

Literature Review: Definition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in Indonesian Journals (2019-2022)



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ABSTRACT: After 30 years of development, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in Indonesia has been widely studied and published in scientific journals. From 2019 to 2022, 44 Indonesian scientific journals were identified through a Google search. This study aims to explore how IMC is defined in scientific journal articles from 2019-2022, considering the current context. The research employs a literature review method, using five definitions of IMC, which are then distilled into sixteen core ideas. The findings reveal that Indonesian scientific journals still adhere to two main definitional concepts: "IMC is comprehensive planning" and "IMC combines various communication elements." The first concept suggests that IMC must be thoroughly planned, typically through its communication elements. The second concept emphasizes the combination of various communication elements. Additionally, the articles found that the communicated message is predominantly from the brand, although only partially. This indicates that IMC has expanded to include brand value. A few scientific journals have advanced further in defining IMC, though only in terms of managing various communication elements, without incorporating dialogue or database-driven development. Overall, this study reveals that the definition of IMC in 44 articles positions it as a strategic process in business and management, involving the planning, execution, and persuasion of brand communication programs. On the other hand, many definitions of IMC need to be considered as concepts, at the very least those drawn from IMC thought leaders, such as the five definitions used in this study.

KEYWORDS: Scientific Journals, IMC, Definition, Literature Review

INTRODUCTION

To date, numerous articles have discussed IMC, both in terms of theoretical development and implementation, published in international journals such as the Journal of Marketing Communications, Journal of Advertising, Journal of Current Issues and Research in Advertising, International Journal of Advertising, Journal of Advertising Research, Journal of Promotion Management, and the European Journal of Marketing (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2015). To understand its progress, several scholars have conducted studies aimed not only at mapping what IMC is, how it functions, and to what extent it has evolved, but also at establishing a customer-centric IMC (Finne & Grönroos, 2009; 2017), referred to as Consumer Integrated Marketing Communication (CIMC). This approach emphasizes two-way, or even multi-way, communication with customers (Vollero et al., 2019) and the effective use of digital media (Mulhern, 2009), including hybrid online-offline integration (Vernuccio et al., 2021). In addition, IMC messages are largely focused on brand messaging (Keller, 2009; Vollero et al., 2019).

However, despite over 30 years of academic exploration, there are still many gaps in the research on IMC, as highlighted in various international journals. Šerić (2016), for instance, provides a review of empirical studies on IMC in journals published between 2000 and 2015. The key topics examined include: (a) IMC implementation; (b) IMC impact; (c) IMC perception; (d) IMC measurement; and (e) the relationship between IMC and communication technology. The results indicate that while IMC impact, perception, and implementation have been extensively researched, IMC measurement and its connection to communication technology remain underexplored. Additionally, the operationalization of IMC needs further development and testing in future studies. Kliatchko (2008), who reviewed IMC in various journals from 1990 to 2006, concluded that theoretical issues and the definition of IMC remain relevant areas of study. Similarly, Schultz et al. (2014) conducted a content analysis of 65 studies on IMC published in seven journals between 1993 and 2009, identifying five popular topics: (a) IMC definitions; (b) IMC perceptions; (c) Branding; (d) Interactivity; and (e) IMC measurement. This research concluded that IMC is still far from being a fully established

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concept. Lastly, Muñoz-Leiva et al. (2015) conducted a bibliometric analysis of IMC research in journals from 1991 to 2012, finding that future research should focus on analyzing the success of IMC implementation and further examining the concept of the communication mix or promotion strategies.

IMC is a multidimensional process of communicating a brand to its audience, meaning that all departments and communication agencies must work together to plan and monitor brand relationships (Schultz et al., 2014). Moreover, consumers (customers) must be given access to media because today's consumers want to talk, be heard, and have their needs met. This shift is linked to technological advancements, transitioning from traditional to digital and interactive media (Ewing, 2009), which grants consumers more access (Duncan, 2002). Several studies have explained how IMC is driven by technology (Holm, 2006; Edmiston-Strasser, 2009) and its various applications (Barker & Angelopulo, 2004; Angelopulo & Barker, 2005; Gurău, 2008), data-driven management systems (Peltier et al., 2003; Dewhirst & Davis, 2005), and social media (Luck et al., 2010). All authors agree that IMC is a product of technological advancement, where communication technology has shifted the focus from one-to-many communication to one-to-one interaction (Vollero et al., 2019). This demonstrates that IMC cannot be achieved without communication technology (Duncan, 2002).

The world, consumers, and communication systems have evolved significantly in the 30 years since the inception of IMC (Schultz, 2009). With the emergence of the internet and digitalization, IMC has become increasingly important. Additionally, the internet (World Wide Web) has created new media platforms, such as websites and social media (Barker & Angelopulo, 2004; Gurău, 2008; Luck et al., 2010), and multi-tasking consumers, further highlighting the importance of IMC. Internet-based and digital tools fundamentally offer new ways for individuals to communicate with each other (Ewing, 2009), as well as enhance the ability to respond to company messages. Consumers are no longer passive receivers of messages through traditional media; they are now active participants in communication (Schultz, 2009). Today, the world offers the opportunity for two-way communication between companies and customers through communication technology (Kliatchko, 2009; Vollero et al., 2019).

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that IMC is a product of internet-based communication technology, meaning companies must engage in two-way or even multi-way, interactive communication with their customers. IMC should place the customer at its core. Moreover, IMC involves a hybrid approach, combining both online and offline communication. When communicating with customers, IMC must utilize communication technology and simultaneously integrate its communication across online media (websites and social media) and offline media (TV, radio, newspapers, and magazines). It must also leverage collected data to better understand its customers. IMC must pay particular attention to customers, as they engage in conversations about the company, brand, and products with other customers on social media platforms. Since companies and products are often represented by brands, the brand must be the central message communicated by the company through its promotions or communication mix. Therefore, the final concern is how to measure the success of IMC. This should be a fundamental part of the IMC definition, with operationalization emphasizing that the IMC message is the brand, and that brand communication should occur through the communication mix and information technology-based media. Finally, the success of IMC must also be measurable.

The above reflections represent the current conceptual development of IMC and can be seen through existing IMC definitions. Additionally, Kliatchko (2008) and Schultz et al. (2014) have pointed out the importance of reviewing IMC definitions and examining how well IMC is understood. Meanwhile, Šerić (2016) and Muñoz-Leiva et al. (2015) noted that communication technology and measurement remain under-researched, which can be seen from the available definitions. Given that the issues discussed are closely related to the definition of IMC, this study conducts a literature review on IMC definitions. Five key definitions by leading IMC thinkers are the focus of this research, as these definitions are the most frequently cited in various journals. However, the researchers do not include the first IMC definition from the 4As, as this definition was revised by Schultz in 1991 (Kitchen, 2004:21).

The first definition is from Duncan (2002), which emphasizes brand value and profit through harmonious relationships with customers and other stakeholders. This highlights the importance of brand value and communication technology, as well as how to foster relationships with stakeholders through dialogue, facilitated by the rapid advancement of communication technology. Duncan's (2002) definition of IMC is as follows:

IMC is a process for managing the customer relationships that drive brand value. It is a cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customer and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all message sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them.

Quoting Kliatchko (2005), a key weakness in Duncan's definition is its failure to explain the communication channels used to achieve the goal of strengthening dialogue. While channels are implied in the concept of "dialogue," they are not explicitly stated in his definition. It is true that Duncan did not specify the channels, but today, these channels must be digital (online) and capable of controlling and influencing customers through various brand messages (Schultz, 2009; Kliatchko, 2009; Vollero et al.,

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2019), while facilitating dialogue to enable one-to-one, one-to-many, or even many-to-many communication that is interactive.

In addition to Duncan, IMC has also been defined by Don Schultz, Heidi Schultz, and Jerry Kliatchko. These descriptions highlight the evolution of the IMC definition and reflect a conceptual shift from an inside-out to an outside-in approach (Kerr et al., 2008), transitioning from company-to-consumer communication to consumer-to-company communication (Estaswara, 2008b; 2016; 2023; Estaswara & Said, 2024). This thinking represents the second generation of IMC, where IMC is now consumer-centric and leverages communication technology.

The second important IMC definition comes from Schultz (Kitchen, 2004:21), which was widely accepted at the time after it revised the 4As definition from 1989:

A concept of marketing communications planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines (for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations) and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communications impact.

The weakness of this definition lies in its focus on integrating all elements of the promotional mix together in an attempt to "speak with one voice." In reality, some of these approaches cannot be managed internally (inside-out) with the advancements in communication technology today, which only obscures the meaning of the word "strategic" (Estaswara, 2008a). The definition is also considered controversial, as it challenges the principles of planning and operating various communication elements, such as advertising, sales promotion, direct marketing, and public relations, by emphasizing a "consumer first" rather than a "tools first" approach. It also suggests coordinating and aligning these communication elements across different functional departments (Kliatchko, 2009).

This thinking further demonstrates that IMC is more than just an inside-out tool that combines all elements of marketing communication (first-generation IMC). However, Schultz (1998) himself stated that IMC must evolve beyond this stage, where the IMC process begins with the consumer and circles back to the company (Estaswara, 2008b; 2015, 2016, 2023) as the foundation for determining and defining the appropriate persuasive communication methods (second-generation IMC). Persuasive communication methods are now shaped by the presence of communication technology, allowing for the flow of communication from the consumer to the company or even from consumer to consumer (Vollero et al., 2019). Therefore, according to this definition, the focus should be on a "consumer first" approach based on communication technology.

Thirdly, after the initial definition proved unsatisfactory, Schultz and Schultz (1998) proposed a new IMC definition based on various studies and built from the experiences of companies that had implemented IMC. The definition by Schultz and Schultz (1998:18) can be explained as follows:

IMC is a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communication programmes over time with consumers, customers, prospects and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.

Schultz and Schultz (1998) argue that what sets their definition apart from others is its focus on the strategic process within business. This definition encompasses the entire spectrum of the IMC concept (Estaswara, 2008b), positioning IMC as a journey from planning to evaluation, involving all stakeholders, both internal and external. Although this definition incorporates most, if not all, of the concepts cited in previous definitions, it is enriched by adding IMC as a business process that includes evaluation and measurement. This approach is even more applicable today, given advancements in communication technology.

Fourth, Kliatchko (2005) also proposed a definition of IMC, developed from the framework of Schultz and Schultz (1998), though it demonstrates originality with greater precision and clarity. Kliatchko's definition of IMC (2005:23) is as follows:

IMC is the concept and process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centred, and results-driven brand communication programmes overtime.

Kliatchko (2005) introduced three pillars of IMC that represent the fundamental variations in its concept and definition: audience-focused, channel-focused, and result-driven. Although these pillars are not entirely new and have been used to describe various aspects of IMC, they had not previously been articulated together within a definition or communicated through communication technology. Today, these three pillars have become central due to the advancements in communication technology, with audience-focused, channel-focused, and result-driven approaches now being the primary focus of IMC in relation to brand communication.

Duncan (2002) explained that IMC should follow an outside-in approach, starting from the consumer and circling back to the company to determine an effective marketing communication strategy for introducing, creating awareness, shaping perceptions, and building attitudes or desire to purchase a brand through data-driven insights. Meanwhile, Schultz & Schultz

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(2004) distinguished between two generations of IMC: the first generation focused on an inside-out approach, meaning that marketing communication must be integrated and communicated to consumers. In contrast, the second generation of IMC shifts to an outside-in approach, treating IMC as a strategic business process that focuses on both internal and external audiences (Estaswara, 2008a, 2016).

Essentially, IMC must evolve toward an outside-in stage, where it employs audience-focused, channel-focused, and result-driven strategies in brand-based marketing communication. In line with this, a more recent definition of IMC was provided by Šerić et al. (2015), who described the concept as:

A tactical and strategic consumer-centric business process, boosted by advances in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) which, on the basis of information obtained from customers databases, delivers a clear and consistent message through the coordination and synergies of different communications tools and channels, in order to nourish long-lasting profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders and create and maintain brand equity.”

In general, this conceptualization is based on seven fundamental principles of IMC: (a) IMC as both a tactical and strategic process; (b) coordination and synergy of different communication tools and channels; (c) clarity and consistency in brand messaging; (d) communication centered on technology and data management; (e) customer-centered communication; (f) IMC as a component of relationship-building approaches; and (g) IMC as a component of brand equity strategy (Šerić et al., 2015). Clearly, this definition encompasses all the elements that should be part of IMC: a strategic and technical process, synergy, coordination, brand messaging, tools and channels based on information technology and data management, customer focus, and IMC as a relational approach. Although the definition does not explicitly address how to measure the success of IMC, brand equity can be considered as a metric.

Given these various definitions, this study aims to conduct a literature review on the definitions of IMC and how these definitions have been articulated in Indonesian journals published between 2019 and 2022.

METHOD

This research employs a literature review technique of national scientific journals on Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) obtained online (Estaswara & Said, 2024). This method has also been utilized in international journals to map the evolution of IMC thinking (such as Kliatchko 2008; Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Schultz, Kim & Kang 2014; Muñoz-Leiva, Porcu & del Barrio-García 2015; and Estaswara, 2023, Estaswara & Said, 2024). The literature review aims to synthesize and critically evaluate to provide an overview and information about the content of Indonesian journals from 2019 to 2022 regarding how they utilize and elaborate on the definitions of IMC.

The rigor of the methodology employed in this study is based on the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method, which involves a process of searching, screening, assessing eligibility, and analysis. Additionally, the systematic review adheres to a checklist to ensure credibility (Estaswara & Said, 2024). According to Sierra-Correa and Kintz (2015), there are three unique advantages: first, defining research questions that can be raised; second, identifying inclusion and exclusion criteria; and finally, examining scientific literature databases within a specific timeframe. Given that the PRISMA statement has been widely used in systematic reviews in social sciences, this methodology is considered suitable for this study (Estaswara & Said, 2024).

For the database utilized in this research, Google Scholar was employed, as previously done in earlier journal articles (Estaswara, 2023, Estaswara & Said, 2024). While databases such as EBSCO, Scopus, and Web of Science are among the largest and most commonly used (Muñoz-Leiva et al., 2015), Google Scholar is favored by social scientists across various disciplines, including researchers in communication and marketing. Therefore, relevant articles from this database cannot be overlooked in providing a review of the definitions and conceptualizations of IMC used after 30 years since its inception. A search in Google Scholar for journals from 2019 to 2022 yielded 44 journals, which can be found in the tables below.

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Table 1. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

| Criteria | Inclusion Criteria | Exclusion Criteria |
|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Concept | Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), Marketing Communication Integrated | Marketing Communication, Public Relations, Personal Selling, Sales Promotion, Direct Marketing, Sponsorship, Point of Purchase |
| Language | Indonesian | Non-Indonesian |
| Manuscript | Scientific Articles | Theses, Dissertations, Books, Articles, Proceedings, Conferences |
| | Empirical Research | Non-Empirical Research |
| Time Frame | Years 2019-2022 | Before and after 2019-2022 |
| Text | Full Text | Abstract |

Source: Researchers Data 2002

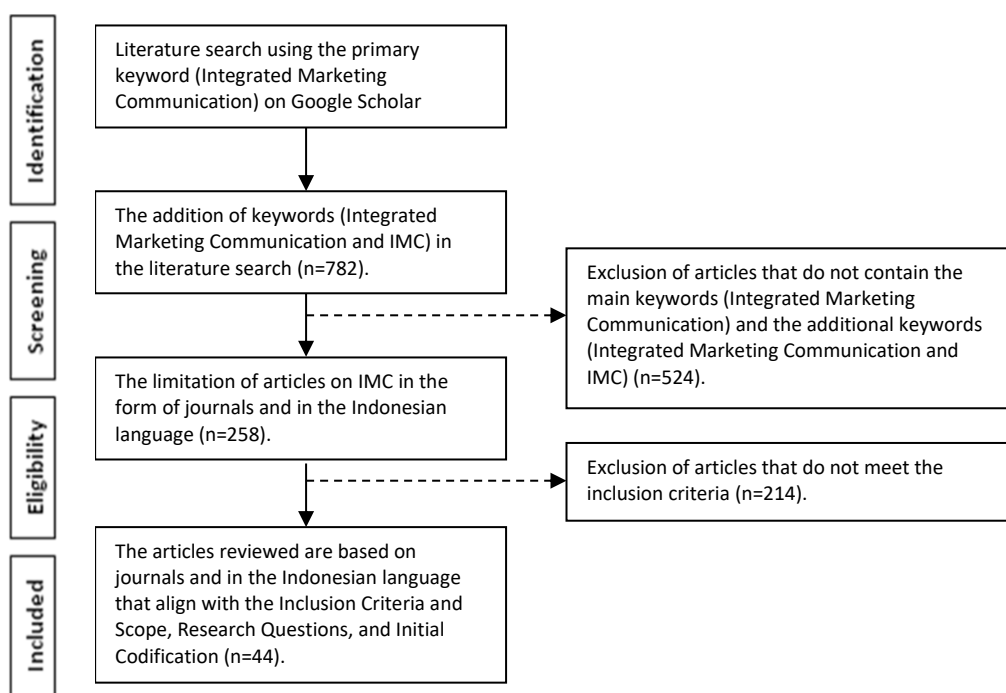


Diagram 1: Systematic Literature Review Diagram

Source: Adapted from Maher, 2009

A literature review is a scholarly work that analyzes, synthesizes, and critically evaluates to provide a clear understanding and information on a particular topic (Hart, 2018; Estaswara, 2023, Estaswara & Said, 2024). In this case, the analysis focuses on the definition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in online journal articles from Indonesia published between 2019 and 2022. This study is a document content analysis, which involves discussing the definitions found in these scholarly journals, with a total of 44 articles collected.

Table 2: Number of Online Scientific Journals Analyzed in Indonesia from 2019 to 2022

| YEAR | NUMBER OF ARTICLES |
|------|--------------------|
| 2019 | 9 |
| 2020 | 17 |
| 2021 | 10 |
| 2022 | 8 |
| | 44 |

Source: Compiled by the Researchers, 2022

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The journal articles in Indonesia utilize concepts that are defined first. If the concept appears in the "Introduction" section, it indicates the presence of an IMC definition that is then elaborated along with the associated issues. However, if the definition is located in the theory section or in the "Theoretical Review," the defined and explained IMC is used to address specific cases. Defining concepts in scholarly articles is considered important, particularly in selecting the definitions that are presented. This approach allows for understanding how the definition of IMC is depicted and explained.

Furthermore, within the definition of IMC, there are always core ideas that encompass the overall content of the definition. Therefore, this study breaks down the definitions into ideas that can be understood as contemporary IMC concepts. Generally, the journals in Indonesia adopt several definitions, such as those by Schultz (Kitchen, 2004), Schultz and Schultz (1998), Duncan (2002), Kliatchko (2005), and Šerić et al. (2015). These five definitions are then distilled into sixteen core ideas, which are as follows:

1. IMC is a concept that adds value.
2. IMC is a comprehensive planning approach.
3. IMC must evaluate its strategic role.
4. IMC should combine various communication elements.
5. IMC communicates the brand as the main message.
6. IMC provides message clarity.
7. IMC requires message consistency.
8. IMC should deliver maximum impact.
9. IMC utilizes information technology.
10. IMC is a strategic process in business.
11. IMC is cross-sectoral in nature.
12. IMC is a management process in marketing communications.
13. IMC builds relationships with other stakeholders (multi-audience).
14. IMC employs databases for dialogue.
15. IMC fosters brand-related dialogue based on communication technology.
16. IMC strengthens databases with advancements in communication technology.

By understanding the core ideas of these five IMC definitions, one can see how these definitions are explained and how they are practiced in scholarly journals in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The number of online scientific journals in Indonesia from 2019 to 2022 is 44 articles. All these definitions depict IMC more comprehensively. To understand how the definitions of IMC from these 44 articles are presented, refer to Table 3 below.

Table 3: Online Scientific Journals in Indonesia from 2019 to 2022

| No | IDEA | Number of Articles | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----|---|---|----|
| | | a | b | c | d | e |
| 1 | IMC is a concept. | 4 | 9 | 2 | 4 | 18 |
| 2 | IMC is a comprehensive planning approach. | 4 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 31 |
| 3 | IMC must evaluate its strategic role. | 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 18 |
| 4 | IMC combines various communication elements. | 7 | 16 | 9 | 6 | 38 |
| 5 | IMC communicates the brand as the primary message. | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 15 |
| 6 | IMC provides clarity in messaging. | 4 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 16 |
| 7 | IMC requires message consistency. | 4 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 17 |
| 8 | IMC must deliver maximum impact. | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 16 |
| 9 | IMC utilizes information technology. | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 18 |
| 10 | IMC is a strategic process in business. | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 7 |
| 11 | IMC is cross-sectoral in nature. | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 12 | IMC involves management processes in marketing communications. | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| 13 | IMC builds relationships with other stakeholders. | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 |

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| | | | | | | |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| 14 | IMC fosters brand-related dialogue based on advancements in ICT. | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 |
| 15 | IMC strengthens databases with developments in ICT. | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 16 | IMC employs databases for dialogue. | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Data Compiled by the Researchers, 2023

a: Year 2019, b: Year 2020, c: Year 2021, d: Year 2022, e: Year 2019-2022

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on Table 3 above, the most prevalent definition of IMC found in scientific journals in Indonesia in 2019 is the combination of various communication elements. This concept of IMC is not significantly different from marketing communication or even promotion itself. However, it is also evident that IMC is viewed as a concept, a comprehensive plan, an evaluation of its strategic role, with the brand as its message, clarity in messaging, consistency in messaging, and maximum impact. Nonetheless, in the 2019 journals, the combination of various communication elements is the most frequently cited core idea, and most do not elaborate beyond the combination of communication elements. This indicates that the writings in the 2019 scientific journals focused on communication elements when analyzing IMC. The communication elements commonly used include advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and direct marketing (Kitchen, 2004).

The IMC definition above falls into the first generation, or inside-out approach. This means that the various elements or promotions are communicated by examining each element across various media, especially social media. Although Schultz's definition (Kitchen, 2004) is fully articulated, the core ideas within that definition are not applied and merely describe the various communication or promotional elements through social media channels. It appears that while social media has been utilized, the communication is not two-way and lacks interactivity.

In 2020, there were 17 scientific journal articles in Indonesia, the highest number among all the years studied. During that year, IMC can generally be defined as a comprehensive plan that combines various communication elements. While many core ideas were presented, these two ideas were most frequently highlighted by the authors. This expression of communication represents the first generation or inside-out approach, which comprehensively communicates its elements to consumers.

The term "comprehensive" in that definition reflects a unified understanding of IMC, accompanied by the combination of various communication elements. The general conceptualization in the 2020 journals similarly depicts each element, just like in 2019. The difference lies in the stronger emphasis on the ideas of "a comprehensive plan" and "combining communication elements" in the Indonesian journals of 2020.

In 2021, scientific journals in Indonesia also raised two similar ideas: "a comprehensive plan" and "combining communication elements," with other ideas mentioned but not explained. These two ideas illustrate IMC within the first generation or inside-out framework, where IMC, in this case, the communication elements, becomes the focal point and is analyzed for internet-based media. Indeed, there is a distinction between 2020 and 2021, as the latter year featured more mentions of "communication elements" compared to 2020, though the difference is not substantial.

In 2022, the IMC ideas were evenly distributed across all responses in ranges 1-7, indicating that IMC resembled its 2019 definition. However, there is a difference, albeit minor. In 2022, the idea of IMC as a comprehensive plan emerged most prominently. The phrase "comprehensive plan" merely signifies that all communication elements are integrated in conveying messages to consumers or customers. Nevertheless, conceptually, the scientific journals in Indonesia describe communication or promotional elements individually, which are then used to analyze issues, with social media serving as the internet-based medium.

Overall, scientific journals in Indonesia from 2019 to 2022 predominantly focus on "combining communication elements" and "comprehensive planning," while the remaining ideas account for less than half of the definitions. Despite this, the notion of "combining communication elements" was the most frequently presented, cited in 38 articles. However, not all definitions are the same; differences exist. It is essential to remember that examining and studying definitions is not solely based on similarities in wording or phrases but on how the ideas behind those definitions can influence understanding or interpretation by researchers, which is what constitutes the core idea. At the very least, the most complete or equivalent definition can be referenced (citing) Schultz's definition (Kitchen, 2004). This is common in the scientific context, where other thinkers cite definitions from established sources. Additionally, simpler definitions may differ but should at least share similar core ideas with Schultz's definition (Kitchen, 2004).

In general, from the 38 definitions, it can be conveyed that IMC is viewed as a concept with added value, a comprehensive plan, involving evaluation, and combining various communication elements (such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and others), along with clarity, consistency, and maximum impact. However, each of these ideas exists only

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within the concept and has not been implemented. Of all the ideas, generally, what is applied or realized is merely the combination of various communication elements, which can be referred to as promotion (Estaswara & Said, 2024).

Despite this, looking at these ideas beginning with the first concept, where "IMC is seen as a concept," explains that IMC is understood as an idea or notion requiring a way of thinking regarding holistic planning and implementation based on a strategic approach, where all elements have added value compared to marketing communication that does not utilize the internet (social media, websites, etc.) as a channel with its unique features. While the explanation of IMC as a concept seems clear, it is not elaborated in detail. Related to this idea, there are 18 definitions in scientific articles stating "IMC as a concept."

Next, the idea that "IMC is a comprehensive plan" explains that when planning IMC, it must be thorough, starting from identifying the target audience, developing the plan, beginning with the message, how to use communication elements, and then the channel. Although this idea is clearly defined, it is not conceptualized. Consequently, what gets applied is merely planning the communication or promotional elements. This idea is found in 38 definitions within scientific journal articles.

Regarding the idea that "IMC must evaluate its strategic role," it describes the communication process, where planning must include evaluation and what will be assessed based on objectives. Ultimately, an evaluation is conducted in accordance with the planning and objectives. The issue of evaluation ideas exists within the concept or explanation but does not clarify the objectives, and concerning its application, there is no evaluation conducted. Nevertheless, this idea of evaluation is found in 18 definitions within scientific journal articles in Indonesia.

Furthermore, IMC combines various communication elements. This statement reflects a communication process where various elements (advertising, public relations, sales promotion, and others) are combined according to IMC objectives. Moreover, it is crucial to manage these elements effectively. It is no surprise that almost all journal articles express definitions on this matter, yet they do not elaborate on how to manage and implement it directly.

IMC also provides clarity in messaging. When communication occurs between the company and consumers or customers, it must express the main message of the brand, adhering to a complete criterion, meaning there should be no noise or errors in any form (including image, sound, or message). This emphasis on message clarity is noted in 16 journal articles. However, in practice, the actual number is not as significant.

IMC requires message consistency. In addition to providing clarity, there must also be consistency in the messaging. Messages across communication elements and various channels, whether massive or interactive, must be consistent. If a channel communicates one message regarding a brand, then wherever IMC is implemented (in other channels or media), it should express that same brand message. Related to message consistency, there are 17 articles that convey this in their definitions, but only a few articles provide elaboration. This means that the messaging about the brand exists only at a conceptual level, with minimal direct explanation and implementation in only a small portion of the 17 journals.

IMC delivers maximum impact. If everything has been executed, the final aspect is the effect. The effect here must be maximal, meaning it should influence consumers, whether cognitively, affectively, or behaviorally. If it is cognitive, consumers should be fully aware of, knowledgeable about, or even perceive the brand favorably according to the plan. If the goal is affective, consumers should desire or feel an urge to purchase the brand. If the behavioral aspect is targeted, then consumers should have already purchased the brand and experienced high brand loyalty. In relation to this, there are 16 definitions in scientific articles that include such effects.

Conversely, the five other ideas—"IMC is cross-sectoral," "IMC builds dialogue with ICT developments," "IMC builds relationships with other stakeholders," "IMC strengthens the database with ICT advancements," and "IMC utilizes databases for dialogue"—do not become focal points of study. Thus, the definitions of IMC found in various journal articles can be summarized in just two core ideas: "comprehensive planning" and "combining various communication elements."

Other IMC ideas resemble the definitions provided by Duncan (2002), Schultz and Schultz (1998), and Kliatchko (2008). From these three ideas, the key concepts identified include strategic processes in business, management processes in marketing communications, building relationships with consumers and other stakeholders (multi-audience), engaging in dialogue with them, and ultimately strengthening the database (data-driven). Data indicates that the definitions of IMC in 11 scientific journals in Indonesia align with all the core ideas of IMC from Duncan (2002), Schultz and Schultz (2004), and Kliatchko (2008), although the quantities vary. The definition from Šerić et al. was not utilized.

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that the definition of IMC is "a strategic process in business and management in marketing communications, encompassing planning, executing, and persuading brand communication programs."

DISCUSSION

Based on the data above, it can be observed that, in general, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is still in its

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first generation (inside-out), characterized by the notion that “IMC combines various elements of communication.” In the 44 journal articles reviewed, the conceptualization of IMC does not fully align with its intended definition. Although the core ideas of the definition are addressed, the articles primarily focus on explaining strategies and techniques of IMC in combining various communication elements. This indicates that IMC is still operating as “tools first” rather than “consumer first” (Kliatchko, 2009).

The concept of first-generation IMC provides foundational thinking related to messages, media, communication elements, and audiences. This idea has evolved from the initial definition of IMC proposed by Schultz and Northwestern University at the request of the American Association of Advertising Agencies (4As) in 1989 (Mazur & Miles, 2007; Schultz, 2003; Kitchen et al., 2004) through to Duncan (Kliatchko, 2005, 2008). First-generation IMC is externally focused, emphasizing the integrated management of various marketing communication elements (promotional mix). This perspective emerged as a response from academics to the state of advertising agencies in the 1980s (Schultz, 2010).

The scope of first-generation thinking can be considered limited to the management of external marketing communication elements. Although its scope does not significantly differ from traditional marketing communication, the idea of integration has introduced a different dimension, incorporating the internet as a medium. Additionally, when examining the foundational elements within the field of communication, the first-generation IMC thought has contributed new ideas related to the integration of messages, media, marketing communication elements, and audiences.

First, communication messages in IMC should embody “one voice,” “one look,” or “one spirit” (Schultz, 2003; Nowak & Phelps, 1994; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008). This implies the need for message consistency across all elements of the promotional mix used. By doing so, the effectiveness of shared meaning in communication messages can be achieved.

Second, the media used in communication should be multi-channel, integrating all media, whether traditional or new. Although the concept of media integration was not explicitly articulated in the early stages of its development, this idea is also connected to understanding the integration of all marketing communication elements. This concept is often referred to as seamless or classless concerning marketing communication elements (Schultz, 2003; Burnet & Moriarty, 1998; Duncan & Caywood, 1996; Duncan, 1993; Nowak & Phelps, 1994; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Swain, 2004; Fill, 2002). Lastly, while the audience in early IMC was not a primary focus, it has evolved to suggest that IMC should begin with an understanding of the audience and ultimately be audience-focused.

Regarding these three IMC concepts, the articles in Indonesian academic journals have, in principle, accommodated all of these ideas. The notion that IMC messages must exhibit “one voice,” “one look,” or “one spirit” across all communication elements has been realized. Moreover, the requirement for IMC to be multi-channel has also been addressed, with a significant number of channels practiced coming from online sources. Finally, IMC has also been directed toward the audience, specifically targeting consumers or customers in communication, despite the fact that it remains “tools first.”

The first-generation IMC concepts are articulated in definitions established by Schultz and his colleagues during the early development of the IMC concept up until 1993. Several other scholars have sought to expand, reinforce, and correct these definitions (Burnet & Moriarty, 1998; Duncan & Caywood, 1996; Duncan, 1993; Nowak & Phelps, 1994; Kitchen et al., 2004; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Swain, 2004; Holm, 2006; Fill, 2002). One notable thinker in IMC who proposed different ideas is Duncan. While his perspective on IMC supports certain first-generation ideas, Duncan places greater emphasis on brand value, relationship building, dialogue, and stakeholder involvement (Duncan, 1993), which essentially represents the core of second-generation IMC.

Regarding Duncan’s (2002) definition that emphasizes brand value, many have pointed out that within the context of “one voice,” only the brand value is communicated. This situation contrasts with Schultz’s definition (Kitchen, 2004), which considers brand value to be outside the scope. However, the authors of the journal articles have regarded brand value as an indispensable element. They recognize the evolution of the times, suggesting that the only aspect that can be communicated in IMC is brand value. Similarly, for nonprofit organizations, the raised brand value becomes the primary message, even if it is not communicated continuously as it is for profit-oriented organizations.

In the second definition and conceptualization, IMC has transitioned to the second generation (outside-in), which defines IMC as “a management process in marketing communication.” This indicates that IMC in Indonesian academic journals has made progress from the first definition and conceptualization. Although the instances are limited, representing less than a quarter of the total, it signifies that IMC in Indonesian journals has entered the second generation (outside-in).

However, within the broad conceptualization of the second-generation definition, Indonesian academic journals predominantly highlight only the management processes. While there are writings addressing each core idea, generally, they only discuss how the management process of IMC in this second generation should be implemented. Consequently, the conceptualization in Indonesian academic journals also reveals that IMC operates at the level of companies or organizations rather than at the divisional or departmental level. It also indicates the presence of other stakeholders beyond consumers or parties that directly focus on IMC, as well as the development and utilization of databases for creating dialogue. Nonetheless, this is only

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evident in a very few scholarly articles in Indonesia.

Second-generation IMC thought differs significantly from the initial ideas of IMC. The distinction lies in the involvement of the internal company in the effective implementation of IMC programs. The foundational idea of IMC, when viewed from the discipline of communication related to aspects of messages, channels, communication elements, and audiences, has been improved and expanded. First, the notion of messages is no longer limited to the integration of communication messages. More specifically, these messages pertain to brand messaging. This gives rise to the idea of brand communication, aimed at creating superior brand value. Furthermore, building a strong brand must also involve the internal role of all company stakeholders and be cross-functional (Duncan, 2002; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Madavaram et al., 2008).

Second, the audience in IMC now includes not only prospects, consumers, and customers but all stakeholders, both internal and external (Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Duncan, 2002; Schultz & Schultz, 2004; Šerić et al., 2015). Third, regarding channels, IMC leverages communication technology through consumer databases to build long-term relationships with customers, which can also serve as a basis for financial evaluation (Schultz & Schultz, 2004; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Šerić et al., 2015). IMC also necessitates dialogue or interactivity (Duncan, 2002). Lastly, the communication elements utilized encompass all forms of company communication, both internal and external (Madavaram et al., 2005).

The second-generation IMC thought has evolved significantly, encompassing a broader scope of study in terms of messages, channels, communication elements, and audience. Second-generation IMC is also more strategic, positioning brand, customers, and relationships at the forefront and involving stakeholders in achieving effectiveness. However, the implementation of IMC still presents numerous challenges. Several weaknesses that continue to arise include the difficulty of implementation (Kitchen & Burgman, 2010). Another challenge is how to integrate IMC cross-functionally within the organization. Active involvement from top management is required to lead the implementation of IMC. This implies that IMC should play a central role in the company's internal communication (Sheehan & Doherty, 2001; Moriarty, 1994; Eagle & Kitchen, 2000; McArthur & Griffin, 1997; Swain, 2004). This understanding ultimately necessitates an organizational structure that aligns with the needs of IMC. The issues regarding organizational structure remain a topic of academic debate (Pettegrew, 2001).

Moreover, there are still additional issues concerning the measurement of IMC effectiveness. Given that the ultimate goal of IMC is the creation of brand value measured through financial return as a form of ROI from investments in communication technology utilizing customer databases (Schultz & Kitchen, 1999; Swain, 1994; Schultz & Barnes, 1995; Semenik, 2002; Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008), the challenge of financial evaluation remains significant. IMC is generally not viewed as an investment but rather as a "cost" in company accounting calculations (Kitchen & Schultz, 2009). Another concern involves the compensation for advertising agencies that have traditionally acted as IMC agents compared to the companies themselves (Eppes, 1999; Swain, 2004), even though conceptually, IMC should originate from and be led by the company, with advertising agencies acting merely as implementers (Kitchen & Schultz, 2009; Kliatchko, 2005, 2008; Swain, 2004).

CONCLUSION

This article examines 44 online academic journals from 2019 to 2022 authored by national scholars, revealing that they remain within the first generation definition of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) or "inside-out." A redefinition of these 44 journals could be articulated as "a strategic process in business and management within marketing communications, encompassing the planning, execution, and persuasion of brand communication programs." This definition primarily focuses on the aspect of combining various communication elements, while other components present in the original definition appear to be overlooked. However, one notable advancement is the emphasis on brand value.

In Indonesian academic journals, there are indeed a few that incorporate definitions akin to those found in the second generation of IMC. Yet, these definitions and conceptualizations focus predominantly on management processes. Although some mention that IMC should be organizationally based, utilize databases, and communicate with other stakeholders, such instances are rare and lack thorough analysis.

Regarding practice, the question arises: is the implementation of IMC in Indonesia merely a reflection of the definitions found in this research, or do the researchers lack an understanding of the extensive and profound developments in IMC? This prompts Indonesian IMC scholars to engage with the concept of IMC more accurately. A comprehensive understanding of IMC should include various internal elements of the company; otherwise, if only external factors are considered, one might adopt the latest IMC definitions and operationalize them in detail. Thus far, authors of IMC journal articles in Indonesia have focused primarily on the 4As definition, which is not addressed in this study as it was refined by Schultz (Kitchen, 2004) in 1991. On the other hand, numerous IMC definitions warrant consideration as concepts, at least those derived from IMC theorists, such as the five definitions employed in this research.

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