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Source-message-receiver in integrated marketing communication

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**Abstract**

This is an abbreviation of the author's dissertation. 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 of IMC. 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. In addition, because IMC is criticized as theoretically weak, this study demonstrates the multi-dimensional construct of IMC can

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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 collected and analyzed descriptive data regarding the function of institutional advancement within US 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. Summary statement: US baccalaureate to doctoral institutions? advancement practitioners? survey responses demonstrated an understanding of the best practice concepts inherent in the IMC model. 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 of IMC 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 practitioners that may benefit from incorporating the process model. 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. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)

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