parents, the athletic teams, their sports records and more. No two institutions of higher education are exactly alike. There is, however, commonality among them, which makes information sharing and the examination of best practices fruitful.

The ranges of Carnegie Classifications must be considered when examining U.S. institutions of higher education because it is the standard by which institutions of higher education are generally categorized in the U.S. Interestingly, Edmiston (2007) found that IMC practice was not determined by Carnegie classification level – advancement units at all Carnegie levels practice at each stage of IMC. Instead of the four-stage description, she re-classified IMC practice as Basic, Intermediate or Advanced because half of the respondents did not proceed linearly through the stages of IMC as defined by AQPC and most other researchers. Her finding contradicts anecdotal speculation within the industry that only very large or very small institutions advancement units can be effectively integrated: large institutions because they are assumed to have many resources and small institutions because it is assumed that fewer people perform the advancement function.

General complexity must also be considered. It is a holistic manner for examining the interactions between individuals and groups in organizations, and Arena (2009) suggests the more interactions between the individuals in a workgroup, more inclined they are to communicate and be self-organized. Goldstein, Hazy, and Silberstang explain that social connectivity, rich information and network-dependent learning help promote social networks which help [practitioners] manage complexity. "As firms share information across boundaries, the resulting social networks serve as a mechanism for the exchange of rich information" (2008, p. 13). Complexity theories, in some ways are extensions of general systems theories, which have long been used to examine the boundary-spanning activity of public relations and other practitioners and are frequently used as the underpinning for IMC studies. Kloviene and Gimzauskiene suggest studying complexity reveals "we are in dynamic reaction with our environment and are very much part of the process that creates that environment. We do not exist in isolation but we exist and have our being within a web of relationships" (2009, p. 72).

Vesterby defines complexity as "quantity and diversity of components and relations, which together constitute a pattern of organization" (2008, p. 91). Complexity can be defined and measured in many ways, for example, Clark, Abela, and Ambler (2006) suggest examining both tasks (number of items, diversity of items and the interdependence among them) and the turbulence of the environment (variability and unpredictability). Moldoveanu (2004) states that complexity can be studied as: structural intricacy, as difficulty, phenomenologically (computational load and informational depth) and teleologically (maximize profit, predictability or survival). Katsinas (2003) recommends institutional control, geography, governance and size be used as metrics of complexity when classifying two-year colleges because he explains that these institutions are much more heterogeneous than is accounted for using the basic Carnegie Classification system – particularly at that level of institution. Hustinx and Handy (2009) examined complexity using the variables of programs (multi-service) and chapters (multi-chapter) in their study of volunteer attachment to the Red Cross.

Moldoveanu and Bauer (2004) studied organizational complexity in relation to critically-linked production tasks and provide a classification of potential algorithmic solutions (simple production tasks, hard production tasks, and undecidable – e.g. some problem involving an epistemic or moral issue). Theirs is a highly quantitative analysis, but to aid in understanding, the authors provide clear examples of high complexity tasks: design, software testing, neuroscience and low complexity tasks: taxi driving, automotive repair, clerical functions. The tasks classified by this article are much more product-based than one would find in the largely people-based field of institutional advancement. Not only must advancement practitioners cultivate resource-bearing relationships at every level among multiple constituencies, both internally and externally to the organization, the multiple tasks within advancement are both time-consuming for the individual and require significant resources. This study does not attempt to quantify specific tasks within advancement, but tasks are used as measures of complexity within the literature. Some tasks that could conceivably be quantified within institutional advancement include: MarCom materials production (e.g. brochures, magazines, newsletters, advertisements, annual reports, Web sites, social networking sites), two-way communication with multiple constituencies both online and interpersonally, group cultivation through activities such as travel, special events planning and implementation, donor solicitations via mail, online, face-to-face and by telephone, as well as prospect research, grant writing and much more. A task-based examination of organizational complexity within institutional advancement is beyond the scope of this study.

In their analysis of organizational complexity, Malott and Martinez (2006) examined the variables of environmental complexity, hierarchical complexity and component complexity in an institution of higher education. They define environmental complexity as “variables or conditions existing in the macrosystem that affect the organization’s performance” (p. 561) and examined factors such as population characteristics, economic conditions, labor unions, federal and state regulations and elected governments. Glenn and Malott define environmental complexity as “the factors external to the organization that affect organizational performance” which can “threaten or enhance organization’s survival” component complexity is “the number of parts that constitute the whole” which can improve “efficiency of processes” and hierarchical complexity is the “number of part-whole levels” which can improve “efficiency of processes” (2004, p. 98). In multiple works with various secondary authors, Malott concludes simply: “The more parts a system has, the more complex it is” (Malott & Martinez, 2006, p. 565). Similarly, Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001) explain that complexity in organizations stems from both microdynamic (bottom-up behaviors occurring when individuals interact) and macrodynamic (emergence of larger systems from the interactions at the micro-level) forces. They suggest that the study of complexity can take multiple forms, including behaviors of ensembles and the “interaction within and among ensembles” as well as “the emergence of common understanding in interacting systems” and the amount of unpredictability existing in interactive systems (2001, p. 395).

Lin and Carley (1997) examined multiple variables including time pressure for decisions, training, organizational form, environment and the match between organizational form and the organization's environment. They state that organizational form is usually classified by size, general view of the organization, the way tasks are distributed, types of processes, form of organizational chart, degree of centralization and etc. However, they reference Malone 1987 and Pfeffer and Salanick 1978 in explaining "differences in communication and coordination and differences in access to information and resources are important in characterizing the organization's form" (Lin & Carley, 1997, p. 135). They operationalize these by examining five levels of organizational structure and six levels of resource access structure.

Valanciene and Gimzauskiene reference studies by Palmer and Parker (2001) and Anderson (1999) to explain complexity:

> Environmental complexity could be determined as the number of elements an organization can interact with at the same time. Organizational complexity is reflected as a set of activities in the organization: (1) vertical complexity is the number of hierarchical levels in the organizational structure; (2) horizontal complexity is a range of organizational processes; (3) complexity in space is the number of departments in different geographical areas. (2008, p. 80)

They add that ideas "representing systems approach reflect not only the technical construction of the systems, but organizational learning, planning of the activities and finding problems' solutions in a systematic way as well" (p. 82).

Organizational, horizontal, vertical, spatial and other forms of complexity impact practitioners' abilities to perform the necessary functions within institutional advancement. For example, some advancement units may be contained within one building on campus, while others may be spread as far as multiple campuses. Similarly, some advancement units may be very simple or flat with practitioners having virtually direct access to the campus CEO and others may be very hierarchical with limited access to senior management. Some advancement units may thrive on interaction between the various departmental leaders while others may operate in insular fashion. Complexity may be a primary factor in whether IMC is used within institutional advancement because it impacts the source's (organization's) ability to coordinate and execute effective messages through multiple media to engage in communication with the various receivers.

Based upon the work of multiple researchers, Bennett (2003) examined the following managerial rigidity (institutional expectations), resource slack (amounts of uncommitted resources), power diffusion (concentrated power structure makes it difficult to implement change), formality of the organizational system (presence of clearly defined rules and procedures), incremental decision-making (small steps are less likely to bring about fundamental changes in activities), and organizational complexity (members' possession of high knowledge, skills and expertise). He built upon Roger's work (1983) to express the more complex an organization, "the greater the depth of the skills embedded in its employees and the better the skills are integrated" (Bennett, 2003, p. 161). Interestingly, Bennett found computer service firms that "employed well-trained and academically sophisticated people were more inclined to mentor and develop staff consequent to a [MarCom] failure than to dismiss or discipline them" (p. 167). Rogers' definition of organizational complexity and Bennett's use of the practitioner-specific variables of formal qualifications, knowledge and additional training blend the concepts of organizational complexity and practitioner engagement in professional development activity.

Practitioner Engagement

As with the concepts surrounding organizational complexity, the term engagement has many definitions and adaptations. Pesut states: "Engagement requires active participation in the discovery and verification of knowledge derived from practice" (2004, p. 2). He offers types of activities an engaged professional can undertake, such as: reading and submitting to publications, mentoring others, comparing self and organization to exemplars, discussing topics of relevance within the industry and negotiating meaning in practice. Britt, Thomas and Dawson state that self-engagement is a more inclusive construct than simply job involvement and is evident when an individual feels a sense of responsibility for and commitment to a domain so that performance matters to the individual" (2006, p. 2101). They further state personal engagement in an activity "is a function of the activity being relevant to central aspects of the individual's identity, leading to increased feelings of responsibility and commitment" thereby increasing individual motivation to do well (p. 2103). Their study determined that personal engagement in a domain can be a predictor of performance ratings in that domain, even when the researchers controlled for the individual characteristic of conscientiousness.

The term practitioner engagement is a global term used in this study to explain practitioners' investments in continuing education, professional development and comparative activity – in other words, how engaged practitioners are in learning about their profession and the industry. After all, "Education must be the central focus of the [advancement] professional who wishes to serve both the institution and the profession effectively" (Ransdell, 1986, p. 379). Indications of practitioner engagement could be: degree(s) held, accreditation(s) held, membership and participation in trade or professional organizations, adaptation of industry best practices and benchmarking against other similar or exemplar practitioners and/or institutions. Some practitioners may not have a college degree, may not be accredited and may not participate in any professional organization or its member development activities. Other practitioners may hold multiple or advanced degrees, multiple accreditations and serve multiple roles within professional organizations. The potential variability is astounding.

In a review of literature, Hermsen and Rosser (2008) drew on the work of Bakker et al. (2007), May et al. (2006), Llorens et al. (2006), Harter et al. (2002), Schaufeli et al. (2006) and Kahn (1990) to determine that *engagement* is a collective term to describe factors related to work life (autonomy and control, job characteristics, organizational norms and professional development opportunities) and identity issues (work-role fit and positive interpersonal relationships with supervisors, colleagues and/or customers) as well as demographic and profile characteristics (age, gender, occupational type). They studied work engagement and job satisfaction among staff within institutions of higher education. Their instrument had 63 questions which were reduced to nine dimensions through factor analysis: Career Support (access to training, clear performance criteria), Inter-Institutional Networks (contact with and advice from peers at other institutions), Recognition for Competence (recognition, guidance, autonomy), Working Conditions (salary, work environment), Work Unit Relationships (sense of teamwork, good communication), External Relations (relationships with faculty, staff, students, public), Job Fit (abilities, competencies, match), Role Fit (identity job gives fits with vision of self), Social Support (supervisor or colleagues help to make the job easier, are easy to talk with and can be relied upon). Interestingly, they found that "working conditions, job fit, role fit and time interacting with students were positively related to work engagement, whereas length of employment on campus was found to be negatively related to work engagement" (Hermsen & Rosser, 2008, p. 14).

Comparative activity may be an indication of how engaged practitioners are – personally and institution-to-institution. Benchmarking is common in institutional advancement, both formally and informally, at the practitioner level and at the institution level. This work is made easier by research, publications, conferences and networking provided by the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education. In fact, in summer 2009, a CASE Benchmarking Toolkit was launched to "enable communities of practice" to "benchmark activities, staffing, budgets and other aspects of their program with peer institutions" (CASE, 2009). This site launch may be a watershed moment in advancement practice because it gives the groups and subgroups within the field's largest professional group the technological means to research and share information among themselves more readily, thereby adding to the body of knowledge formally and informally.

AMA's Marketing Dictionary defines benchmarking as "a point of reference for measurement, often against other companies" (2008). The Center for What Works (2009) describes three areas ripe for benchmarking practices: processes, policies and programs. Similarly, Ratcliff (2000) describes three types of benchmarking used within institutional advancement: internal (within the organization), industry (within the industry) and generic (best practices regardless of industry). He explains benchmarking is essential to institutional advancement because it is a quality improvement process. He suggests five steps: planning (determining what to measure), identifying target organizations (determining what institutions are recognized leaders), data collection (examine processes and measure performance), analysis (evaluate strengths and weaknesses in relation to benchmark partners) and implementation (documented action plan). Benchmarking is valuable on multiple levels.

> All benchmarking efforts, of course, must incorporate and complement the vision and mission of the institution. It is up to the leaders to ensure that the college or university is working effectively to achieve its strategic goals, meet its accreditation standards and realize its mission. (Bender, 2002, p. 119)

Further, benchmarking allows an institution to evaluate if change is necessary and helps it overcome resistance to change as well as enables the institution lead by example where applicable among peer groups.

Because of the broad nature of the advancement function, practitioners may hold memberships with multiple professional/trade organizations, including the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), the Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) or other organizations participating in the Universal Accreditation Board (such as the Southern Public Relations Federation or the National School Public Relations Association), the American Marketing Association (AMA), the American Advertising Federation (AAF) and etc. This is important because it underscores the potential for much knowledge sharing regarding ideas incorporating each component of IMC's and each component of advancement's best practices. Conversely, because licensure or accreditation is not mandatory, a practitioner could not be a member of any professional development organization and could not have pursued accreditation. However, because advancement exists in educational settings, it would seem highly unlikely that practitioners at baccalaureate to doctoral institutions would have no post-secondary academic credentials.

Lohman (2005) compared members of two different types of professional development organization (teachers and human resource managers) and found that both formal and informal learning are important to the workplace. However, seven personal characteristics enhanced the motivation of members in both professional groups to engage in informal learning: initiative, self-efficacy, love of learning, interest in the profession, commitment to professional development, a nurturing personality and an outgoing personality.

Lin and Carley found that training "has an impact because it affects both what the members of the organization learn and how they use or interpret that information. Organizational learning, to the extent it is encapsulated in personnel, becomes a major determinant of performance" (1997, p. 147). In fact, they found that training is the dominant factor in dynamic choice tasks, more so than organizational complexity and environment. Interestingly, a 2004 study by the Performance Assessment Network found employees who participated in training and higher education opportunities (54%) were more fully engaged than those who had not (35%). They define "*fully engaged* as having a strong personal connection to the organization and acting in ways that create and enhance customer loyalty" (Performance Assessment Network, 2005, p. 14).

In education as well as business settings and in other fields' literature, the term *community of practice* (CoP) is frequently used in reference to transmitting best practice information between individuals. As Iverson and McPhee explain, "CoP theory strongly emphasizes the interactively constructed nature of engaging, sharing and negotiating" (2008, p. 179). Wenger defines a community of practice as "groups of people who share a passion for something that they know how to do, and who interact regularly in order to learn how to do it better" (2004, p. 2). Wenger provides three elements of a community of practice: A community of practice must have a domain, it must be about something; it is not a social network. A community of practice must be a community, it is made up of people who interact and develop relationships that help them to address problems and share knowledge; it is not a Web site. A community of practice must include the body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, cases, documents and etc. that help define the practice. "Over time, [members] accumulate practical knowledge in their domain, which makes a difference in their ability to act individually and collectively" (Wenger, 2004, p. 3). There are three dimensions to a community of practice: *mutual engagement*, explained as competence of self and others/knowing where to go for help and how to help others, *joint enterprise* or the collective negotiation of meaning which makes the enterprise something larger than any one person or entity and *shared repertoire* which includes such things as tools, routines, words, actions, stories, ways of doing things and symbols (Culver & Trudel, 2008). In a case study examination of two groups, Iverson and McPhee (2008) uncovered CoP elements in each group: mutual engagement (scheduled and unscheduled interaction, trainings, online interaction), joint enterprise (flexibility and rigidity within the system, advice and feedback welcomed, independence and interdependence) and shared repertoire (terminology, skills, activities, stories). They also found CoPs have great variability: "These differences provide insight into ways in which practitioners could enhance engagement and facilitate the productive development of a shared repertoire and the effective negotiation of joint enterprises" (2008, p. 195)

Communities of practice cannot be mandated or simply created because they are in many ways organic. As such they need to be purposefully cultivated in order to sustain themselves, which makes the existence of trade and professional development organizations much more important. Sharing and borrowing ideas is frequent in organizations to which an advancement practitioner may belong, as an example, an affectionate and (definitely unofficial) moniker for CASE among some practitioners is "copy and steal everything" because members of that organization are so willing to share best practices with others. This nickname helps to illustrate that CASE is indeed a community of practice because its domain is institutional advancement, its members are a community of individuals who interact frequently to perfect the practice and advance the body of knowledge. Other organizations, such as Public Relations Society of America, American Advertising Federation, Association of Fundraising Professionals, Partnership for Philanthropic Planning, and Council of Alumni Association Executives, are not dissimilar from CASE in that regard. Anecdotally and via trade literature, those engaged in professional development organizations and personal professional development are more likely to use common language, be familiar with advancements within the industry and are more likely to research and use best practices. In a study of faculty in the higher education setting, Blanton and Stylianou (2009) cite a 1991 study by Lave and Wenger to explain that learning occurs through participation in communities of practice which may at first be peripheral but then progresses "toward full participation in the sociocultural practices of a community" (p. 83). They describe a community of practice as including a particular way of talking about a phenomenon – a common language. A language of practice is an indicator of how practitioners think about topics relevant to the industry.

Though developed for online communities, Hoadley and Kilner's 2005 C4P Framework for Communities of Practice (Conversation, Connections, Content, Context and Purpose) is similar to Wenger's three-pronged definition (Hodgkinson-Williams, Slay, & Sieborger, 2008). C4P helps make the idea of a community of practice easily understandable. Professional development organizations may be communities of practice and there are many different organizations to which an advancement practitioner may belong, therefore the purpose may vary, but it is the basic reason people come together to share information. The content is one-way information that may be provided by the organization itself. The conversation is the information exchanged within the community and may occur in various ways (online, face-to-face, etc.). Connections represent the actual interpersonal contacts or the network of people involved. Context allows members of a community to decide if the information is relevant to them.

Because advancement occurs in an academic environment, findings related to academic CoPs may be relevant. The following has been determined regarding communities of practice based upon a longitudinal effort examining PhD students that began in 1997. CoPs incorporate peer learning which builds upon characteristics of working in a team or group. CoPs promote lifelong learning and application of knowledge. CoPs promote professional development beyond the academic degree. CoPs promote both cognitive (more knowledge) and affective (more self-confidence) elements (Shacham & Od-Cohen, 2009).

There are many communities of practice within advancement, some are internal to the organization and others lie within professional development organizations. It is important to note, however, that some professional development organizations may not be communities of practice. Still, many of the organizations to which advancement practitioners belong do fit the definition because they work toward a common purpose and they work to cultivate connections, context, content and conversations through much knowledge sharing, practitioner interaction and the free-flow of best practice information.

Integrated Marketing Communication is a complex blend of the best practices from many disciplines, including the fields of advertising, marketing and public relations. It has traditionally been examined within the corporate/agency environment. Institutional Advancement is a complex blend of the functions of alumni relations, development and marketing-communication and their support activities within institutions of higher education and is an appropriate venue in which to examine IMC. Practitioners' engagement in formal and informal learning, engagement in their own communities of practice, engagement in comparative, educational and professional development opportunities may all impact whether they and their institutions are more likely to have incorporated the tenets of the IMC model within their own practice and within their institution's version of advancement.

Research Questions

Proceeding from the literature review, the five components of this study are:

1) IMC model: unified communications for consistent message and image (S), differentiated communications to multiple customer groups (M), database-centered communications for tangible results and relationship fostering communications with existing customers (R)
2) Organizational Complexity: horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional complexity
3) Practitioner Engagement: participation in communities of practice, comparative activity, personal engagement
4) Descriptive data: practitioner and institution, including Carnegie classifications
5) Commonly used success indicators within institutional advancement: enrollment, good addresses, volunteers, attendance, members, donors and gifts.

Though this study is purely exploratory and does not purport to determine causality, Figure 4 represents a graphical illustration of the variables as they may interrelate.

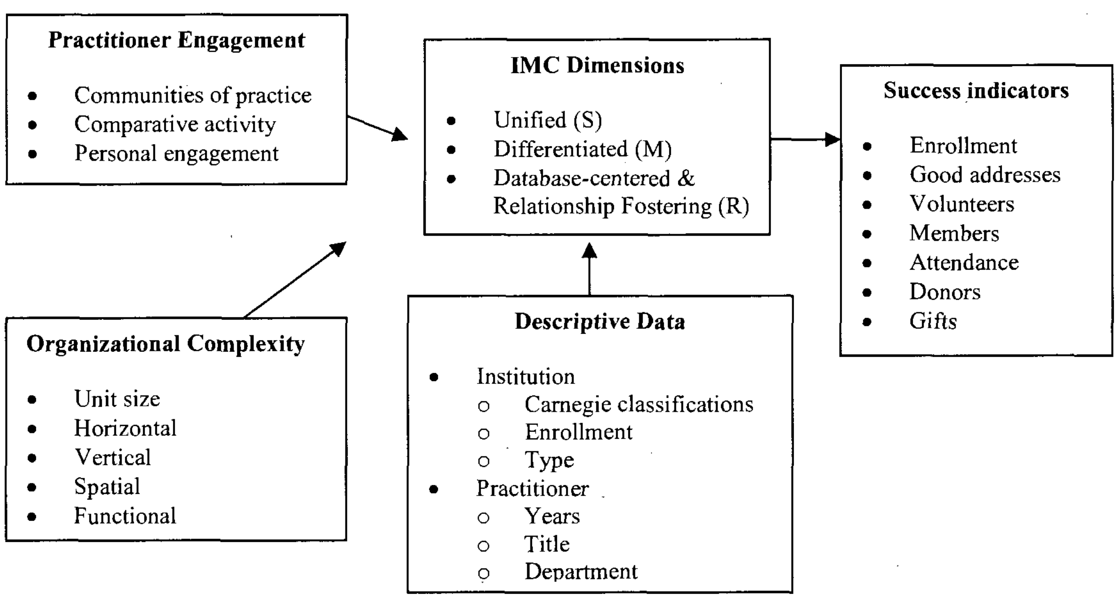

Figure 4. Graphical illustration of the variables

Practitioners and institutions are extremely variable. That makes it difficult to make predictions regarding which practitioners or institutions are more likely to have incorporated the IMC process model. Therefore, the following research questions are proposed for this study:

RQ1: Which Carnegie classifications of institution are more likely to have lower mean scores (higher agreement) on the dimensions of the IMC model?

RQ2: Is there a relationship between measures of organizational complexity (size, horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional) and the dimensions of the IMC model

RQ3: Is there a relationship between variables of engagement (communities of practice, comparative activity, and personal engagement) and the dimensions of the IMC model?

RQ4: Will institutions with higher scores on the dimensions of the IMC model be more likely to self-report improvements in common advancement success indicators (enrollment, good addresses, volunteers, attendance, donors, gifts, members)?

In an attempt to answer these research questions, the balance of this study proceeds in the following manner: chapter three explains methodology, chapter four presents results and chapter five concludes the study with general discussion, including managerial implications and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses operational definitions, survey design, data collection and analysis methodology for this study. This study attempted to assess whether the Lee & Park dimensions of IMC are evident in institutional advancement and whether organizational complexity and practitioner engagement interrelate with the process model. It uses exploratory and descriptive methodology.

Research Design

The research approach for this dissertation includes: 1) Conduct secondary research including literature review and study proposal: chapters one through three. 2) Review of proposal and data collection instrument by dissertation committee. 3) Q-sort IMC factors by experts. 4) Pre-test instrument and analysis with institutional advancement practitioners and make adjustments as necessary. 5) Prepare the sample from the Carnegie Foundation's data file of all baccalaureate to doctoral degree granting institutions in the U.S. 6) Distribute the surveys via e-mail to advancement practitioners throughout the U.S. who represent the three-legged stool of alumni relations, development and MarCom at various types of institutions. 7) Analyze the data. 8) Write the analysis and discussion: chapters four and five. 9) Present findings and conclusions. 10) Follow up with all survey respondents who request study results.

Instrumentation

The data collection instrument for this study is a 37-question survey (Appendix B). It was distributed via e-mail and administered using the SurveyMonkey™ electronic data collection tool. In a meta-analysis of 45 comparisons between Web survey response rates with other modes' response rates ranged between 11% and 82%. Web surveys were found to yield an "11% lower response rate compared to other methods....therefore, the initial number of subjects needs to be higher to achieve the same precision" (Manfreda, Bosnjak, Berzelak, Haas, & Vehovar, 2008, p. 97). The meta-analysis indicated the mean response rate for Web surveys was 32.66%.

The instrument was arranged in seven electronic pages and used a combination of scrolling and paging. Peytchev, Couper, McCabe and Crawford found both scrolling and paging in Web surveys yielded similar results (2006). Page One is a brief introduction to the survey and contains no questions. Page Two uses an adaptation of the Lee & Park scale of four dimensions of IMC. Page Three includes variables related to organizational complexity. Page Four gathers information related to practitioner engagement. Page Five gathers demographic data. Page Six gathers success data. Page Seven thanks the participants and allows them to self-identify if they would like a copy of the results. Finally, electronic Page Eight contains USM's statement of review by the Human Subjects Review Committee.

Limitations/Delimitations of Study

The sample consisted of busy college and university professional staff members, generally at the director level or above, who perhaps did not welcome a request to take a survey and may not have clicked through to the instrument. Additionally, this study did not have the weight of organizational affiliation to boost its response rate as the organization approached by the researcher declined to cooperate. This, in addition to the propensity for Web surveys to have a slightly lower response rate than other comparable data collection methods, led to the sample being intentionally quite large at 685.

Another limitation of this study is variable definitions of functions at the various institutions of higher education in the U.S. While the advancement function generally must occur in higher education to promote the institution and acquire resources, schools define roles and functions differently. Though trade associations have done much to normalize the language of advancement, role alignment is a challenge – for example, at one school the annual fund could be an alumni relations function and at another, it could fall under the auspices of the foundation and at another it may be managed by the development office. Additionally, in multiple institutions, the term 'advancement' was not used to define the entire unit as championed by CASE (the three-legged stool of alumni, fundraising and MarCom). In no fewer than 50 of the 171 sample institutions, it was used as a replacement term describing only the fundraising function. This can be seen in the high number of "other" responses as well (53), with 23 respondents indicating that their actual department, not unit is named Advancement. Variability in practitioner sophistication was also a challenge. For example, an exchange of e-mails with two respondents was necessary for each of these practitioners to understand that the intended sample did indeed include alumni relations, development and MarCom practitioners. This seems to indicate that some busy practitioners may have skimmed the request for participation and discarded it thinking they had been solicited in error because they, themselves define the term 'advancement' in a manner that is different from the literature.

Regarding the instrument itself, using a qualitative cognitive factor analysis (Q-Sort) by experts rather than a quantitative factor analysis was a challenge because the researcher force-fit a proven scale created to measure four dimensions into three basic categories for which it was not originally purposed. This was done because IMC study has traditionally proven to be problematic. Using a tested scale seemed preferable as it would allow the researcher to assess whether IMC is practiced in institutional advancement and to test ideas about what may lead practitioners to embrace the best practice tenets of IMC. Additionally, using a scale that was demonstrated to measure IMC allowed the researcher to examine the idea of using the absolute base of much communication theory, source-message-receiver, as an underpinning for future study of the IMC process model, since most IMC studies either do not reference an underpinning or tend to rely on hierarchical examinations of stages and levels. Finally, most of the data collected is either nominal or ordinal. There are only two sets of five-point scales in the instrument, so statistical analyses were limited.

Operationalization of Variables

CASE publications indicate that IMC and institutional advancement are one and the same. Edmiston, Horrigan, Hobson and Morris found that IMC is practiced in institutional advancement. Therefore, the dependent variables for this study are the four IMC model factors, assessed by the adapted 18-item Lee & Park metrics. This scale was successfully adapted by Hobson for her study of IMC among U.S. community colleges. It uses a five-point Likert-type scale to which respondents Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree or Strongly Disagree (1 to 5). The scale originally aligned on four dimensions: 1) unified communications 2) differentiated communications 3) database centered communications and 4) relationship fostering communications.

In the analysis section for the research questions, the adapted scale is kept intact (in the original four dimensions proposed by Lee & Park). However, to determine if S-M-

R could be a lens with which to examine the complex IMC process model, the four-dimension scale created by Lee & Park was fit into a three-dimension S-M-R framework via a Q-Sort or cognitive factor analysis by experts and subsequent internal consistency reliability checks using the following alignment:

- *Unified communications for consistent message and image measures* may be reclassified for analysis as SOURCE metrics because they examine coordinated encoding. These appear on the instrument as questions 4, 7, 10, 12, and 13 (see Appendix B, electronic page 2).
- *Measures of differentiated communications for multiple customer groups* may be reclassified for analysis as MESSAGE metrics because they examine how targeted the message is. These appear on the instrument as questions 3, 14, 11, 16 and 17 (see Appendix B, electronic page 2).
- Metrics designed to assess *database-centered communications for tangible results* (questions 1, 5, 8 and 18) and *relationship fostering communications with existing customers* (questions 2, 6, 9 and 15) are discussed at times as measures that focus on the RECEIVER/Feedback loop (see Appendix B, electronic page 2).

Independent variables for this study are organizational complexity and practitioner engagement.

Organizational complexity is operationalized using nominal and ordinal questions (see Appendix B, electronic page 3) which determine structural complexity as determined by the following variables:

- *Unit size* (Q1) seeks to determine how many practitioners are responsible for the advancement function at each institution; the larger the advancement group, the more difficult it may be to navigate as a practitioner.
- *Horizontal Complexity* (Q2) assesses the number of departments within the advancement unit; the more departments, the more there is to coordinate on behalf of the source.
- *Vertical Complexity* (Q3) seeks to determine the number of hierarchical levels within the respondents' advancement units; the more difficult it is to interact with the campus CEO, the harder it may be to coordinate the encoding of the message and feedback from the receivers.
- *Spatial Complexity* (Q4) asks respondents to identify how their advancement unit is physically ordered; it should be easier to communicate and coordinate S-M-R interdepartmentally if all legs of the advancement stool are nearer one another because there is greater likelihood that the practitioners will interact more frequently.
- *Functional complexity* seeks to determine how many advancement functions are performed in the respondents' departments (Q5) and also asks the respondents to select the various constituencies with whom he or she interacts regularly (Q6). Though departments within institutional advancement are frequently separate and distinct, there is a considerable amount of intermingling of the workload, for example: development produces communication materials, MarCom interacts with alumni for publications, and alumni relations often does development work, such as soliciting outright donations in addition to event attendance fees.

Practitioner Engagement is operationalized using nominal, ordinal and scale questions on electronic page 4 of the survey instrument (see Appendix B). Popularized by Wenger and Snyder (2002), the term *Communities of Practice* is used to describe a "group of people in a professional environment who come together to share experience and expertise.... participants in a community of practice learn together by focusing on problems that are directly related to their work" (Vavasseur & MacGregor, 2008, p. 519). The first two questions on electronic page 4, are both "select all that apply" questions that assess practitioner involvement with their trade association(s): Q1 asks which organization(s) the practitioner is a member of and Q2 asks the respondent to indicate how he or she participates in the organization(s). While not all professional development organizations are communities of practice, this study uses membership and involvement in professional development organizations as an indicator of such. Additionally, Q3 is a five-point scale assessing *comparative activity* in which the practitioner may engage (does the practitioner compare himself/herself and institution against industry standards and/or other practitioners). Professional development organizations and their activities generally fit the preceding definition of communities of practice.

Practitioners' *personal engagement* in education is also assessed to help determine overall engagement by examining whether they hold accreditation(s) from their professional organization/trade association (Q4) and, because relatively few practitioners are accredited, Q5 asks the respondents to identify the highest degree held. Accreditation and/or an advanced degree should indicate a personal investment in education which should subsequently indicate whether the practitioner is engaged in the types of professional growth opportunities available to advancement practitioners.

The next section, electronic page 5, contains nominal questions that collect descriptive data on the practitioner and institution, including: Number of years in institutional advancement (Q1). The respondent's title (Q2) and department (Q3). Question 4 asks the respondent to identify the *Type* of institution that he or she works for as either public or private. Question 5 asks which regional accrediting body oversees the institution and provides a list, so the responses can be segmented geographically. The respondents are also asked to identify express the *Size* of their institutions by selecting the approximate number of students from a list (Q6). Finally, respondents are asked to select their Carnegie Classification level from a list (Q7).

The final section, electronic page 6, contains only one question (Q1) that asks the respondents to self-report success indicators for their institution. Advancement practitioners should be able to select an answer from three points (increased, decreased or remained about the same) without having to query their own database or their institutional research departments, because the list includes commonly collected data used to indicate a successful advancement program as defined by CASE best practice information, including: enrollment, number of good addresses in the advancement database, number of volunteers supporting the advancement function, attendance at special events, membership (such as in the Alumni Association), number of gifts and number of donors. This study never intended to presume to determine causality and it should be understood that the practitioners' answers to this question do not provide verifiable information. However, including self-reported results indicators in this study provides an approximation, conferred by the practitioners, which can be used to assess whether IMC practice in institutional advancement can be linked to general improvement in commonly collected advancement metrics. It is not a perceptual measure because the data requested should be readily known by advancement practitioners. This assumption was supported by the professional pretesters who acknowledged they knew the information requested without having to do research to answer the general 'success' questions.

Participants

Because institutions of higher education are carefully segmented using non-overlapping criteria established by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, stratification levels are predetermined for this study. There are 4,391 Carnegie-classified institutions of higher education in the U.S, but only 1,713 of them are baccalaureate to doctoral degree granting institutions (Carnegie Classifications data file, 2009). Numbers of institutions per classification level are shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

Number of Institutions at Each Carnegie Classification Level

CC#	Carnegie Classification Name	n
15	RU/VH: Research Universities/Very High Research Activity	96
16	RU/H: Research Universities/High Research Activity	103
17	DRU: Doctoral/Research Universities	83
	DOCTORAL TOTAL	***282 (16%)***
18	LM: Master's Colleges & Universities (Larger programs)	346
19	MM: Master's Colleges & Universities (Medium programs)	190
20	SM: Master's Colleges & Universities (Smaller programs)	128
	MASTER'S TOTAL	***664 (39%)***

Table 3 (continued).

21	B/A&S: Baccalaureate Colleges – Arts & Sciences	287
22	B/Div: Baccalaureate Colleges – Diverse fields	360
23	B/Assoc: Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges	120
	BACCALAUREATE TOTAL	***767 (45%)***

Though there are fewer doctoral degree granting institutions than both master's and baccalaureate, this study sought a representative sample of respondents from each of the three primary Carnegie Classification levels: Doctoral, Master's and Baccalaureate. This study sought at least 50 practitioner responses for each classification level (doctoral, master's, baccalaureate).

The sample institutions were chosen by selecting every 10th institution from a random start point within the doctoral to baccalaureate schools as classified in the Carnegie Classifications Data File. That selection method yielded 171 schools or 10% of the institutions. Within each school, the name and e-mail address for the current senior manager, alumni relations director, marketing-communications director and development director were located using each institution's Web site. It is important to acknowledge that this study includes both institutional- (organizational complexity) and practitioner-specific (personal engagement) variables, therefore institutional information AND practitioner information were both sought by this instrument. It should be understood that because of the way the sample was drawn, it is possible that the same institution could be represented more than once among the respondents, but each respondent should be unique. The data collection tool was configured so it would not accept multiple surveys from the same computer IP address, though someone who began a survey could go back into their own survey to complete it or to edit their own answers.

Various search strategies and multiple search terms, such as *advancement*, *alumni*, *development*, *marketing*, *public relations*, *media relations, university relations* and *communication* were used until the sought after data was found. Interestingly, institutional organizational charts were frequently posted online under an Administration link. This became a search strategy as well because when these were found, they offered a graphical illustration of institutional administrative structure and clarified potential questions, particularly about who were advancement units' senior managers. Another fruitful strategy was to search the institution's directory by department. Advancement units were frequently clustered in campus online directories. Searching institutions' Web sites for contact information yielded a sample size of 685 individuals. Very few sample institutions, about 15 of the 171, yielded no contact information at all, most of these (approx. 12) seemed to be for-profit, online-based institutions, rather than more traditional nonprofit colleges and universities. The few more traditional institutions with no contact information online seemed to be somewhat resource-challenged regarding their online presence. This is an assumption by the researcher based solely upon the state of those institutions' Web sites. It was interesting that for-profit institutions frequently had no publicized advancement unit. This seems to lend support to the notion that the function of advancement is more necessary in traditional, nonprofit colleges. When no data was found, that institution was skipped and the next 10th institution in the Carnegie Classifications Data File was used until 171 (or 10% of the population) was selected. Two e-mail addresses bounced with change information and the solicitations were re-sent to those individuals. Fifty-three solicitations for participation in the survey were either blocked (8) or bounced (45) from either of two e-mail solicitations (primary, then reminder), leaving 632 as the number of potentially valid e-mail addresses, or total sample size. With 169 respondents, the response rate was 27%, a good rate of return for Web-based surveys, but below the 32.66% average found via meta-analysis by Manfreda et al. (2008).

Four survey responses were discarded because it was evident that these respondents abandoned the questionnaire within the first few questions of the first electronic page. Of the 165 respondents who completed the survey, 90 (55%) requested a copy of the researcher's results, indicating high practitioner interest in the examination of IMC within institutional advancement in the U.S.

Procedures

Two types of pretest were done. First, in addition to soliciting feedback from the professors comprising the dissertation committee, a link for this study's instrument was e-mailed to 10 current advancement practitioners as a pretest. The convenience sample of pre-test practitioners included some of the researcher's current and former colleagues who work within institutional advancement at a private, Small Master's school and at three larger Doctoral public schools in multiple states. Their titles range from Vice President to Assistant Director. Few have less than five years in advancement with at least one having more than 20 years in practice. On the basis of a personal request from the researcher, nine of the practitioners completed the questionnaire and then answered a few questions regarding the clarity, relevance, and specificity of the instrument itself (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003) as well as other pertinent questions to help determine face/content validity. Using SurveyMonkey™ data collection tool, when pretesting practitioners clicked DONE, they were directed to a 12-question electronic survey regarding the main instrument (Appendix D) through which they provided feedback on the instrument. The pretest data was examined for oddities, though the quantity was too low for statistical analyses. No major problems were identified, though some concern was expressed about the length of some of the IMC scale questions.

In the second pretest, IMC experts were asked to accept or reject individual questions as well as to conduct a cognitive factor analysis or Q-sort on the adapted 18-item Lee & Park IMC factors into the S-M-R framework. "Q-sorting is a method of assessing reliability and construct validity of questionnaire items in the pretesting stage" (Nahm, Solis-Galvan, Rao, & Ragun-Nathan, 2002, p. 1). When pretesting using Q-sort, judges are asked to examine questionnaire items, determine if each question is acceptable and then place them into the target constructs. Inter-judge agreement is measured. "Scales based on categories which have a high degree of correct placement of items within them can be considered to have a high degree of construct validity, with a high potential for good reliability scores" (Nahm et al., 2002, p. 3). The Q-sort questionnaire is Appendix C.

Because of the potential for non-response, five experts were asked to evaluate the questions and perform a cognitive factor analysis on the questions in the 18-item Lee & Park scale. Four experts returned the questionnaire and judged the scale. Two judges are IMC experts with multiple publications in reputable academic journals. The third judge, a marketing expert, returned the questionnaire most quickly and that judge's responses were judged as outliers by the researcher. The fourth judge evaluated the questions and accepted the adapted scale but declined to perform the Q-Sort. The fifth person, a public relations expert, did not return the questionnaire. According to Neuendorf, Cohen's Kappa can be adapted for multiple coders, but for pilot reliability analysis, it is "problematic to use multiple coders because the coefficients obscure pairwise intercoder differences, making it impossible to identify coders who might need extra training or the odd rogue coder" (2002, p. 161). Therefore, only the two IMC expert judges were used in the pilot Q-Sort.

All experts had commentary regarding the adapted Lee & Park scale and the two IMC experts each referred the researcher to their own definitions of IMC. All judges expressed their expertise was limited and did not extend into the realm of institutional advancement. Though each judge had suggestions and much commentary was offered regarding the ability of the 18 items to assess IMC, all four judges who returned the questionnaire indicated their acceptance of the scale because it was published in a peer-reviewed journal and had been successfully used in other studies.

After committee members, practitioners and experts reviewed either the IMC scale or the instrument in its entirety, minor edits were made to help ensure content validity and internal consistency reliability. The instrument was distributed to the sample of selected practitioners in late summer. Solicitations for responses were sent electronically and in small batches to help insure they would not be blocked by electronic spam filters. It is important to note when the study occurred because in late summer, advancement practitioners are preparing for the start of the fall semester at their respective colleges and universities and may be busier than usual. Also, the researcher received 81 out-of-office automated responses to the e-mail solicitations. These messages helped confirm the message was received by the intended recipient and in most of these, the practitioner indicated he or she was on vacation, on budget-cutting furloughs mandated by their state or something similar. Solicitation e-mails were sent on a Thursday with a reminder e-mail the following Thursday. Sample members were given about three weeks from the date of the first e-mail to respond before the data collection mode was closed.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 14 and hand calculations. Frequencies and descriptive statistics were run on all variables and means were compared where possible. Many of the questions are nominal and ordinal, but the dependent variables comprise a multi-item scale, which made statistical analysis problematic largely due to sample size. The nine Carnegie Classifications were collapsed into three categories (baccalaureate, master's, doctoral), the 18-item scale was collapsed into Lee and Park's four dimensions as well as into a single scale and three-dimension scale (S-M-R). The comparative activity scale, minus the question regarding entering award competitions, was collapsed as well. MANOVAs were used to determine variance in means. Multiple regressions were run between the IMC dimensions and independent variables comprising organizational complexity and practitioner engagement.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This chapter provides general data analysis on the information provided by the respondents and examines the information in relation to the research questions used in this study.

IMC Dimensions

Q-Sort is a qualitative method for determining construct validity. Though all the Q-Sort judges accepted the adapted 18-item Lee & Park scale, repurposing an existing four-dimension scale (1: unified communications for consistent message and image, 2: differentiated communications for multiple consumer groups, 3: database-centered communications for tangible results and 4: relationship fostering communications with existing customers) into three new categories (Source: coordinated encoding, Message: targeted messaging, and Receiver: feedback loop between source and receiver) generated less inter-judge agreement than was anticipated. Though a Q-Sort seeks high inter-judge agreement among two judges, it is noteworthy that the two IMC expert judges agreed with the researcher on S-M-R question sorting for 12 of the 18 items (Q#2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16) or 67% simple agreement between three people. The highest percentage of agreement regarding sorting the questions into S-M-R was between the two IMC expert judges whose simple percent agreement was 78% (14 of 18 questions). Table 4 shows how each of four IMC dimensions were placed into S (1) M (2) R (3) categories by the two IMC experts.

Table 3

Simple Percent Agreement Necessary to Perform Cohen's Kappa

Lee & Park Dimension	Survey Q#	Judge IMC1	Judge IMC 2	Agree /Disagree
1-Unified	4	2	2	A
1-Unified	7	1	2	D
1-Unified	10	1	2	D
1-Unified	12	1	1	A
1-Unified	13	1	1	A
2-Differing	3	2	2	A
2-Differing	11	2	2	A
2-Differing	14	2	2	A
2-Differing	16	2	2	A
2-Differing	17	1	1	A
3-Databased	1	3	1	D
3-Databased	5	3	3	A
3-Databased	8	3	3	A
3-Databased	18	2	3	D
4-Fostering	2	3	3	A
4-Fostering	6	3	3	A
4-Fostering	9	3	3	A
4-Fostering	15	3	3	A

Table 4

Cross-tabulation Table

IMC Judge 1

IMC Judge 2	Construct	S=1	M=2	R=3	Total
	S=1	**3**	0	1	4
	M=2	2	**5**	0	7
	R=3	0	1	**6**	7
	Total	5	6	7	18

Note. Bold numbers = 'hits' or units for which coders agree

Table 5

Product of Marginals

Construct	Marginals *n* Judge 1	Marginals *n* Judge 2	Product of Marginals
S=1	5	4	20
M=2	6	7	42
R=3	7	7	49
Total	18	18	

Two-thirds of the questions were correctly repurposed to the three S-M-R constructs by the two IMC expert judges, indicating support for a basic communication underpinning for the complex IMC process model. As Nahm et al. (2002) explain, when using Q-Sort, researchers should examine how many items were placed by the judges into the target constructs with the overall frequency of agreement measured using Cohen's Kappa.

Cohen's Kappa = $\frac{PA_O - PA_E}{1-PA_E}$

Where $PA_E = (1/n^2)\ (\sum pm_i)$

n = number of units coded in common by coders

pm_i = each product of marginals

$PA_E = (1/n^2)\ (\sum pm_i)$

$= (1/18^2)\ (20+42+49)$

$= (1/324)(111)$

$= .34$

Cohen's Kappa = $\frac{PA_O - PA_E}{1-PA_E} = \frac{.78-.34}{1-.34} = \frac{.44}{.66} = .67$

"Scales based on categories which have a high degree of correct placement of items within them can be considered to have a high degree of construct validity with a high potential for good reliability scores" (Nahm et al., 2002, p. 3). They caution against use of constructs with inter-judge agreements below 60%. At 67%, agreement is not high, but it is not unacceptable, indicating moderate support for repurposing a four-dimension IMC scale into a three-dimension scale.

The adapted Lee & Park IMC scale, as a whole, demonstrated internal consistency reliability as a measure of the constructs comprising the IMC process model with an alpha coefficient of .899 for the 18 items. Hair et al. (2003) state that an alpha coefficient of .7 to < .8 is good, .8 to < .9 is very good and an alpha of .9 is excellent. When the constructs within the scale are examined individually, less internal consistency reliability is exhibited, yet the alpha coefficients are still within the acceptable range, again indicating support for an S-M-R theoretical underpinning for the IMC model. The five questions the researcher labeled SOURCE and which Lee and Park define as measuring *unified communications for consistent message and image* yielded an alpha coefficient of

.79. The five questions the researcher labeled MESSAGE and Lee and Park define as *measuring differentiated communications for multiple customer groups* reached an alpha of .75. The eight questions the researcher labeled RECEIVER and Lee and Park define as *database-centered communications for tangible results* and *relationship fostering communications with existing customers* together earned an alpha coefficient of .80. Interestingly, the final two dimensions of the Lee and Park scale had lower alpha coefficients when examined separately: *database-centered communications for tangible results* was .635 and *relationship fostering communications with existing customers* was .70. It is important to note that Lee and Park reference the "overall measure used as a dependent variable" in their 2007 article (p. 231).

Offering more basic support to the research question of whether IMC is practiced in institutional advancement as found by both Edmiston and Hobson, practitioners either agreed or strongly agreed with 17 of the 18 questions comprising Lee and Park's IMC scale as majority responses. Only one question (Q5: My institution sees to it that the information generated in the course of marketing-communication activities is compiled) received majority neutral responses from the advancement practitioners with 61 (38%). Practitioners did not disagree to scale items very frequently as indicated above; however note there were combined indications of disagreement above 10 percent for 10 of the 18 questions: Q1 (19%), Q4 (15%), Q5 (17%), Q8 (13%), Q11 (12%), Q13 (15%), Q14 (12%), Q15 (12%), Q16 (12%) and Q17 (15%). The highest percentage of Strongly Disagree response was to question Q7 (visual consistency) at 3.1%. Table 7 provides the means and standard deviations generated by advancement practitioners for each of the 18 items in Lee & Park's IMC scale. The means are generally low on the 18-item scale, which indicates a high propensity for practitioners to report they understand and use the IMC model within the advancement function because the scale was arranged with 1 as strongly agree and 5 as strongly disagree.

Table 6

Responses to 18-item IMC Scale

	Mean	*SD*
Q1: Collected Info/Unified Database	2.33	1.14
Q2: Flow of resources – solid relationships	2.08	.87
Q3: MarCom Strategy Differentiates	1.82	.96
Q4: Message consistently delivered	2.30	.98
Q5: Information is compiled	2.61	.96
Q6: Maintaining Relationships – important as recruiting	1.99	.93
Q7: Visual Consistency	2.04	1.01
Q8: Follows up MarCom responses	2.34	.96
Q9: MarCom activity – strengthen relationships	1.93	.85
Q10: Linguistic consistency	2.24	.95
Q11: Single-Multiple brand images	2.15	1.02
Q12: Goal – consistent brand image	1.65	.88
Q13: Maintains consistency – long term	2.33	1.05
Q14: Targets multiple groups	2.38	.97
Q15: Generate resources – existing constituencies	2.45	.94
Q16: MarCom strategy – stages decision making process	2.41	.96
Q17: MarCom tools – each stage of decision making process	2.51	.98
Q18: MarCom designed to induce action	1.94	.88

Note. Scale = Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5)

Note that across the 18-item scale, the average frequency of negative responses was 18 and 110 for positive responses. For the unified communications dimension assessed by questions 4, 7, 10, 12, 13 – the average frequency of negative response was 17 with 115 for positive response. For the five questions representing differing communications, 3, 14, 11, 16, 17, the average frequency of negative responses was 19 with 104 for positive responses. Average frequencies of response were similar for the final two dimensions: (Q 1, 5, 8, 18) database-centered communications, 22 negative, 104 positive, and relationship fostering communications (Q2, 6, 9, 15) with an average of 12 negative and 115 positive responses.

General Descriptive Information

This study succeeded in collecting data from advancement practitioners representing colleges and universities throughout the U.S. (Table 8) as 154 respondents identified their regional accrediting body. Though the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools yielded the most respondents (35%), each of the six regional accrediting bodies were represented, in descending order of frequency: North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools, Western Association of Colleges and Schools, New England Association of Schools and Colleges and Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities.

Table 7

Respondents by Regional Accrediting Body

	Frequency	Percent
Middle States ACS	24	14.5
New England ASC	12	7.3
North Central ACS	39	23.6
Northwest CCU	4	2.4
Southern ACS	57	34.5
Western ACS	18	10.9

Every level of Carnegie Classification was represented (Tables 9 and 10) among the practitioners who identified their classification. Institutions at the Master's level were represented most at 70 or 42% (10-Larger, 30-Medium, 30-Smaller) with 26% of the respondents or 42 each representing Doctoral (13-Very High Research, 10-High Research, 19-Doctoral/Research) and Baccalaureate (32-Arts & Sciences, 8-Diverse, 2-Associate) institutions. Eleven respondents (6%) did not self-identify by Carnegie Classification level. Baccalaureate/Arts & Sciences was the most frequently selected category (mode). The percentages of respondents did not match the actual stratification which exists within the Carnegie Classifications Data File as the largest pool of potential respondents (baccalaureate) was under-represented.

Table 8

Respondents by Carnegie Classification

	Frequency	Percent
RU-very high	13	7.9
RU-high	10	6.1
Doc/RU	19	11.5
Master's-Larger	10	6.1
Master's-Medium	30	18.2
Master's-Smaller	30	18.2
Bacc/Arts & Sci	32	19.4
Bacc/Diverse	8	4.8
Bacc/Assoc	2	1.2

For analysis, Carnegie classifications were grouped by the three main levels: Doctoral, Master’s and Baccalaureate.

Table 9

Respondents by Primary Carnegie Classification Levels

	Frequency	Percent
Doctoral	42	25.5
Master's	70	42.4
Baccalaureate	42	25.5

Practitioners representing every type and size of institution responded to the survey (Table 11) with 160 identifying the size of their institution as measured by student enrollment. The majority of institutions represented in this study, 57%, self-reported student enrollment of less than 6,000 students and most of those respondents, 23%, indicated they represented schools with less than 2,000 students. Nineteen percent of respondents identified themselves as practitioners representing colleges and universities with enrollments between 6,000 and 19,999. Finally, 14% of the respondents indicated they represented institutions with enrollments above 20,000 students with 11 (7%) of those reporting enrollments of more than 30,000 students. Institutions with enrollments between 18,000 and 20,000 were the least represented in this study at only .6%. The most frequently selected number (mode) of students was 'Less than 2,000.'

Table 10

Reported Student Enrollment

	Frequency	Percent
30K or more	11	6.7
28K to 29,999	3	1.8
26K to 27,999	2	1.2
22K to 23,999	5	3.0
20K to 21,999	2	1.2
18K to 19,999	1	.6
16K to 17,999	7	4.2
14K to 15,999	6	3.6
12K to 13,999	7	4.2
10K to 11,999	4	2.4
8K to 9,999	7	4.2

Table 11 (continued).

6K to 7,999	11	6.7
4K to 5,999	21	12.7
2K to 3,999	35	21.2
Less than 2K	38	23.0
Total	160	97.0

Respondents represented a good mix of both private (57%) and public (38%) institutions as well (Table 12).

Table 11

Respondents' Type of Institution

	Frequency	Percent
Public	63	38.2
Private	94	57.0
Total	157	95.2

Of the 118 practitioners who identified their department, most, 48 (29%), represented the alumni relations function of advancement, followed by development at 39 (24%) and MarCom at 13 (8%). Ten respondents indicated they represented Advancement Services, five represented their institution's Foundation and four indicated they were in the President's Office (Table 13). Interestingly, 53 respondents selected the 'other' option and entered a department title, an action that supports the assertion of tremendous variability within institutions of higher education. Most of the responses provided were Advancement (18) and several (9) listed dual function departments, such as Alumni/Development or Communications/Media Relations. Some departmental titles were somewhat unexpected, such as Leadership Relations or Church Relations and two respondents provided their department title as Stewardship.

Table 12

Respondents' Departments

	Frequency	Percent
Advancement Services	10	6.1
Alumni	48	29.1
Development	39	23.6
Foundation	5	3.0
Pres Office	3	1.8
PR/Mktg	13	7.9
Total	118	71.5

Most of the respondents, 48%, had 10 years or less in institutional advancement. Table 14 shows that practitioners' reported years in advancement, were in descending order: less than 5 years (26%), 6 to 10 years (21%), 21 to 25 years (14%), 16 to 20 years (13%), 11 to 15 years (12%), 26 to 30 years (10%) and more than 30 years (1%).

Table 13

Practitioners' Reported Years in Advancement

	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5	42	25.5
6 to 10	34	20.6
11 to 15	20	12.1
16 to 20	22	13.3
21 to 25	23	13.9
26 to 30	17	10.3
More than 30	2	1.2
Total	160	97.0

Table 15 shows the most frequently reported title among the 126 respondents who answered this question was Director at 35% followed by VP at 30% and then Executive Director at 10%. Associate and Assistant Director combined were only 6%, indicating the respondents represented the desired level because the sample sought senior managers and those responsible for each leg of the three-legged stool (alumni, development, MarCom).

Table 14

Respondents' Titles

	Frequency	Percent
Vice President	49	29.7
Executive Director	16	9.7

Table 15 (continued).

Director	58	35.2
Associate Director	3	1.8
Assistant Director	3	1.8

Of course, due to the variable nature of higher education, respondents provided 29 other titles including 18 with some version of Vice President or Vice Chancellor (i.e. Assistant, Associate, Senior VP or VC) and two with dual-title positions such as VP *and* Executive Director, which is not uncommon in institutions of higher education. Three of the respondents indicated their title to be President and each indicated they were, in fact, in the president's office at private institutions with less than 4,000 students. Note that if an institution's president was solicited for participation in this study, it was because the organizational chart posted on the institution's Web site indicated that he or she was responsible for acting as the senior manager for the advancement function. This lends some support to the anecdotal expectation that even executive staff at smaller schools frequently perform multiple functions.

Organizational Complexity

Complexity can be defined in many ways, internally, externally or in combination. This study sought internal information such as advancement unit size as well as horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional complexity. Regarding unit size (Table 16), of the 163 practitioners who responded overwhelmingly, 42% (70), expressed there were more than 20 people responsible for the advancement function within their institutions.

Table 15

Complexity: Unit size (No. People Responsible)

	Frequency	Percent
1 to 5 people	22	13.3
6 to 10 people	25	15.2
11 to 15 people	25	15.2
16 to 20 people	21	12.7
more than 20 people	70	42.4

This finding is interesting because most respondents represent smaller, private, master's level institutions.

In describing horizontal complexity (Table 17), the 160 practitioners who responded said most often (27%) that there were three departments within their advancement unit. The larger numbers of departments were each selected as descriptors quite frequently by the advancement practitioners: Four (18%), Five (15%) and Six or more (18%). One (7%) or two (13%) departments within the unit received the least responses.

Table 16

Horizontal Complexity (No. of Departments in Advancement Unit)

	Frequency	Percent
1 department	12	7.3
2 departments	21	12.7
3 departments	44	26.7
4 departments	29	17.6
5 departments	24	14.5
6 or more departments	30	18.2

Vertical complexity (Table 18) was assessed by asking how many reporting levels there were within the unit and secured 162 respondents. The most frequent response was three (CEO to VP to Director to staff) at 38% (62). The second most frequent response was Two (CEO to VP to staff responsible) at 22% (37).

Table 17

Vertical Complexity (No. of Levels within Advancement Unit)

	Frequency	Percent
CEO to staff (1 level)	6	3.6
CEO to VP to staff (2 levels)	37	22.4
CEO to VP to Director to staff (3 levels)	62	37.6
CEP to VP to Director to AD to staff (4 levels)	24	14.5
CEO to VP to Dir to AD to Asst Dir to staff (5 levels)	21	12.7
more levels	12	7.3

The questionnaire also assessed spatial complexity (Table 19) as 162 practitioners indicated spatial arrangement of their unit. Almost all respondents 91% (150) indicated their workspace was either all in one building (49%) or in multiple buildings on the same campus (42%). Only 12 respondents (7%) indicated the advancement function for their institution was physically housed in multiple buildings on multiple campuses.

Table 18

Spatial Complexity

	Frequency	Percent
All in 1 building	80	48.5
Multiple buildings on same campus	70	42.4
Multiple buildings on multiple campuses	12	7.3

Practitioners were asked how many advancement functions their own departments perform and were given the examples of alumni relations, communication and fundraising and 161 responded. A full 50% indicated their departments perform four or more advancement functions (Table 20). An additional 29% reported their departments perform three or more advancement functions. Only 7% of respondents (11) stated one advancement function was performed within their department.

Table 19

Functional Complexity (No. Advancement Functions Performed)

	Frequency	Percent
1 function	11	6.7
2 functions	20	12.1
3 functions	48	29.1
4 or more functions	82	49.7

Interestingly, crosstabulations indicate that advancement practitioners at institutions with student enrollments of less than 6,000 perform the most varied functions with 49 indicating they perform four or more functions and 30 indicating they perform three functions, lending some credence to the anecdotal assumption that practitioners at smaller schools are more generalized in their activity. To provide further information on the type of work performed, practitioners were asked to indicate which constituencies their department interacted with regularly (Fig. 5).

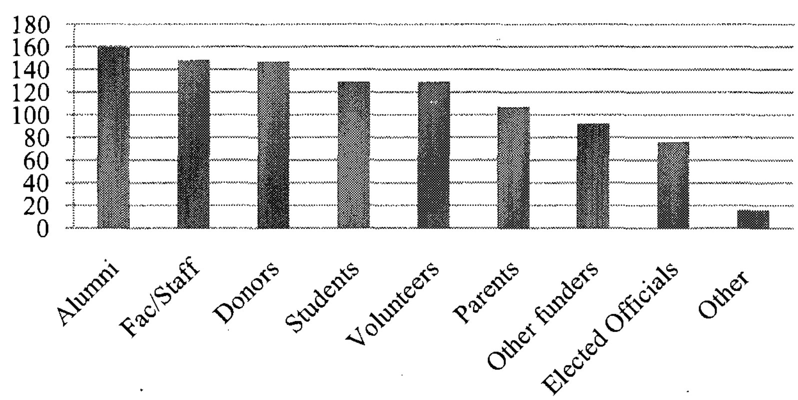

Figure 5: Functional Complexity (Constituencies with whom Practitioners Interact)

As anticipated, because of the nature of the work and the propensity for the advancement structure to mirror the IMC model, there was overlap in constituency interaction. In descending order, respondents selected each of the following: Alumni 159 (96%), Faculty/Staff 148 (90%), Donors 147 (89%), Students and Volunteers were both selected by 129 respondents (78%), Parents 107 (65%), Other funders – e.g. grantmakers 92 (56%) and Elected Officials 76 (46%) – see Table 21. Sixteen respondents offered additional constituencies, such as Board of Trustees, Friends of the Institution, Community, Business Leaders, Prospective Students and State System. Multiple constituency selection and the number and variety of 'Other' responses help to underscore the boundary-spanning role of advancement practitioners in general.

Table 20

Interaction with Various Constituencies

	Frequency	Percent
Alumni	159	96.4
Volunteers	129	78.2
Donors	147	89.1
Other funders – e.g. grantmakers	92	55.8
Elected officials	76	46.1
Students	129	78.2
Parents	107	64.8
Faculty/Staff	148	89.7

Practitioner Engagement

One indicator of practitioner engagement in professional development and comparative activity is their participation in communities of practice. According to Wenger (2004), these are groups that have their own domain, interact and develop relationships that help them address problems and share knowledge. These also include a body of knowledge, methods, tools, stories, etc. that help define the practice. The study sought to determine which professional development organizations advancement practitioners join (Fig. 6). The assumption is that holding membership in a professional development organization increases the likelihood that a practitioner will be engaged in the profession and in comparative activity. Not surprisingly, the majority of practitioners

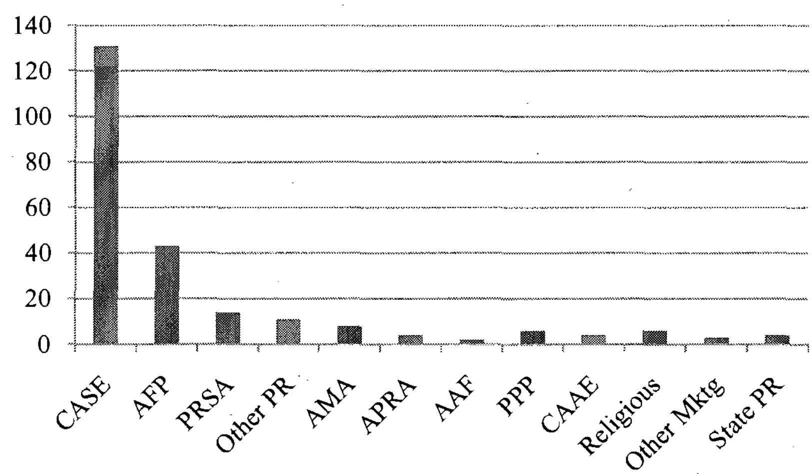

Figure 6. Memberships in Professional Development Organizations

131 (80%) indicated they were members of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education and 43 (26%) indicated they were members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals. Fourteen respondents (9%) indicated they were members of the Public Relations Society of America and 11 (7%) said they were members of some

other PR Universal Accreditation Board member organization. Eight respondents indicated they held membership in the American Marketing Association (5%) and four respondents selected the Association of Prospect Researchers for Advancement (2%). Only two respondents indicated they were members of the American Advertising Federation.

Interestingly, 30 respondents typed in one or more other organizations in which they hold memberships, most notably: Partnership for Philanthropic Planning (6), Religiously-affiliated groups such as the Baptist Communicators Association (6), Council of Alumni Association Executives (4), Association of Governing Boards (2), other marketing organizations (3), other state/local/college public relations groups (4).

Another indicator of engagement in professional development and comparative activity via participation in communities of practice is how active the practitioners are within the group(s) to which they hold membership(s). All professional development organizations listed as a choice on the questionnaire and most of the ones typed in by respondents host conferences or other training opportunities, publish magazines or newsletters, host award competitions and other activities that could enhance knowledge distribution via the community of practice AND allow for comparative activity.

The practitioners who responded appear to be engaged with their community of practice because they participate in their professional development organization in some way (Table 22). Most of the respondents 143 (87%) indicated they read publications of their professional development organization. Similarly, 73% (121) respondents reported they attend conferences of their professional development organization. Fewer practitioners reported participation in leadership roles: 21% (35) participate in conference planning and 10% (18) serve as an officer. The knowledge sharing within communities of practice was demonstrated as 44 of the respondents (27%) stated they mentor newer advancement professionals. However, as anticipated, very few practitioners, only five (3%), indicated they contribute to the body of knowledge within their industry by writing for their professional development organization's publications. Only 8 (5%) of the respondents said they do none of these. In browsing these practitioners' responses, it was found that three who reported 'None of these' also reported holding no membership a professional development organization.

Table 21

Participation in Professional Development Organizations

	Frequency	Percent
Read publications	143	86.7
Attend Conferences	121	73.3
Conference Planning	35	21.2
Write for publication(s)	5	3.0
Officer	18	10.9
Mentor	44	26.7
None of these	8	4.8

The second five-point scale in this instrument assessed engagement in comparative activity (Table 23). Eighty-nine percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed (142) that they regularly review 'best practice' industry information. Similarly, 94% either agreed or strongly agreed (149) that they attempt to incorporate 'best practice' industry information into their work. Eighty-five percent of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed (136) that they actively compare their institutions' programs to other similar institutions' programs and a majority 62% (99) indicated they actively compared their institutions' policies to other similar institutions' policies. This question had the most neutral responses in the scale with 54 (38%). Only 35% (54) of the respondents indicated they enter award competitions to compare their/their institutions' work to others' similar work and 61 respondents (39%) indicated they did not enter awards competitions. The alpha coefficient for this scale as a whole was .623, but when the final statement in this scale was removed, it achieved an alpha of .724, which is an acceptable indication of internal consistency reliability. The final question in this scale should have been coded as a yes or no, or nominal, question rather than a scale question and it was removed from analysis. Again, means and standard deviations indicate high agreement to participation in comparative activity.

Table 22

Participation in Comparative Activity

	Mean	*SD*
Regularly review industry information	1.81	.66
Incorporate industry information	1.67	.59
Compare programs	1.84	.71
Compare policies	2.23	.82

Note. Scale = Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5)

Additional indicators of practitioner engagement in professional development are accreditation and highest degree held. Only three of 165 respondents indicated they hold accreditation in public relations (APR). Nine respondents indicated they hold the

Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) designation. Only one person indicated that he or she was a Certified Meeting Planner (CMP). Other certifications/accreditations expressed through the Other option in the instrument were: one respondent indicated he or she holds a Chartered Adviser in Philanthropy (CAP) designation via the International Association of Advisors in Philanthropy, another indicated that he or she is Certified in Management of Nonprofit Organizations and one practitioner indicated that he or she was NIMS certified (National Incident Management System) through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

The most frequently-held degree level among the 160 respondents who identified their highest degree earned was master's level 44% (73) which should indicate some degree of personal engagement in professional development as master's degrees are typically considered professional degrees. This is appropriate and expected among professional staff in higher education. Table 24 shows the next most common degree held was baccalaureate 38% (63). Three practitioners indicated they held a law degree, five indicated they held an EdD and 15 practitioners (9%) hold PhDs.

Table 23

Practitioners' Education Levels

	Frequency	Percent
AA/AS	1	.6
BA/BS	63	38.2
MA/MS/MBA	73	44.2
JD	3	1.8
EdD	5	3.0
PhD	15	9.1

Success Data

Figure 7 and Table 25 illustrate practitioners' responses regarding success data. Note that some respondents did not report success data. In addition to responding to the IMC scale affirmatively, respondents indicated their institutions' success variables: enrollment, event attendance, good addresses, number of donors, number of gifts, number of members and number of volunteers had increased over the past five years.

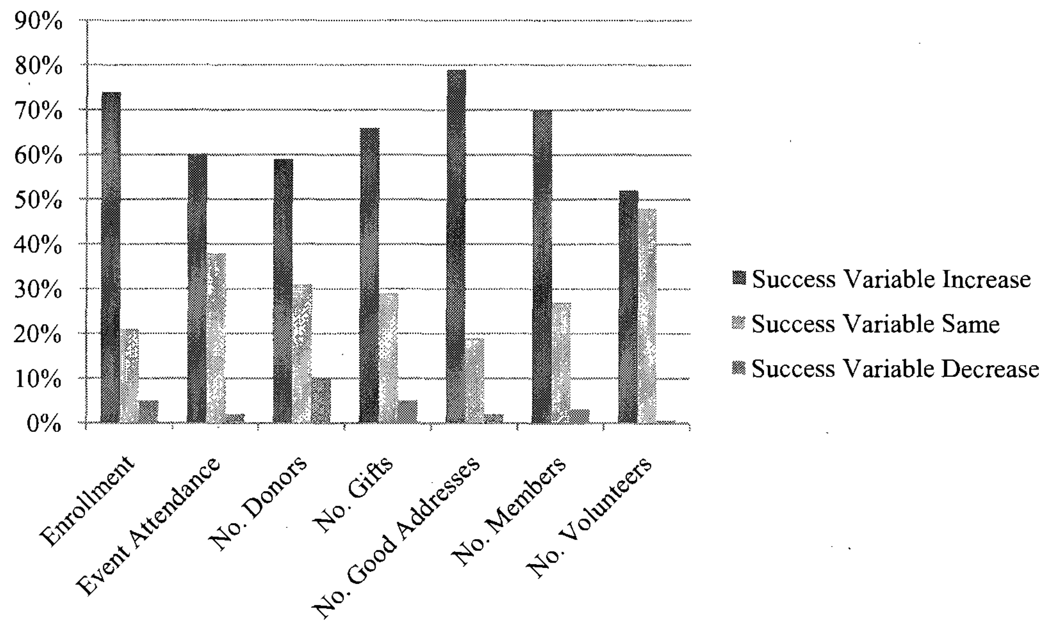

Figure 7. Practitioners' Reported Success Data

The range of respondents for success indicators was between 157 and 165 practitioners. One hundred eighteen practitioners who responded to the survey overwhelmingly indicated enrollment at their institutions has increased (72%) and 33 indicated it has remained about the same (20%) over the last five years. Only eight of the 158 (5%) respondents indicated enrollment at their institution has declined. Most practitioners indicated that attendance at special events has increased (96 responses or 58%) or remained about the same (60 responses or 36%). Only three of the respondents (2%) indicated attendance at events has declined. The variable 'number of donors' received eight non-responses, however, 92 (56%) indicated an increase, 49 (30%) indicated remained about the same and 16 (10%) indicated a decrease. Similarly, seven respondents did not supply information on number of gifts, though 104 (76%) reported an increase, 46 (18%) indicated these have remained about the same and eight (2%) indicated a decrease. One hundred twenty five respondents (76%) indicated that the number of good addresses has increased at their institution and 30 (18%) reported it has remained about the same. Only three (2%) reported a decrease. The greatest number of non-responses was for the variable requesting data on number of members with 19 practitioners declining to provide data; however, 102 (62%) indicated an increase, 40 (24%) indicated remained about the same and only four (2%) indicating a decrease. Finally, number of volunteers received eight non-responses and 81 (49%) indicated an increase, 75 (46%) indicated remained about the same and only one respondent (.6%) reported a decrease.

Table 24

Practitioners' Reported Success Data

		Frequency	Percent
Enrollment	Has increased	118	71.5
	Remained the Same	33	20.0
	Has decreased	8	4.8

Attendance - Special Events	Has increased	96	58.2
	Remained the Same	60	36.4
	Has decreased	3	1.8

Table 25 (continued).

Number of donors	Has increased	92	55.8
	Remained the Same	49	29.7
	Has decreased	16	9.7
Number of gifts	Has increased	104	75.8
	Remained the Same	46	18.2
	Has decreased	8	1.8
Number of good addresses	Has increased	125	75.8
	Remained the Same	30	18.2
	Has decreased	3	1.8
Number of members	Has increased	102	61.8
	Remained the Same	40	24.2
	Has decreased	4	2.4
Number of volunteers	Has increased	81	49.1
	Remained the Same	75	45.5
	Has decreased	1	.6

Findings

As an exploratory effort, a portion of this study sought to determine whether the adapted scale could be fit into an S-M-R framework. Therefore, research questions were examined multiple ways. Results were similar whether the IMC scale was collapsed into one dimension, whether the final two dimensions were collapsed into one to create a three-dimension (S-M-R) scale or whether Lee and Park's original four dimensions were used. To eliminate redundancy and because an existing IMC scale was adapted for this study, the tests of the four research questions are reported here only following the scale's original dimensions with S-M-R notation where applicable. Reporting the research question analysis this way allows for better study-to-study comparison of the Lee and Park scale in IMC literature.

RQ1: Which Carnegie classifications of institution are more likely to have lower mean scores (higher agreement) on the dimensions of the IMC model?

Doctoral institutions have the highest agreement to the five-question Lee and Park construct of unified communications for consistent message and image (M = 2.07, SD = .60). Master's institutions have the highest agreement on the four-question Lee and Park four-item relationship fostering communications with existing consumers factor (M = 2.27, SD = .70). Baccalaureate institutions have the highest agreement on both the five-question differentiated communications for multiple customer groups factor (M = 2.21, SD = .65) and on the construct of database-centered communications for tangible results (M = 2.01, SD = .69) indicating a slight propensity of practitioners at that level to agree more to the items in the IMC scale (Table 26).

Table 25

Carnegie Classifications & IMC Factors

		Mean	*SD*
Unified Communications for consistent message & image (SOURCE)	Doctoral	2.07	.60
	Master's	2.13	.79
	Baccalaureate	2.13	.68
	Total	2.11	.71
Differentiated Communications for multiple groups (MESSAGE)	Doctoral	2.25	.69
	Master's	2.29	.70
	Baccalaureate	2.21	.65
	Total	2.25	.68
Databased-centered Communications for tangible results (RECEIVER)	Doctoral	2.18	.64
	Master's	2.16	.65
	Baccalaureate	2.01	.69
	Total	2.13	.66
Relationship fostering Communications with existing customers (RECEIVER)	Doctoral	2.37	.66
	Master's	2.27	.69
	Baccalaureate	2.31	.71
	Total	2.31	.68

Note. Scale = Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (5)

This study did not find statistical significance between the three primary Carnegie Classification levels and mean scores for the four Lee & Park IMC factors $F(8, 298) = .623$, $p = .758$. The means for all three Carnegie Classification levels indicated high levels of agreement, based upon the scale 1: Strongly Agree to 5: Strongly Disagree, and standard deviations in responses were below 1 on every measure tested here, indicating there is little variance in responses among the three groups indicating support for Edmiston's finding of no difference in IMC orientation by Carnegie Classification levels in her 2007 study. It seems likely that the null hypothesis of no difference is supported, however, because of limited sensitivity and power, this study only indicates that the null hypothesis (H_o: *No difference*) should not be rejected.

RQ2: Is there a relationship between measures of organizational complexity (size, horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional) and the dimensions of the IMC model.

The sample was representative of all forms of baccalaureate to doctoral institutions of higher education from throughout the U.S. It indicates the practice of institutional advancement demonstrates variability in size of unit, number of departments, number of hierarchical levels, location of the departments, number of functions and number of constituencies with whom the practitioner interacts. However, relationships cannot be detected in this study between these measures of complexity and the IMC dimensions to a statistically significant degree. Four regressions were run between the ordinal independent variables of organizational complexity as defined in this study (size as well as horizontal, vertical, spatial and functional complexity) using the adapted Lee & Park IMC dimensions as dependent variables. No significant correlations were detected in this study between the IMC dimensions and the variables of organizational complexity:

unified communications for consistent message and image F (4, 155) = 2.13, p = .079, R^2=.052, differentiated communications for multiple customer groups F (4, 155) = .943, p = .441, R^2=.024, database-centered communications for tangible results F (4, 155) = .40, p = .809, R^2=.010, relationship fostering communications with existing consumers F (4, 155) = .692, p = .599, R^2 = .018. It would seem that the null hypothesis of no relationship between organizational complexity and the IMC dimensions is supported, however, , this study only indicates that the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

RQ3: Is there a relationship between variables of engagement (communities of practice, comparative activity, and personal engagement) and the dimensions of the IMC model?

The engagement scale demonstrated internal consistency reliability once the final question about entering award competitions was removed at .724. The ordinal and scale metrics of practitioner engagement were run in four regressions with the IMC dimensions. This study, at this time, cannot determine to a statistically significant degree that there is a relationship between practitioner engagement as defined by comparative activity, personal engagement and the four dimensions of the IMC model: unified communications F (3, 155) = 1.06, p = .366, R^2 = .02, differing communications F (3, 155) = 1.22, p = .304, R^2 = .004, database-centered communications F (3, 155) =.96, p = .429, R^2 = .02, and relationship fostering communications F (3, 155) = 2.18, p = .092, R^2 = .041. It would seem that the null hypothesis of no relationship is supported, however, this study only indicates that the null hypothesis should not be rejected.

Still, frequencies and types of responses by the practitioners indicate that almost all respondents are active within professional development organizations and hold at least a bachelor's degree, though most hold an advanced degree. Ninety-six of the respondents hold an advanced degree, 63 hold at least a bachelor's degree, only 1 holds an associate's degree and five declined to identify their educational level. This sample and this population are highly educated and operate as professionals in an educational environment. The overwhelmingly positive responses to the questions within the Lee & Park scale would seem to indicate that best practice information disseminated through these professional development organizations is likely being incorporated by the practitioners.

RQ4: Will institutions with lower mean scores (higher agreement) on the dimensions of the IMC model be more likely to self-report improvements in common advancement success indicators (enrollment, good addresses, volunteers, attendance, donors, gifts, members)?

High percentages of agreement to the items comprising the IMC scale (range = 53% to 85%) and high 'increased' responses to self-reported success data (enrollment: 74%, attendance at special events: 60%, number of donors: 59%, number of gifts: 66%, number of good addresses: 79%, number of members: 70% and number of volunteers: 52%) seem to indicate that the null hypothesis should not be rejected. However, this study, at this time, cannot determine to a statistically significant degree that lower mean scores (higher agreement) on the dimensions of the IMC model will trend toward reported improvements in common advancement success indicators: unified communications $F\ (133, 833) = 1.02$, $p = .427$, differing communications $F\ (119, 847) = .903$, $p = .755$, database-centered communications $F\ (105, 861) = 1.22$, $p = .073$ and relationship fostering communications $F\ (84, 882) = 1.12$, $p = .229$.

Ancillary Findings

It is important to note there is high practitioner interest in the information this study sought with 90 of 165 respondents requesting a copy of the results. Interestingly, this study somewhat contradicted the anecdotal notion that the smaller the unit, the more generalized the practitioners because the most frequently recorded number of functions performed was '4 or more' by every size category (1 to 5 people = 11, 6 to 10 people = 9, 11 to 15 people = 14, 16 to 20 people = 13 and more than 20 people = 35). It was also somewhat surprising that most institutions represented were private, Master's level schools with enrollments under 6,000 students, yet the most frequently occurring size of advancement units as a whole was 'more than 20 people,' which may indicate that advancement units are likely some of the largest units by number of employees within these smaller institutions.

Some information found via sample searching on institutions Web sites was quite interesting. The advancement function is either not visible or not present in for profit institutions as their sites' focus was much more on admissions than on other revenue generation methods that are found in more traditional institutions via the development function within advancement units. This contradicts the notion that all baccalaureate to doctoral colleges and universities have some version of the three-legged advancement stool (alumni, development, MarCom). Of course, MarCom is present in the Web site itself, but to have no evidence of at least an alumni relations function in multiple institutions was an unexpected finding.

Some responses for the variables within the success data question and the manner in which missing data manifested itself seems to indicate the fundraising/friendraising divide between development and alumni functions of advancement may continue to exist in many institutions. This may point to lack of coordination between these two functions despite the overwhelming agreement to the items in the IMC scale as most respondents represented the alumni function (41%) followed by development (33%).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter provides conclusions, discussion and limitations as well as recommendations for practice and future study.

Conclusions and Discussion

The IMC process model represents the disciplines of advertising, marketing and public relations growing together through the cross-pollination of best practices from each (as well as other fields) into one comprehensive framework. Primary tenets of IMC are that it is inherent to the organization; a senior manager who participates in the dominant coalition of the organization should have oversight of the function; close communication between all individuals who gather and use information to plan, execute and evaluate their MarCom activities is necessary; messages should be strategic and targeted; relationships should be built with multiple constituencies; multiple data sources and feedback channels should be cultivated and success should be measured. Institutional advancement demonstrates all of these. These best practices are easy to express and difficult to practice, particularly because so many highly educated professionals are responsible for the resource-building functions necessary in higher education's competitive environment (mode = 20 or more per institution).

There is no one-size-fits-all way to practice IMC and as a result, there is both great commonality and great variability. The commonality exists in the similar notions of what constitutes a good MarCom program. The variability exists within both the organizations and the individuals. The notion of a multi-term, multi-meaning view of

IMC may be the best way to explain its existence, particularly within the institutional advancement function of U.S. baccalaureate to doctoral institutions.

IMC studies are frequently designed to determine who is practicing, who leads the effort and whether they understand the principles of coordination, strategy, message and relationships that are inherent to the model. This exploratory study examined both institutional- and practitioner-specific variables to assess whether there might be relationships between these variables and the tenets espoused by the IMC model. Both can be examined in many ways. Regarding institutions, from the organizational sciences, metrics for complexity, often considered an extension of systems research, can include size, scope, task, structure, spatial arrangement, decision-making, control, programs, functions, environment, hierarchy and more. Regarding practitioners, from education, leadership and other literature, metrics for engagement include work-life factors, identity, personal investments in professionalism via formal and informal learning, participation in communities of practice (explained as Wenger's mutual engagement, joint enterprise, shared repertoire or Hoadley and Kilner's C4P: Conversation, Connections, Content, Context and Purpose), benchmarking and other factors that must be cultivated by the individuals working together in a domain to enhance its body of knowledge – to enhance knowledge derived from practice.

Professionals generally have great interest in perfecting their crafts and IMC tends to generate much interest among professionals, less among academics. Why study a model? Examinations of models like IMC are important because the pace at which the MarCom/media landscape and audiences/publics themselves are changing necessitates an understanding of normative rules that contribute to effective practice. As Macnamara

(2007) explains, there is a fork in the road between communication theory and practice and practitioners and scholars should work toward a better understanding of one another's efforts. Basic and applied research should help inform practice, not exist apart from it. Not necessarily a case for selecting better or worse, understanding a process model built from multi-discipline best practices helps everyone from teachers to researchers to practitioners have a better understanding of what works and why.

IMC research has traditionally been problematic, its weaknesses in definition and measurement are evident and it is criticized for having little theoretical core. This study demonstrates some of the difficulties in examining IMC holistically and quantitatively. It was appropriate to conduct this study at this level because as a concluding student work, it allowed the researcher to take risks via a completely exploratory effort.

This study succeeded in securing practitioners representing every Carnegie Classification level, though Baccalaureate Arts & Sciences was the single most represented level. As a group, Master's level institutions were most represented. Practitioners represented all six regional accrediting bodies, though most indicated their institutions were accredited through SACS. Most respondents indicated theirs were institutions with enrollments of less than 6,000 students, but all sizes of institution were represented. All departments within institutional advancement were represented, however most respondents were either in alumni (friendraising) or development (fundraising). Both private and public institutions were well represented. Practitioners who responded represented all ranges of years in the field and held mostly director level titles or above. Organizationally, all sizes of advancement units were represented, though most respondents said '20 or more' people performed the function at their institution.

Similarly, most respondents said their advancement unit was comprised of six or more departments. All types of hierarchical structures were represented, but most institutions indicated three hierarchical levels. Most practitioners said their advancement function operated in one building on their campus, though other spatial arrangements were represented as well. Most practitioners said their department performs four or more advancement functions (alumni, development, MarCom, support functions like prospect research and database management). Individually, almost all respondents hold membership in at least one professional development organization and seem to be active within these organizations. Almost all expressed they were members of the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education, which defines itself as a community of practice and enables sharing behavior through tools like its online Benchmarking Toolkit launched in summer 2009. Most practitioners hold an advanced degree but very few held professional accreditations. Most practitioners reported five-year increases in success metrics commonly collected within the advancement function of U.S. institutions of higher education.

Through secondary research and high agreement to the IMC scale items, it was determined that advancement practitioners understand the concept of IMC and have generally embraced the model to varying degrees, but this is not specific to Carnegie Classification level, and this finding supported Edmiston's 2007 finding. Baccalaureate institutions had the highest agreement overall (and on differing communications and relationship fostering communications). Doctoral institutions had the highest agreement on the unified communications dimension and Master's institutions had the highest agreement on database-centered communications.

The study respondents' overwhelming agreement to the items in the adapted Lee and Park scale lends some quantitative support to IMC practice in institutional advancement, indicating it is an appropriate venue though which to examine IMC in action. However, variability within the field manifested itself because an average of 18 practitioners disagreed with each question on the IMC scale.

Additional support for using institutional advancement as a venue for studying IMC is the pretesting practitioners' acceptance of the questionnaire in its entirety and the interest the survey itself generated among advancement practitioners with 55% requesting a copy of the results. A final measure of support for using institutional advancement as a venue in which to study IMC is the academic sophistication of the professionals responsible for the function. Ninety-three of 165 respondents hold advanced degrees. The presence of so many master's level, (professional) degrees seems to indicate that the employees themselves possess complex, practice-based skill sets that may help them negotiate the multi-function, multi-constituent arena of institutional advancement. It would seem higher levels of education are valued in advancement because of the environment in which it exists and it would seem engagement in professional development activity is encouraged and supported by the institutions. Academic sophistication and personal/professional growth possibly indicate that IMC studies among institutional advancement practitioners may be able to test more complex ideas and that the questions may need to be more discrete than the scale used in this study.

Because IMC metrics and IMC study have traditionally proven problematic, this study used scale that had been repeatedly tested before it was published in the *Journal of Advertising Research* and was subsequently used by Hobson. Through qualitative Q-Sort of the IMC scale questions by experts and subsequent internal consistency reliability checks on the scale using data generated from advancement practitioners, this study has made a contribution to the body of knowledge by offering the base of much communication theory, Source-Message-Receiver, as a potential lens with which to examine the IMC process model. The Q-Sort score on three factors rather than four was .67, demonstrating modest support. The alpha coefficients on the adapted Lee and Park dimensions actually scored higher as three than as four on internal consistency reliability checks: unified communications (source) $\propto$=.79, differing communications (message) $\propto$=.75 and database-centered communications/relationship fostering communications (receiver) $\propto$=.80. When the final two were considered separately, alphas were .635 and .70 respectively.

The number of respondents was good considering the type of data collection device used, the time of year in which data collection occurred and the type of professionals solicited for participation, but 165 responses did not allow for techniques that could have perhaps better demonstrated the proposed interaction of the variables, investigated by Research Questions 1 through 4 (as proposed by Fig. 4). The minimum number of items in each cell must generally be greater than the number of dependent variables when multivariate techniques are used (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006) and many of the cells had minimum responses of less than 18. Where possible, data was grouped for analysis (e.g. nine Carnegie Classifications to three). Still, the analysis on the data generated by this study seems to indicate the null hypothesis is generally supported. However, it cannot generally be accepted or rejected via this study.

Though the Lee and Park scale had previously been used in a higher education setting via Hobson's study of community colleges, the results of this study contradicted hers as it found that incorporating IMC in advancement practice was not statistically linked to improved success metrics. One possible explanation for this could be that community colleges are more homogenous than baccalaureate to doctoral institutions. This study also found that relationships did not exist between the IMC factors and variables of organizational complexity and practitioner engagement. Therefore, another possible explanation for the results of this study could be that the highly educated practitioners – who are generally involved in their professional development organizations, who are exposed to best practice information and who benchmark against other practitioners and institutions – may have provided socially desirable answers to the questions in the Lee and Park IMC scale.

The qualitative components of this study, which were designed to satisfy the two very broad, general questions which began this effort: Is IMC practiced in U.S. Institutional Advancement? and Can IMC metrics be examined through a source-message-receiver lens? yielded positive results and represent this study's academic contribution. This study's contribution to practice is that it asked questions about *what is* within institutional advancement, and uncovered descriptive information that members of the advancement communities of practice can use as they continue to build their body of knowledge regarding best practices and through their own comparative activity.

Limitations

This study's limitations were many and limited sensitivity and power are the result. First, pulling the sample population directly from institutions' Web sites, rather than distributing the survey link through an organization may have contributed to the number of responses. However, not partnering with an organization may mean that the data could be more representative of institutions within the Carnegie Classifications Data File. Thirty-four (34) practitioners uncovered by the study (8%) are not members of the largest organization for professionals in institutional advancement and the most prolific source of research within the field. With a sample size of 685 individuals yielding a less than 30% response rate, perhaps the only way to secure large enough numbers of professionals for a study such as this would have been to partner with more than one professional development organization and perhaps focus on the smaller professional development organizations that may have been more receptive to working with the researcher on this study. Another method of distribution could have been to use a snowball sample with practitioners forwarding the survey among themselves; though that may not have worked either because of how busy these practitioners are and the time of year the study was implemented.

Second, several of the questions could have been worded better to eliminate the frequent selection of 'Other' as a response – particularly among nominal variables like department title, job title, etc. Additionally, question wording may have contributed to the overwhelmingly positive responses as well. More subtle questions may be called for when sampling such an educated population as there is a possibility the practitioners' responses reflected what they know they should be doing (through education and involvement in professional development activity), maybe not what they actually are doing in practice. Perhaps the study should have had more qualitative components, such as site visits or more systematic promotional materials checks, which could have allowed the researcher to verify not only that advancement practitioners are following the model, but how as well.

While the descriptive analysis and data seem to indicate that organizational complexity and practitioner engagement may influence whether practitioners incorporate the best practice tenets of advertising, marketing and public relations expressed within the IMC model, the inferential statistics were inconclusive. Assigning an 18-item scale as the dependent variable was problematic for either exploratory or confirmatory statistical methods and required that data be transformed into collapsed categories for analysis. Sample size was also an issue. To properly fill the cells for multivariate analysis, this study would have had to generate more than 300 individual responses, so the sample size should have been closer to 1,000 individuals or about 250 schools with four managers at each school selected via the institutions' Web sites.

In short, the finding of no difference between Carnegie Classification levels and agreement to the items on Lee and Park's 18-item scale (RQ1) was not surprising as it confirmed a previous study's results. However, the lack of statistical support RQ 2, RQ3 and RQ4 was surprising. These findings indicate that there are either no interactions between organizational complexity, practitioner engagement, success indicators and IMC practice OR that the instrument and methods used in this study were insufficient to detect them, a distinct possibility when using a quantitative approach via a 37-question instrument.

Recommendations for Policy or Practice

Whether practitioners' responses reflected actual practice or were the result of socially desirable responses, an understanding of the best practice concepts inherent in the IMC model is present among advancement practitioners in U.S. baccalaureate to doctoral institutions. It seems that more than 50 years of at least one professional development organization educating its members about best practices stemming from many disciplines, including advertising, marketing and public relations, overlapping with more than 20 years of various industries' trade publications espousing the benefits of IMC, have led to great interest at the practitioner level, the level where individuals focus on outputs and processes. However, the criticisms at the academic level are all too valid – there is no definitive definition nor is there a definitive measure, especially one that can easily be adapted to fit all types of industries and practitioner that may benefit from incorporating IMC. That IMC as a monolithic concept is difficult to examine is not in question. Still, the secondary and primary research in this study seems to indicate that both practitioners and scholars should continue current efforts.

The CASE online Benchmarking Tool was launched the month this study concluded. The tool allows members to share data, partner with peer institutions for benchmarking and other comparative activity and allows that organization's members to create, distribute and share collected data with one another. This should prove tremendously beneficial to practitioners and researchers who are members of that organization because it cultivates at least CASE as a true community of practice with the technology to fuel practitioners' engagement in their own knowledge production, knowledge sharing and etc. within the domain of institutional advancement.

Recommendations for Future Research

Because the sample was constructed through institutions' Web sites, variability in sophistication, resources, method and general site content was astounding. The more traditional four-year institutions' sites generally attempted to accommodate every possible constituency through the primary page, in contrast, for-profit schools focused on recruitment almost exclusively. Additionally, the tremendous variability in resources among institutions was evident. Perhaps a content anaylsis of institutions' sites might provide managerial recommendations that may be welcomed by advancement practitioners.

Additionally, the variability in institution-specific definitions of advancement manifested itself in this study as some practitioners asked questions of the researcher because they did not understand why they had been asked to participate in this study. Though practitioners from multiple departments generated a variety of perspectives and responses, perhaps a census approach may have been better with the solicitation sent only to the senior manager at each of the 1,713 baccalaureate to doctoral institutions for which such data could be found.

Though this study did not produce more definitive assertions regarding the relationships of practitioner engagement, organizational complexity and IMC, its contribution is that it lends support to institutional advancement as an arena in which to study that process model. It also provided secondary as well as some qualitative (Q-Sort) and quantitative (internal consistency reliability) support for S-M-R as a potential underpinning for future IMC studies. It is suggested that the information in this study be used as a step in building the body of knowledge related to IMC. This study can be used to help build an original S-M-R scale, through which the complex constructs inherent in the IMC process model, those same complex constructs inherent in practitioners' best practice information, can be drilled down into fewer constructs and simpler questions comprising more broad variables regarding SOURCE (coordinated encoding), MESSAGE (targeted communication through appropriate channels) and RECEIVER (feedback loop).

APPENDIX A

HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW BOARD PERMISSION

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI

Institutional Review Board

118 College Drive #5147
Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001
Tel: 601.266.6820
Fax: 601.266.5509
www.usm.edu/irb

HUMAN SUBJECTS PROTECTION REVIEW COMMITTEE
NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Human Subjects Protection Review Committee in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: **29071601**
PROJECT TITLE: **A Source-Message-Receiver Examination of IMC in U.S. Institutional Advancement: Effects of Organizational Complexity and Practitioner Engagement**
PROPOSED PROJECT DATES: **07/15/09 to 09/20/09**
PROJECT TYPE: **Dissertation or Thesis**
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS: **Sharee L. Broussard**
COLLEGE/DIVISION: **College of Arts & Letters**
DEPARTMENT: **Mass Communication & Journalism**
FUNDING AGENCY: **N/A**
HSPRC COMMITTEE ACTION: **Exempt Approval**
PERIOD OF APPROVAL: **07/30/09 to 0/29/10**

Lawrence A. Hosman
Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
HSPRC Chair

8-06-09
Date

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

Electronic Page 1: Introduction

This questionnaire is part of a broader study examining marketing-communication practices of Baccalaureate to Doctoral U.S. institutions' Advancement units. It should take five to seven minutes to complete. Individual responses remain confidential.

Marketing-communication activity is defined as relationship- or resource-building activity conducted within institutional advancement units comprised of Alumni Relations, PR/Marketing, Development and related departments.

Your participation is completely voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you'd like, you can request a copy of the completed study on the final page of this questionnaire.

Thank you!

Electronic Page 2: Marketing-Communication (MarCom) Assessment

The following questions assess how your institutional advancement unit engages in MarCom activity.

1. My institution integrates information collected or generated from different departments into a unified database.

   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

2. My institution makes efforts to generate a continuous flow of resources from individuals in the long run by solidifying relationships with them through marketing-communication activity.

   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

3. My institution's marketing-communication strategy differentiates multiple constituencies (ex. different strategies for alumni, students, parents, donors, funders).

   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

4. My institution carefully examines whether its intended message is consistently delivered through all communication tools and channels, such as advertising, publicity, direct mail, and Web site.

   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

5. My institution sees to it that the information generated in the course of marketing-communication activities is compiled.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

6. My institution emphasizes that maintaining and strengthening relationships with existing constituencies is as important as recruiting new students.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

7. My institution maintains consistency in all visual components of communication, such as trademarks, logos and colors.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

8. My institution follows up on responses to marketing-communication activities (ex. follow up mailer to event participants and/or adding attendees to standing mailing lists).

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

9. My institution actively carries out marketing-communication activities, which strengthen the relationships with existing constituencies, such as face-to-face communication or dialogue through social media, publications & announcements, trouble-shooting for alumni and etc.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

10. My institution maintains consistency in all linguistic components of communication, such as slogans and/or mottos.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

11. The issue of whether to maintain a single brand image or to create multiple brand images is thoroughly discussed in my institution (ex. different messages for traditional undergraduate students & adult learners).

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

12. Insuring a consistent brand image is one of the most important goals of the institution's marketing-communications program.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

13. My institution does not alter the brand image, even as its context changes, but maintains its consistency from the long-term perspective.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

14. My institution carefully deliberates whether targeting multiple groups is desirable.

( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

15. My institution's marketing-communication strategy places heavy emphasis on generating additional resources from its existing constituencies by enhancing their satisfaction levels.

    ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

16. My institution's marketing-communication strategy considers the stages of the decision-making/buying process, such as brand awareness, information search, campus visit and registration.

    ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

17. My institution employs the marketing-communication tools that are most appropriate for each stage of the decision-making/buying process.

    ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

18. My institution's marketing-communication activities are designed to induce actions, such as campus visit, event attendance and donation.

    ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

<u>Electronic Page 3: Organizational Complexity</u>
Please select the responses that best describe your institution/advancement unit.

1. There are approximately ___ people responsible for the advancement function as defined by my institution.

   ( ) 1 to 5 ( ) 6 to 10 ( ) 11 to 15 ( ) 16 to 20 ( ) more than 20

2. Number of departments within my advancement unit

   ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 ( ) 5 ( ) 6 or more

3. Number of levels within my advancement unit

   ( ) Campus CEO to staff responsible (1)
   ( ) Campus CEO to VP to staff responsible (2)
   ( ) Campus CEO to VP to Director to staff responsible (3)
   ( ) Campus CEO to VP to Director to Associate Director to staff responsible (4)
   ( ) Campus CEO to VP to Director to Associate Director to Assistant Director to staff responsible (5)
   ( ) more levels (6)

4. Departments within my advancement unit

   ( ) are all in one building
   ( ) are in multiple buildings on the same campus

( ) are in multiple buildings on multiple campuses
( ) other: please specify

5. How many advancement functions (alumni relations, communication, fundraising, etc.) does your department perform formally or informally?

   ( ) 1 ( ) 2 ( ) 3 ( ) 4 or more

6. Which or the following constituencies does your department interact with regularly? (all that apply)

   ( ) Alumni ( ) Volunteers ( ) Donors ( ) Other funders, such as grantmakers
   ( ) Elected Officials ( ) Students ( ) Parents ( ) Faculty/Staff
   ( ) Other: please specify

<u>Electronic Page 4: Practitioner Engagement</u>
This section assesses practitioner engagement in professional development and comparative activity.

1. I am a member of ____ (select all that apply)

   ( ) American Advertising Federation
   ( ) Association of Fundraising Professionals
   ( ) American Marketing Association
   ( ) Association of Professional Researchers for Advancement
   ( ) Council for the Advancement and Support of Education
   ( ) Public Relations Society of America
   ( ) Other Universal Accreditation Board groups (ex. Southern Public Relations Federation, National Schools' Public Relations Association)
   ( ) Other: please specify

2. I participate in my trade association(s) via ___ (select all that apply)

   ( ) I read publications of my trade association(s)
   ( ) I attend my trade association(s)' conference(s) or other training opportunities
   ( ) I participate in conference planning for my trade association(s)
   ( ) I serve as an officer for my trade association(s)
   ( ) I mentor newer advancement professionals
   ( ) none of these
   ( ) Other: please specify

3. Please indicate the response that best indicates your agreement to each statement below

   I regularly review 'best practice' industry information.
   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree
   I attempt to incorporate 'best practice' industry information into myt work.
   ( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

I actively compare my institution's programs to other similar institutions.
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

I actively compare my institution's policies to other similar institutions.
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree
I enter award competitions to actively compare my/my institution's work to others' similar work.
( ) Strongly Agree ( ) ( ) Neutral ( ) ( ) Strongly Disagree

4. I hold the following accreditation(s)

   ( ) APR ( ) CFRE ( ) CMP ( ) Other: please specify

5. Highest degree earned

   ( ) AA/AS ( ) BA/BS ( ) MA/MS/MBA ( ) JD ( ) EdD ( ) PhD
   ( ) Other: please specify

<u>Electronic Page 5: Descriptive Data</u>
This section collects descriptive data on you and your institution.

1. Number of years in institutional advancement

   ( ) less than 5 ( ) 6 to 10 ( ) 11 to 15 ( ) 16 to 20 ( ) 21 to 25 ( ) 26 to 30
   ( ) more than 30

2. My title is ____.

   ( ) Vice President ( ) Executive Director ( ) Director ( ) Associate Director
   ( ) Assistant Director ( ) Other: please specify

3. My department is ___.

   ( ) Advancement Services ( ) Alumni ( ) Athletics ( ) Development
   ( ) Foundation ( ) Governmental Affairs ( ) President's Office
   ( ) Public Relations ( ) Special Events ( ) Other: please specify

4. My institution is ___.

   ( ) Public ( ) Private

5. The regional accrediting body for my institution is ___.

   ( ) Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
   ( ) New England Association of Schools and Colleges
   ( ) North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
   ( ) Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities
   ( ) Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
   ( ) Western Association of Colleges and Schools

6. The approximate number of students at my institution is ___.

   ( ) 30,000 or more ( ) 28,000 to 29,999 ( ) 26,000 to 27,999
   ( ) 24,000 to 25, 999 ( ) 22,000 to 23,999 ( ) 20,000 to 21,999
   ( ) 18,000 to 19,999 ( ) 16,000 to 17,999 ( ) 14,000 to 15,999
   ( ) 12,000 to 13,999 ( ) 10,000 to 11,999 ( ) 8,000 to 9,999
   ( ) 6,000 to 7,999 ( ) 4,000 to 5,999 ( ) 2,000 to 3,999 ( ) less than 2,000

7. My institution's Carnegie Classification

   ( ) Research Universities (very high research activity)
   ( ) Research Universities (high research activity)
   ( ) Doctoral/Research Universities
   ( ) Master's Colleges and Universities (larger programs)
   ( ) Master's Colleges and Universities (medium programs)
   ( ) Master's Colleges and Universities (smaller programs)
   ( ) Baccalaureate Colleges – Arts & Sciences
   ( ) Baccalaureate Colleges – Diverse Fields
   ( ) Baccalaureate/Associate's Colleges

<u>Electronic Page 6: Success data</u>
The questions on this page seek general information regarding success data for your institution. Because of the state of the economy at the time of this study and the questionnaire's length, you're asked to provide non-revenue success indicators.

1. Generally, over the last five years, ___ at my institution…

   Enrollment
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Attendance at special events implemented by my advancement unit
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Number of donors
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Number of gifts
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Number of good addresses in the advancement database
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Number of members (ex. Alumni Association)
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased
   Number of volunteers supporting the advancement function
   ( ) Has increased ( ) Has remained about the same ( ) Has decreased

Electronic Page 7: Thank you!
Your participation in this study is greatly appreciated.

1. OPTIONAL: If you'd like a copy of the completed study, please provide the requested information below. This information will not be shared with anyone, nor will it be used in the study.

   Name
   Institution
   Department
   Mailing Address
   City, State, Zip

Electronic Page 8: One final note
This project has been reviewed by the Human Subjects Protection Review Committee, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations. Any questions or concerns about rights as a research subject should be directed to the chair of the Institutional Review Board, The University of Southern Mississippi, 118 College Drive #5147, Hattiesburg MS 39406-0001.

APPENDIX C

Q-SORT/PRETEST QUESTIONNAIRE

This study seeks to examine IMC adoption in institutional advancement (alumni relations, marketing/communications, development and related functions) and determine whether organizational complexity and practitioner engagement can be considered moderators to IMC adoption. The study uses exploratory, descriptive and relational methodology. Goals of the study are 1) to provide theoretical support for the IMC process model and 2) to inform practice.
The study adapts an 18-item scale by Lee & Park which has been previously used to examine IMC adoption within U.S. community colleges. Their scale aligned on four dimensions: A) unified communications for consistent message and image, B) measures of differentiated communications for multiple customer groups, C) database-centered communications for tangible results and relationship fostering communications with existing customers.
Please check whether you would ACCEPT or REJECT each of the five-point Likert-type questions below as a measure of integrated marketing communication within institutional advancement.

#	QUESTION	ACCEPT	REJECT
1	My institution integrates information collected or generated from different departments into a unified database.		
2	My institution makes efforts to generate a continuous flow of resources from individuals in the long run by solidifying relationships with them through marketing-communication activity.		
3	My institution's marketing-communication strategy differentiates among multiple constituencies (such as alumni, students, parents, donors, funders).		
4	My institution carefully examines whether its intended message is consistently delivered through all communication tools and channels (such as advertising, publicity, direct mail, Web site).		
5	My institution sees to it that the information generated in the course of marketing-communication activities is compiled.		
6	My institution emphasizes that maintaining and strengthening relationships with existing constituencies is as important as recruiting new students.		
7	My institution maintains consistency in all visual components of communication (such as trademarks, logos, colors).		
8	My institution follows up on responses to marketing-communication activities (such as follow up mailer to event participants, adding attendees to standing mailing lists).		
9	My institution actively carries out marketing-communication activities, which strengthen the relationships with existing constituencies (such as face-to-face communication or dialogue through social media, publications & announcements, trouble-shooting for alumni, referrals, etc.).		
10	My institution maintains consistency in all linguistic components of communication (such as slogans, mottos).		
11	The issue of whether to maintain a single brand image or to create multiple brand images is thoroughly discussed in my institution (ex. different messages for traditional undergraduate students & adult learners).		
12	Insuring a consistent brand image is one of the most important goals of the institution's marketing-communications program.		
13	My institution does not alter the brand image, even as its context changes, but maintains its consistency from the long-term perspective.		

14	My institution carefully deliberates whether targeting multiple groups is desirable.		
15	My institution's marketing-communication strategy places heavy emphasis on generating additional resources from its existing constituencies by enhancing their satisfaction levels.		
16	My institution's marketing-communication strategy considers the stages of the decision-making/buying process, such as brand awareness, information search, trial and purchase.		
17	My institution employs the marketing-communication tools that are most appropriate for each stage of the decision-making process.		
18	My institution's marketing-communication activities are designed to induce actions (such as campus visit, event attendance, donation).		

As part of dissertation pretesting, you're being asked to perform a cognitive factor analysis or Q-sort on the adapted IMC scale. Please insert the question numbers into the Source-Message-Receiver categories based upon the brief descriptions given. Try to include all 18 questions.

SOURCE:	**MESSAGE:**	**RECEIVER:**
List the questions numbers below that you believe reference coordinated encoding by various practitioners	List the question numbers below that you believe reference targeted messaging	List the question numbers below that you believe reference the feedback loop (e.g. data use and relationship building)

Please add any comments or suggestions regarding this scale here:

____

____

____

THANK YOU!!!

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRETESTERS

Pretest Feedback
Your willingness to help is greatly appreciated. The final survey will be going to a few hundred staff members in institutional advancement throughout the U.S. Please answer the questions thoughtfully as your input at this stage of the study is very important to both the questionnaire and the dissertation as a whole. Thank you so very much!!!

1. Are the instructions and items easy to read and understand?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

2. Are the items meaningful to a staff member in institutional advancement?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

3. Are the items sufficiently detailed or are they too general?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

4. Do you find any of the questions to be offensive or obtrusive?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

5. Are there any questions you would exclude from the questionnaire?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

6. Are there any questions you would include that are NOT part of this questionnaire?

   Comments:

7. How long did it take you to complete this questionnaire?

   ( ) between 5 and 10 minutes ( ) between 10 and 15 minutes
   ( ) between 15 and 20 minutes ( ) more than 20 minutes

8. The time required to complete the survey was…

   ( ) too long ( ) appropriate ( ) too short

9. Were you able to complete the survey without have to look up any of the answers?

   ( ) Yes ( ) No Comments:

10. Please provide any other comments or suggestions about this survey in the box below.

    Comments:

11. In your opinion, what would be the best day of the week to e-mail this survey to institutional advancement practitioners from throughout the U.S.?

( ) Sunday ( ) Monday ( ) Tuesday ( ) Wednesday ( ) Thursday
( ) Friday ( ) Saturday

12. In your opinion, how many reminder e-mails should I send to the selected sample?

( ) none ( ) one ( ) two ( ) three ( ) Other-specify

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