

ANALYSIS OF THE PERCEPTION AND REALITY OF INTEGRATED
MARKETING COMMUNICATION (IMC) IN CORPORATE PUBLIC RELATIONS:
A STUDY OF SOUTH KOREA

By

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For all that I have accomplished and become, I dedicate this thesis to my family.
Without their love and support, I would not be where I am today.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
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In today's corporate world intangible assets such as reputation, corporate social responsibility, innovation, etc. have become a valuable factor. Businesses are no longer evaluated solely on their financial performance, and a company can be worth much more than its book value if it has a solid reputation. This is why many corporations are focusing on their corporate brand equity in order for long-term sustainability and success of their organizations. In this sense, it seems practical and possible that all communication disciplines should work together in order to reach that common goal.

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) has been a debated topic for some time and in general while the advertising and marketing fields have favorable views, the public relations field was opposed to the idea of voicing concerns such as marketing imperialism. However, under current circumstances since corporations are looking to increase their corporate brand equity by developing long-term beneficial relationships

with various publics, the business environment makes it probable for an integrated communication to be effective and beneficial for public relations.

The purpose of this study was to research the attitudes of public relations practitioners and academicians in South Korea to see if there were any discrepancies between what was found in the literature and actual practice. The results showed that overall attitudes toward IMC were more favorable than what was suggested in the literature. There are several possible reasons for this gap between theory and practice, some of them being related to cultural differences between the United States and South Korea, but others perhaps regarding the lack of interest and research on IMC from the public relations academia.

This study is not comprehensive enough to make generalized statements about the findings. However, it can serve as a step toward evoking new interest in an integrated communication approach in corporate public relations.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

What is a corporation? By definition a corporation is “a specific legal form of organization of persons and material resources, chartered by the state, for the purpose of conducting business”(Corporation, 2005). Thus, the basic goal of a corporation is to make profit which also determines the value, or worth, of the corporation as well. However, in today’s world the market value of a corporation does not necessarily or solely depend on revenues that the organization generates. For example, in 2004 PepsiCo showed a tangible book value of \$6.5 billion, but had a market value of \$86.8 billion. Then where does the \$82.3 billion come from? According to *Forbes* magazine it comes from estimating the value of intangible assets such as reputation, innovation, and corporate citizenship that form the corporate brand (Fluke & Badenhausen, 2004).

Corporate branding has become a popular term in recent years and intangible assets play a crucial role to a corporation in building up its corporate brand. In 2001, *Business Week* and Interbrand started using valuation methods to assign dollar values to these intangible assets of some of the largest global companies. Also in 2004, Porter Novelli conducted a study in order to understand what is driving the corporate brand trend, and asked communication professionals at 16 of the top global brands, “Do you believe that in the future your organization will need to place greater emphasis on managing its corporate or company name as if it were a brand?” to which 94 percent answered either ‘yes’ or that they were already doing so (Argenti & Druckenmiller, 2004). With such

emphasis on the importance of the corporate brand, it is only natural that corporate brand equity is also becoming an important concept.

Brand equity, in the traditional marketing sense, can be defined as “the brand assets linked to a brand’s name or symbol that add to (or subtract from) a product or service” (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000, p.17). Then what is corporate brand equity? Schultz, Hatch, Larsen, and Keller (2002) define corporate brand equity as “the differential responses by consumers, customers, employees, other firms, or any relevant constituency to the words, actions, communications, products or services provided by an identified corporate brand entity” (p.113). Therefore, corporate brand equity exists when constituencies hold strong, favorable, and unique associations about the corporation brand (Keller, 2002). Brand equity and its importance have been a hot topic in marketing since the late 1980s (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). But why are marketers now putting emphasis on the value of intangible assets and corporate brand equity? Among the many factors, one of the most prominent is due to technological advances. According to Argenti and Druckenmiller (2004), “the changing dynamics of product marketing seem to make the corporate brand more important for companies” (p.370). Technological advances broadened sales channels and diversified communication channels, which also means that their advances diversified consumers and relevant constituencies, and changed the way of effectively reaching and communicating to them. Today’s public is more informed than ever and will look to a company’s value and overall performance before purchasing a product, buying its stock, or boycotting and turning away from it. Thus, products are looking to the corporate brand to endorse them, and marketing communicators are focusing on the need to “protect, nurture, and

strengthen themselves by building interactive and synergistic relationships with all stakeholders who can impact corporate performance” (Kitchen & Laurence, 2003, p.105-106).

Public relations can be defined as “a function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Ledingham, 2003, p.181). Through this definition it seems that public relations is very similar to the focus of marketing communicators in building corporate brand equity. Furthermore, since technological advances such as TiVO and the Internet have made publics shift away from mainstream media, corporations such as Amazon, Starbucks, and Krispy Kreme have combined marketing communications with public relations to build their brand, and more corporations are looking to do so in such a highly networked world (Fernando, 2004). Given this review, it not only seems that the integration of communication disciplines such as public relations, advertising, and other areas of marketing communications would be effective and beneficial, but also needed as well in today’s corporate communications.

Therefore, the main purpose of this thesis was to examine how IMC is perceived among corporate public relations practitioners in South Korea. The research explored dimensions such as the level of practice, implementation rates, and to see if IMC can be beneficial to the corporate public relations sector. In addition, this thesis also examined how South Korean academicians view IMC in relation to public relations as well.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Relations and Integrated Marketing Communication

Public Relations' Attitudes towards IMC

Integrated marketing communication (IMC), or integrated communication (IC), is “a strategic process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communications programs over time with consumers, customers, prospects, employees, associates and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences” (Schultz, 2004, p.8). At the very beginning when the concept was initiated, advertising educators were in favor of IMC, seeing it as the best of both worlds. Public relations educators, on the other hand, tended to be opposed (Miller & Rose, 1994). Many public relations academicians and practitioners saw IMC as not only encroachment but also a form of marketing imperialism where public relations was concerned (Kitchen, Brignell, Li, & Jones, 2004). There is also argument that the view of public relations held by most advocates of IMC is extremely narrow because they see public relations as a technical support function that they consider to be press agency or product publicity alone and deals solely with customer publics. From this perspective public relations in order to be excellent must be strategic and should not be dominated by marketing. It should be separate from marketing functions (Grunig & Grunig, 1998).

Other issues also may stand in the way of public relations' scholars becoming advocates for IMC. The first concerns the role of public relations in diversity issues. From the point of view that the role of public relations is to form and maintain

relationships with an organization's publics and to provide two-way symmetrical communication channels that will ultimately benefit all parties, public relations scholars have voiced opinions about diversity or requisite variety. This is a characteristic, or function, of public relations that helps organizations identify their various publics and foster productive relationships with each, whether external or internal. Diversity in this sense is not only limited to the physical aspects such as race and gender, but also diversity of voice as well (Hon & Brunner, 2000). Public relations is more effective when an organization provides support for such diversity (Dozier, Grunig & Grunig, 1995). Therefore there can be a legitimate argument that in embracing IMC, which is portrayed as focusing mainly on the consumer public, public relations may not be able to fulfill its role as a diversity agent and thus become less effective.

Another area of concern with an integrated communication system can be related to public relations ethics. Throughout the development of the public relations field there has been much debate about ethics. In the beginning stages, anything that was not dissemination of false information may have been acceptable ethical behavior. But, there is consensus that public relations today through two-way symmetrical communication with publics should ultimately work for the greater good of society (Day, Dong & Robins, 2001) and public relations practitioners have a role in being the ethical conscience of the organization (Bowen, 2004). However, IMC because it originates from the marketing and advertising fields may have a tendency to emphasize cost-benefit analysis in building relationships or making ethical decisions. Therefore, if integrated with other communication disciplines that have such a basis regarding ethics, again public relations may not be able to fulfill its core responsibility effectively.

However, integration does not mean domination of the public relations practice by marketing. According to Miller and Rose (1994) integration refers to the implementation of horizontal coordination mechanisms such as communication ‘czars’ or cross-functional teams, as well as the merger of all communication disciplines under a single organizational unit. Therefore, opposition from the public relations field toward this concept whether this opposition has to do with egos and turf battles (Duncan & Everett, 1993), or concern about not being able to effectively execute public relations practices in such a system, seems rather unresolved. Regardless of the theoretical debate, many public relations professionals are determined not to let their function be subsumed by marketing or advertising. However, some see the inevitability of a custom mix of advertising, promotion, direct marketing, and public relations (Miller & Rose, 1994). Since IMC is becoming increasingly widespread and embodied in contemporary marketing communication practice (Cornelissen, 2003), using integration as an opportunity rather than being opposed to the idea may be beneficial to public relations.

The Benefits of Integration for Public Relations

Although many public relations professionals have argued against the integration of communication because they viewed marketing and public relations as having different goals (Miller & Rose, 1994) and also due to fear of marketing imperialism, public relations is one of the communication disciplines that can contribute most and provide most value to this integration. IMC planning shifts the marketing idea that the most important thing is to “sell” products, or services, to acknowledge a principle that public relations practitioners have known for a long time: Every organization has more than one target stakeholder audience with whom it must communicate – not just consumers – and these audiences have different message needs (Moriarty, 1994).

Further emphasized by Schultz and Schultz (1998), IMC advocates acknowledge that a corporation's relevant publics include various internal as well as external audiences such as consumers, shareholders, government, employees, and board directors. Thus, IMC programs are not directed to consumers only, but to multiple publics, and put these publics at the core of the process "in order to effectively address their needs and wants through meaningful dialogue and by establishing long-term and profitable relationships with them" (Kliatchko, 2005, p.27). In this sense, it seems that public relations, which has always kept its pulse on all internal and external stakeholders, has much to contribute to IMC such as being able to balance public opinion and business strategy (Gorning, 1994).

Not only are this knowledge and practice know-how of recognizing the importance of relationships with various constituents and being able to deal with them effectively an advantage that public relations professionals have in this integrated communication system, but the focus that public relations has on the overall corporate reputation is also another factor that places it at the core of IMC. Since IMC focuses on the total corporate or brand reputation, it will turn to public relations to have a better global understanding of how impressions are created. Organizational communication factors such as relationships, motivation, and involvement are often addressed by public relations programs. Therefore, public relations practitioners may be the people in the organization who are most competent to function as change agents, which is a critical task in creating and managing IMC programs (Moriarty, 1994). Also by taking responsibility for positioning a primary corporate asset – the company's reputation – public relations practitioners can demonstrate an accountability which enables them to

become players (Gorning, 1994). Also, understanding the complexity of corporate message synergy can bring public relations experts to marketing planning sessions where they previously may have been uninvited (Moriarty, 1994). Furthermore, with businesses and marketers thinking that “to survive the inevitable difficulties an organization could face at some time in its life, building and protecting corporate reputation through building brand equity must be viewed as the essential factor” (Edlin & Harkin, 2003, p.26).

Despite the negative perceptions of public relations scholars who are opposed to the idea of IMC due to concerns that it may hinder the effectiveness of excellent public relations, an integrated approach may be able to solve some of the problems that professionals are facing such as ethical issues. Although public relations as a field tends to agree that it should be the conscience of the organization to ultimately benefit society as a whole, often times this is hard to achieve because public relations practitioners are frequently left out of the decision making process regarding organizational ethics, thus being powerless (Curtin & Boynton, 2001). Therefore, by becoming more included in previously excluded areas, IMC also may benefit public relations by giving more power to the role within the organization, which could ultimately contribute to a more effective practice.

Public Relations and IMC from an International Perspective

As examined above, the movement toward an integration of the communication principles has been widely debated. Although there are voices of advocacy, for the most part IMC has been viewed through very skeptical lenses in the public relations realm. However, much like the fact that the body of knowledge in public relations has been built around research and studies conducted in the United States and Western countries

(Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999), almost all reported studies regarding IMC have been concerned with the development of the concept, or practice, in cultures where English is the dominant language (Kim, Han & Schultz, 2004).

Past studies in international public relations have discovered that many theories and practices that are apparent in the United States and Western countries do not always apply to all cultures (J. Grunig, L. Grunig, Sriramesh, Huang & Lyra, 1995). If so, it seems naive to assume that an integrated communication system will hinder the practice of excellent public relations, or be viewed in the same way in all cultures as well.

Therefore, under the assumption that the environment and culture in which public relations has developed and is practiced is different for the United States and South Korea, this thesis will explore whether the perception of IMC differs from that of the United States in the South Korean public relations field. A second purpose is examining the degree of its implementation – or lack of – in corporate public relations practice.

Public Relations in South Korea

The History and Development

Public relations first appeared in South Korea in the late 1940s. In 1945, when Japan was defeated in World War II, South Korea was freed from 35 years of colonization. As a result of the Moscow meeting among the United States, the former USSR, and China on September 8, 1945, the US Army administration over South Korea was initiated – thus, began the introduction of modern public relations in the country (Rhee, 2002). At the beginning, public relations activities were close to propaganda, with the American military's General Headquarters (GHQ) primarily censoring and manipulating the press to enforce its own ideas and policies (Shin & Oh, 2002). As the

GHQ practiced its press policies, United States public relations practices were gradually absorbed into the Korean media culture as well (Berkowitz & Lee, 2004).

In the 1960s, under the administration of President Jeong-Hee Park, public relations became active in the corporate sector as well. During this time conglomerate businesses called “*Chaebol*” rapidly expanded their businesses (Kim & Hon, 1998). The *Chaebol* system in South Korea is a small group of business conglomerates that dominate the Korean economy (Jo & Kim, 2004). These business groups were closely tied to the authoritarian government and received special privileges in exchange for illegal political funds. As a result, public relations was needed to avoid negative press coverage on these group’s close ties with the government and its monopoly of certain markets (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999). Each *Chaebol* group set up in-house public relations departments for this purpose; therefore, public relations practice was confined to media relations in a reactive manner (Kim & Hon, 1998). *Chaebol* groups, which are owned and managed by family members or relatives in many diversified business areas, actually originate from a similar Japanese business system called *Chaibatz*. However, the Japanese *Chaibatz* system disappeared after World War II when General Douglas MacArthur led the democratization of Japan (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999). As for South Korea, *Chaebol* groups are still very successful and have major influence over the economy today. Four major *Chaebol* groups – Samsung, SK, LG, and Hyundai – employ more than half a million people directly, and control the jobs of millions more indirectly (Rhee, 2002).

Not surprisingly, due to the history of its development, and the *Chaebol* oriented business system, public relations in South Korea has been focused on media relations

(Kim & Hon, 1998; Jo & Kim 1999; Park, 2001; Rhee, 2002; Berkowitz & Lee, 2004).

According to previous studies, more than 95 percent of operational lines in Korean public relations agencies consist of media relations, including collection and distribution of news material, and news monitoring (Park, 2001). However, such practices in South Korean public relations have been slowly changing since the late 1980s.

Change in South Korean Public Relations

The 1988 Seoul Olympics was a mark in public relations history because it fostered development of the profession into a more managerial and proactive function. Since then, there have been indicators that even *Chaebol* groups have slowly resorted to two-way communication, although it is very asymmetrical in favor of the organization (Sriramesh, Kim & Takasaki, 1999).

More recently, there has been significant change within the country that allowed public relations to take a wider scope of practices into mainstream. In 2002, President Moo-Hyun Roh was elected. The “participation” government under President Roh’s administration declared in 2003 that it would begin to maintain “tense” relations with the press, and watch over *Chaebol* businesses with scrutiny in order to reform the economy. Accordingly, the government abolished, and put tighter restraints on, some of the common media relations practices, such as gift giving (Berkowitz & Lee, 2004).

Another important change in the South Korean environment for corporations and public relations is the emphasis on two-way communication. Factors such as development of more diverse communication channels, rapidly diffusing information technologies that lead to consumer fragmentation, and diversified consumer lifestyles, contribute to this change (Kim, Han & Schultz, 2004). In terms of the development and diffusion of new information technologies, South Korea is one of the countries moving

the fastest toward an information society. The number of Internet users reached 32.6 million by June 2005, and mobile communication users reached 37.8 million by the end of August 2005, making South Korea's mobile subscriber base the 14th largest in the world (MIC, 2005). These figures mean that almost all adults and teenagers, perhaps even many children, use Internet and mobile communication technologies (Kim, Han & Schultz, 2004).

In addition, many South Korean corporations have become globally successful. Among the "2005 Global 500 list" from *Fortune* magazine, Samsung Electronics and Hyundai Motors were included in the top 100th tier (*Fortune*, July 25, 2005). Furthermore, in another article from *Fortune* magazine, which ranked the 25 most successful and influential business leaders in Asia, the CEOs of Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics were listed (*Fortune*, October 17, 2005). With many of these global South Korean corporations also being dominant within the South Korean business sector, corporate brand and brand equity in the South Korean market obviously become important factors to these organizations as well.

Benefits of IMC in South Korean Corporate Public Relations

Public relations has the potential to be at the center of strategic decision making in an integrated communications system. Despite much of the negativity about an integrated communication system, public relations scholars have advocated an integration of advertising and marketing public relations (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1998). However, it is not just the marketing aspects of public relations that is needed in IMC, but the full breadth. Public relations has much to contribute because much of IMC is similar to the basics of public relations theory and practices (Moriarty, 1994). However, due to the negative lenses through which IMC is dominantly looked through and turf debates about

who shall manage such a program – which leads to arguments such as the one about imperialism – public relations in the United States has taken a back step in being proactively involved in integration.

Nonetheless, the different historical background of the development of public relations between South Korea and the United States, plus the current change in the South Korean political and social environment that affects the practice of public relations, suggest room for different perceptions and practices. From this perspective, public relations practitioners in South Korea may have different views about IMC especially in the corporate communications sector, and may be taking different steps toward this communication approach than their counterparts in the United States. Especially due to the high penetration of technological advances in South Korea, and the importance of the corporate brand equity, which comes with the growth of multinational corporations, the corporate public relations field may have more positive attitudes toward an integrated communication system. Integration may have the potential for expanding the main role of a corporate public relations practitioner beyond media relations.

Research Questions

Previous Studies

As mentioned in the literature review, most of the IMC studies that have been done previously had to do with the United States and Western markets. However, there are a handful of research studies done in Asia. Kim, Han, and Schultz (2004) examined advertising professionals, both in-house and at agencies, to see how well IMC was received in the South Korean advertising field. The results showed that there was a high acceptance of IMC and that the implementation of integrated approaches was increasing. However, the study also noted that there were implications of barriers such as lack of

staff talent, the present decision making procedure, and the business culture. The problem that arises with the business culture mainly refers to the “sister company system,” which exists in the *Chaebol* system, where the client company is restricted to working with an agency that is a sister company within the big *Chaebol* group. Therefore, the client companies are dependent on what their sister companies can do, and if the sister company agency does not provide IMC services there is not much room for implementation of an integrated communication approach.

Kitchen and Li (2005) conducted research in Beijing, China, among both advertising and public relations professionals working in local and foreign agencies. Results showed that in both professions over 70 percent claimed they offered IMC services, although what they thought of as the most important factor of IMC differed between advertisers and public relations practitioners. While most advertising agencies said that IMC as a strategic business process utilized for brand communication programs is the most important aspect, public relations agencies gave priority to the IMC aspect of coordination of communication disciplines. According to the study this indicates that while Chinese advertising agencies view IMC from a strategic perspective, public relations agencies seem to locate it at a more tactical level.

Research Questions

These studies suggest a movement toward putting emphasis on the corporate brand and its brand equity, as well as penetration of IMC in the corporate sector in Asia. However, both of these studies put a greater emphasis on the advertising profession – although the Kitchen and Li (2005) study did include public relations practitioners as well. If IMC is defined as a total integration of all communication disciplines, the public relations field’s perception toward this approach is as important as any other.

Therefore, this study explores how IMC is perceived in the South Korean corporate public relations sector, and also examines the level of practice, or potential for future implementation. It attempts to determine if an integrated communications system will help in shifting the current focus of public relations on media relations to an emphasis on building and maintaining relationships with diverse publics. This study will examine the following research questions:

RQ1: What is the perception of IMC in the South Korean corporate public relations field?

RQ2: How widely is IMC practiced in the South Korean corporate public relations field?

RQ3: Has public relations practice of IMC helped widen the scope of South Korean corporate public relations beyond media relations?

Furthermore, because a majority of the negative perceptions of IMC in the public relations field in the United States and Western countries come from academia, this thesis also will study the attitudes of South Korean public relations academicians toward IMC.

To do so, this study will examine the following research questions:

RQ4: What is the perception of IMC in South Korean public relations academia?

RQ5: Do academicians believe that being proactive in an integrated communication system can broaden the scope of corporate public relations' emphasis beyond media relations in South Korea.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

Survey

The main purpose of this study was to examine if an integrated communication system is positively perceived among South Korean corporate public relations practitioners. This study explored whether the perception of IMC was positive, whether IMC was actually practiced and the degree of its implementation, as well as whether it has helped in broadening the scope of public relations practice. To answer these questions a quantitative survey method was employed and a self-administrated questionnaire was used to gather data.

Survey methods are effective when collecting a large amount of data, and allow the researcher to examine variables such as attitudes, motives, and intentions relatively easily (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Surveys are also flexible, allowing many questions to be asked, and are consistent because they ask the same question of all subjects, which allow the researcher to collect a large amount of standardized data (Babbie, 2001). However, surveys also have weaknesses in that the independent variables cannot be manipulated or controlled, which makes it difficult to establish causality between two variables, and inappropriate questionnaire design can bias results (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). Surveys also are somewhat inflexible in the sense that the initial design cannot be changed throughout the study, and they cannot deal with the context or details of the situation under study (Babbie, 2001). Therefore, to ensure

reliability in a study Babbie (2001) suggests using research methods proven reliable in a previous study.

In order to improve reliability in this study the questionnaire was based on the previous studies of Kim, Han, and Schultz (2004) and Kitchen and Li (2005). The type of questionnaire they used also has been used for studies in the United States and the United Kingdom (Kitchen & Li, 2005). However, although this study used this questionnaire as a basis, it was slightly modified to focus on examining the perceptions of IMC and its practice among public relations practitioners rather than advertising practitioners. For example, sub-question 6-e was changed from asking about the advertising profession to ask about the public relations profession, and questions eight and nine were added in order to examine the scope of public relations' practice (see Appendix A).

A self-administrated questionnaire in English was designed and translated into Korean by the researcher. It was reviewed by two Korean public relations practitioners who did not participate in the survey and have graduate degrees from universities in the United States. After the survey was complete, the open-ended responses were back translated into English by the researcher and reviewed again. No major inconsistencies or problems were found with the translated results.

Sample and Procedure

This study examined public relations practitioners in South Korea working in corporate public relations. Therefore, practitioners working in-house for corporations as well as practitioners working at agencies who mainly work in corporate public relations were targeted. A pretest was done with 15 public relations practitioners who either work in-house for corporations or agencies in the Seoul area prior to the actual survey.

The 15 pre-test questionnaires were coded and tested for reliability using SPSS 12.0. The Cronbach's alpha value of the pretest was .747, and according to Woo (2001) if the Cronbach's alpha value is over .7 a measure is considered reliable. In the main survey, a total of 150 practitioners were surveyed. The survey was conducted in Seoul, Korea from December 2005 to January 2006.

For in-house public relations practitioners, those who work in the top two corporations that have the highest budget for communications were selected. The corporations were chosen based on information from the Korea Advanced Digital Data (KADD) Inc. on advertising expenditure from 2000 to 2004. The only two corporations that were consecutively included in the list of the top five advertisers during the five year period were Samsung Electronics and SK Telecom as illustrated in table 3-1.

Table 3-1. Top five advertisers from 2000 – 2004

(currency: ROK Won)

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
2004	Samsung Electronics 1.80 billion	SK Telecom 1.23 billion	LG Electronics 0.99 billion	KT 0.94 billion	KTF 0.81 billion
2003	Samsung Electronics 1.80 billion	SK Telecom 1.71 billion	KT 1.02 billion	N/A	N/A
2002	SK Telecom 2.01 billion	Samsung Electronics 1.52 billion	LG Electronics 1.01 billion	KTF 1.01 billion	KT 1.00 billion
2001	SK Telecom 1.18 billion	Samsung Electronics 1.01 billion	KTF 0.76 billion	LG Electronics 0.75 billion	NamYang 0.62 billion
2000	Samsung Electronics 1.13 billion	SK Telecom 0.83 billion	LG Electronics 0.77 billion	HyundaiMotors 0.65 billion	NamYang 0.64 billion

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed to in-house practitioners of the two corporations and 58 were completed; eight were disregarded for being incomplete. The questionnaire also was distributed to 50 practitioners by convenience sampling to

practitioners working at public relations agencies in Seoul, Korea. Twenty one complete questionnaires were collected, making the total number of completed questionnaires 71 out of 150. The overall response rate of the survey was 47.3 percent.

The Survey Instrument

This study used a 16-item questionnaire that had five sections (see appendix A). The first section (questions one through five) asked the respondents if they knew about IMC and whether or not they thought it was important for public relations. This section also had the respondents tell how important they thought various communication disciplines are in an integrated approach, as well as their thoughts on the benefits of an integrated communications approach. The second section (questions six and seven) asked respondents about the implementation rate of an IMC system or communication programs that had an integrated communications approach. The third section (questions eight and nine) asked about the various aspects of a public relations job and whether the respondents perceived them as being important in public relations, as well as the actual practice of such various aspects. The fourth section asked for demographic information, and the fifth section consisted of three open-ended questions to further examine the respondents' perceptions about public relations and IMC, as well as barriers to implementation.

For the questions asking the respondents about perception, importance, or attitude, a 10 point Likert-type scale was used. Likert-scales are useful in gathering respondents' opinions, feelings, and attitudes. Likert-scales can either have an odd number scale, which give respondents the option of having a neutral opinion, or an even number scale, which forces respondents to make a choice. Although both scales have advantages and disadvantages, when given the possibility of a neutral option many

respondents tend to take that option (Allen & Yen, 2002). Therefore, although the Kitchen and Li (2005) study used seven point Likert-type scale, in this study an even number scale was employed in order to eliminate neutral or undecided responses.

Intensive Interview

In order to gain more insight and qualitative analysis, intensive interviews also were conducted for this study. The interviews were conducted to examine the perception of IMC among the South Korean public relations academic field, and whether or not academicians thought an integrated communications approach would broaden the scope of corporate public relations practice.

Intensive interviews generally use a smaller sample. They provide detailed background about the reason why respondents give specific answers and more accurate responses on issues. They also allow for longer observation of the respondents' nonverbal responses which add to the gathering of elaborate data concerning opinions, values, and feelings (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003). However, intensive interviews have disadvantages in that they are: 1) hard to generalize to the whole population, 2) in the case of unstructured interviews the results may not be consistent, and 3) even if the interviewer is trained properly the results can be biased (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003).

In order to eliminate the disadvantages of bias and inconsistency, all interviews were conducted by the researcher with the same set of questions for each interviewee. A total of five questions were asked regarding the perception of an integrated communications approach from academicians' viewpoints, and their opinion on whether an integrated system will be able to shift some of the focus on media relations to establishing and maintaining relationships with more diverse publics (see appendix B).

Six professors in public relations departments who teach in major universities in South Korea were contacted in November 2005. These professors were chosen because either: a) they teach at universities that have a separate public relations course or, b) they were recommended by a public relations agency managerial level practitioner who has worked with them on consulting accounts for corporations. Due to the fact that it was the holiday season and winter break, some interviewee candidates could not find the time to accept the interview. Among the six professors who were contacted, three participants agreed to a face-to-face interview. The interviews were conducted in December, 2005 and January, 2006.

The interview questions were originally prepared in English and translated into Korean by the researcher. The interviews varied from approximately 30 to 50 minutes and were conducted in Korean. The Korean manuscript then was translated back into English by the researcher and was reviewed by a Korean graduate student with a master's degree in public relations from a university in the United States.

Data Analysis

Data from the returned surveys were coded and loaded for data analysis. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 12.0) was used for the analysis. Frequency statistics were utilized to examine *RQ1*, *RQ2*, and *RQ3*. To further explore each research question, t-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) methods were also used to test for differences in perception or practice of IMC among respondent groups.

The content of the interviews was analyzed by two people—the main researcher and another graduate student. The same manuscripts were distributed to the graduate student, and were analyzed independently. Coder reliability was assessed dialogically—

after the manuscripts were translated into English, the main researcher and coder went over each answer together to compare differences in their interpretations of the original interview answers. No significant differences or problems in the interpretations were found.

CHAPTER 4
FINDINGS

Survey

Demographics

Of the 71 people who responded to the questionnaire, 58 percent are male and 42 percent are female. For the type of organization the respondents worked in, 70 percent worked at an in-house office of a corporation and 30 percent worked at agencies. As for the ranks of the respondents 62 percent were mid-level employees (assistant managerial level), 25 percent were entry level, and 13 percent of the respondents' ranks were senior manager and up (see Table 4-1). The whole population for the in-house practitioners of the two selected companies was 105 in total: 71 male, 34 female practitioners.

Table 4-1. Demographics of survey respondents

		Frequency	Percent
Type of organization	In-House	50	70
	Agency	21	30
Rank	Entry	18	25
	Mid	44	62
	Upper	9	13
Gender	Male	41	58
	Female	30	42

Examining Research Question

Research question 1

RQ1: What is the perception of IMC in the South Korean corporate public relations field?

In order to examine this research question a frequency test was utilized for questions one through five of the questionnaire. For questions using a 10 point Likert-type scale, the questionnaire was designed so that the higher the number the more positive the attitude or perception. The results from question one showed that 83.1 percent of the respondents knew what IMC was. On a 10 point scale (with 10 being the most positive) when asked how well they knew about IMC and how necessary they felt it was to public relations, the mean number for each question showed a result of (6.04) and (7.92) respectively (see Table 4-2).

Table 4-2. Mean of knowledge and necessity of IMC

		Knowledge	Necessity
N	Valid	71	71
	Missing	0	0
Mean		6.04	7.92
Median		7.00	8.00
Std. Deviation		2.481	1.654
Minimum		1	1
Maximum		9	10

To further explore the perception of IMC among practitioners, differences in perception according to type of organization, age, and gender also were examined. To explore the difference in perception between organization types, an independent sample t-test was utilized. The independent variable was the type of organization, and the dependent variable was the perception of IMC. Perception in this exploratory dimension was tested for both the knowledge and the perception of the necessity of IMC – questions two and three from the questionnaire. Results showed that for knowledge the p value was less than (.05), which means that there was a statistically significant difference in knowledge between practitioners who work in-house at corporations and those who work at agencies. However, for necessity as a perception the p value was

(.066), which means that there was no statistically significant difference between practitioners working at the two types of organizations (see Table 4-3).

Table 4-3. Significance test for difference in perception between organization types

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	15.724	.000	-3.516	69	.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-4.499	66.170	.000
Necessity	Equal variances assumed	4.304	.042	-1.389	69	.169
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.867	68.975	.066

Although numerically there is a difference in the mean score for necessity between the two types of organizations (see Table 4-4), the difference is not statistically significant.

Table 4-4. Group statistics of perception and type of organization

	Org. Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	In-house	50	5.42	2.596	.367
	Agency	21	7.52	1.327	.290
Necessity	In-house	50	7.74	1.882	.266
	Agency	21	8.33	.796	.174

In order to explore the difference in perception according to age, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) method was used. The independent variable was the age of the respondents, and the dependent variable was perception. Results showed that for both knowledge and necessity as perceptions, the significant values were both higher than (.05), which means that there was no difference in perception according to age (see Table 4-5).

Table 4-5. ANOVA for difference in perception according to age

		F	df	Sig.
Knowledge	Between Groups	.872	18	.612
	Within Groups		52	
	Total		70	
Necessity	Between Groups	.670	18	.824
	Within Groups		52	
	Total		70	

To explore the difference in perception according to gender, an independent sample t-test was used with the independent variable being gender, and the dependent variable being perception. Again, perception was measured with both knowledge of IMC and the necessity of IMC to public relations.

As can be seen in Table 4-6, there are differences between the mean scores for both knowledge and necessity depending on the gender of the respondent. The mean score for knowledge of the male respondents was (6.22), and for female respondents (5.80). The mean score for necessity of the male respondents was (7.83), and for the female respondents (8.03). However, t-test results show no statistically significant difference (see Table 4-7).

Table 4-6. Group statistics of gender and perception

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Knowledge	Male	41	6.22	2.574	.402
	Female	30	5.80	2.369	.433
Necessity	Male	41	7.83	2.036	.318
	Female	30	8.03	.928	.169

Table 4-7. Independent samples test for gender and perception

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Knowledge	Equal variances assumed	.074	.787	.701	69	.486
	Equal variances not assumed			.710	65.370	.480
Necessity	Equal variances assumed	6.955	.010	-.511	69	.611
	Equal variances not assumed			-.566	59.337	.573

As can be seen in Table 4-8, results for which communication tools respondents thought were most important in IMC showed that practitioners believe public relations is the most important (mean score of 8.49), followed by advertising (8.30), sales promotions (7.49), the Internet (7.41), direct marketing (6.63), and personal selling (6.51).

Table 4-8. Importance of communication tools to IMC

		Ad	PR	SP	DM	PS	Internet
N	Valid	71	71	71	71	71	71
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		8.30	8.49	7.49	6.63	6.51	7.41
Median		8.00	8.00	8.00	7.00	7.00	8.00
Std. Deviation		1.034	.969	1.827	1.734	1.919	1.917
Minimum		6	5	1	1	1	1
Maximum		10	10	10	10	10	10

As can be seen in Table 4-9, for the survey item about the benefits of IMC, results showed that the respondents gave the highest score to the statement that it would increase consistency with a communication message (mean score of 8.04). Respondents gave the second highest score to the statement that IMC would benefit professionalism in the communication field as a whole (7.68), followed by IMC would improve professionalism in public relations (7.39).

Although respondents thought that it was least likely that IMC will be supported by top management (7.01), this score still indicates a positive response because it is over 5.5. Thus, overall results showed that corporate public relations practitioners in South Korea have a positive perception toward IMC, and think that it is necessary in relation to public relations.

Table 4-9. Benefits of IMC

		CEO	Job	Consistency	Comm. Pro	PR Pro
N	Valid	71	71	71	71	71
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.01	7.03	8.04	7.68	7.39
Median		7.00	7.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Std. Deviation		1.669	1.612	1.719	1.402	1.686
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		10	10	10	10	10

Research question 2

RQ2: What is the practice rate of IMC in the South Korean corporate public relations field?

In order to examine the research question, descriptive statistics of question numbers six and seven from the questionnaire were analyzed. Results showed that although only 49.3 percent of respondents answered that an IMC system has been implemented in their work, 93 percent replied that there were some communication campaigns that had an integrated communication approach (see Tables 4-10 and 4-11).

Table 4-10. Applicability of IMC

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	4	5.6	5.6	5.6
	After 3 years	6	8.5	8.5	14.1
	Within 3 years	26	36.6	36.6	50.7
	Yes	35	49.3	49.3	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

Table 4-11. Practice rate of an integrated communication program

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	5	7.0	7.0	7.0
	Less than 25%	23	32.4	32.4	39.4
	Over 25% Less than 50%	25	35.2	35.2	74.6
	Over 50% Less than 75%	11	15.5	15.5	90.1
	Over 75%	7	9.9	9.9	100.0
	Total	71	100.0	100.0	

In order to further explore the practice rate of an integrated system, a statistical analysis was done utilizing an independent sample t-test to see if there was a difference between the type of organization and practice rates. The practice rate consisted of two aspects – the applicability of an IMC system and the implementation of integrated communication type campaigns – questions six and seven on the survey questionnaire.

As shown in Table 4-12, results of the t-test show that there is a difference in applicability of an IMC system according to organizational type ($p = .037$), but not for practice rates of communication campaigns that are some type of an integrated communications approach. Since the agency mean for applicability is higher than that of the in-house, results show that agencies tend to have a more positive perception in applying an IMC system within the organization (see Table 4-13).

Table 4-12. Independent samples test for practice rate and organization type

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Applicability	Equal variances assumed	.883	.351	-2.124	69	.037
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.265	43.704	.029
Implementation	Equal variances assumed	8.380	.005	-.569	69	.571
	Equal variances not assumed			-.650	51.891	.518

Table 4-13. Group statistics of practice rate and organization type

	Org. Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Applicability	In-house	50	2.16	.866	.122
	Agency	21	2.62	.740	.161
Implementation	In-house	50	1.84	1.167	.165
	Agency	21	2.00	.837	.183

Research question 3

RQ3: Has public relations' practice of IMC helped widen the scope of South Korean corporate public relations practice beyond media relations?

To examine this research question, first respondents were asked questions about how important they felt various aspects of public relations are, including media relations, consumer relations, investor relations, government relations, internal relations, corporate citizenship, etc. Then they were asked how much time they actually devoted to each aspect in doing their job as a corporate public relations practitioner. Again, a 10 point Likert-type scale was used with one being not important, or devote no time, to ten being very important, or devote all of their time.

Results showed that respondents viewed media relations as being the most important job in public relations (mean score of 8.34). The second most important

aspect was consumer relations (8.00), followed by corporate citizenship (7.76), investor relations (7.66), and internal relations (7.45). Results showed that the respondents thought government relations was the least important (see Table 4-14).

Table 4-14. Perception of importance of job aspect to PR

		MR	CR	IR	GR	Internal	CSR
N	Valid	71	71	71	71	71	71
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		8.34	8.00	7.66	7.34	7.45	7.76
Median		9.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
Std. Deviation		1.444	1.464	1.341	1.492	1.566	1.608
Minimum		1	1	5	1	1	1
Maximum		10	10	10	10	10	10

When asked about how much time the respondents actually spent on each aspect of a public relations job, results showed that respondents devoted the most time to media relations (6.48), followed by consumer relations (5.72), internal relations (5.52), corporate citizenship (5.20), and investor relations (4.13). Government relations again came in last (see Table 4-15).

Table 4-15. Time actually spent on each job aspect

		MR	CR	IR	GR	Internal	CSR
N	Valid	71	71	71	71	71	71
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		6.48	5.72	4.13	3.93	5.52	5.20
Median		7.00	7.00	4.00	4.00	6.00	5.00
Std. Deviation		2.704	2.559	2.158	2.332	2.407	2.584
Minimum		1	1	1	1	1	1
Maximum		10	10	9	9	10	10

To further explore whether an integrated communications approach helped broaden the scope of the perception of public relations, the relation between the respondents' perceptions of IMC and their perceptions of the importance of various public relations job aspects were analyzed using an independent sample t-test. Attitude

was measured by how necessary the respondents thought IMC was in public relations (question three). The perception of the importance of multiple job aspects was measured by the sum score of ratings for various aspects of public relations (question eight). Since the question asking respondents about the necessity of IMC in public relations was designed as a 10 point Likert-type scale, answers that were five points or below were coded as negative attitudes and answers that were six points or above were coded as positive attitudes.

Results of the t-test show a statistically significant value of (.038) (see Table 4-16). This finding demonstrates that respondents with a positive attitude toward IMC tend to view multiple aspects of public relations important, as opposed to viewing a single aspect (i.e., media relations) as being dominantly important in public relations.

Table 4-16. t-test for attitude and perception of importance for various PR jobs aspects

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Overall	Equal variances assumed	2.175	.145	-2.116	69	.038
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.478	3.163	.231

In exploring whether an integrated communications approach helped broaden the scope of public relations practice, the relation between the respondents' perceptions of IMC and the time that the respondents devoted to various public relations job aspects were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The practice rate was measured by the respondents' responses to question seven of the questionnaire, and the time devoted was measured by the sum of scores for question nine.

As can be seen in Table 4-17, results of the ANOVA test showed no statistically significant difference between the practice rate of IMC and devoting more time to multiple aspects of public relations. In other words, even if respondents work in organizations that have an over 75 percent rate of integrated communication campaigns, respondents do not necessarily devote more time to multiple aspects of public relations than those who work in organizations that do not practice IMC at all.

Table 4-17. ANOVA for implementation of IMC and practice of various PR job aspects

	F	df	Sig.
Between Groups	.748	4	.563
Within Groups		66	
Total		70	

Intensive Interview

The intensive interviews were conducted in order to gain insight into the perception of an integrated communications system in the South Korean academic field. Among the three participants, two of them had a generally positive attitude toward IMC and felt that it was being accepted as an integral part of public relations practice, and one participant thought that the notion of IMC was a phase that will pass.

Examining Research Questions

Research question 4

RQ4: What is the perception of IMC in South Korean public relations academia?

To examine this research question participants were asked about their perspective, as well as what they thought the general attitude of Korean public relations academia is toward an integrated communications approach. Two participants showed a positive attitude toward IMC, saying that an integrated communications system will create synergy between public relations and marketing communications. One

participant mentioned that especially in the practice of corporate communications, the coordination or integration among marketing and public relations departments is frequent: “marketing communication practitioners are striving to learn more about other aspects besides marketing such as product managing, advertising, and especially public relations. They are realizing that in order to see the larger picture public relations is essential.” The participant added that just as public relations is becoming an indispensable aspect to marketing, the opposite is also true.

Another participant mentioned that since marketing professionals are realizing the importance of publics other than consumers, public relations is playing a vital role in IMC. This is not only because the profession deals with relationships with diverse publics, but also because marketing is realizing that these other publics can actually influence consumers. Public relations in this sense is vital to marketing communications because it manages the various environments that directly and indirectly affect the consumer public. She also pointed out that a more appropriate terminology for this integrated communications approach is IC (Integrated Communications), which in her perspective encompassed the concept of IMC within.

Both these participants acknowledged that there is some negativity in the public relations academic field toward IMC due to turf battles and control issues. One participant said that “although the Korean public relations academia accepts the IMC paradigm, it seems that they also think that public relations should be in control of marketing.” He went on to further explain about this control issue, saying that since corporations need to build relationships and gain trust with diverse publics, public relations academia may have a tendency to view marketing communications as a single

function dealing with consumer publics within the broader spectrum of public relations. Nevertheless, he also mentioned that despite these differences, marketing communications and public relations alike seem to agree that in corporate practice all disciplines are working for the same goal. Coexistence is not only inevitable, but also is needed to enhance effectiveness.

Another participant also mentioned that although in the public relations curriculum IMC is not taught separately, MPR (Marketing Public Relations) is offered and that the theories and basis for that course derive from IMC literature. She also said that when teaching public relations, it is almost impossible to ignore marketing environments because often times that is what influences, or affects, the environment of many publics.

However, one participant voiced his opinion that his perception of IMC was negative. First of all, he mentioned that IMC was not a substantial practice but more of a passing phase. “Like emotional marketing or green marketing,” he said, “it’s temporary.” The participant also mentioned that IMC came from a need for advertising agencies to include public relations, or an integrated communication approach, to expand their services for company growth. Therefore, IMC may serve as a similar tool for public relations agencies in expanding their territory, but otherwise the notion of IMC is a threat to public relations.

Research question 5

RQ5: Do academicians believe that being proactive in an integrated communication system can broaden the scope of corporate public relations’ emphasis beyond media relations in South Korea?

To examine what the participants thought about this question, they were asked what they thought was the most emphasized aspect among public relations in South Korea. They were also asked to comment on whether or not they thought an integrated communication approach could broaden the scope of public relations.

To this question all of the participants answered that media relations was probably the most emphasized aspect of Korean public relations. However, the details about how or why media relations is emphasized were slightly different for each participant.

One participant said that although media relations is still important, the way that it is practiced has changed, mainly due to advances in technology. Since digital broadcasting and the Internet have created a new digital media era, it has become much easier and faster for publics to access information through a variety of channels. Therefore, the practice of media relations has taken a different form because public relations practitioners can no longer build strong relationships with a selected few media outlets that used to dominate the information channels. As this participant explained, “These major newspapers and television stations that used to be almighty in influencing publics have now become just one of the very many channels available.”

He also mentioned that there is a current trend for organizations to make and operate their own media outlet via the Internet in the form of an on-line newspaper. The strategy is to get their voice out to the public and this is also a new form of a controlled communication device that public relations practitioners have to take on.

Another participant pointed out that although media relations is still an important function of public relations, it is not the same practice as it was because media relations is

not just about building good relations with journalists or powerful media outlets. Rather, media relations is to facilitate the use of media as a tactic or means to get out information and messages that will build strong and beneficial relationships with diverse publics within the context of a larger function of public relations such as issue management or reputation management.

However, one participant mentioned that media relations was still the most important function of public relations mainly because organizations that have more access to the media are considered to be more competent or powerful. He also mentioned that in the sense of an organization being a powerful entity, government relations is becoming increasingly important as well.

When asked whether or not IMC could broaden the scope of public relations practice in South Korea, one participant replied that he did not think so at all. The other two participants answered that an integrated communication approach would definitely widen the scope of public relations.

One participant explained that an integrated communications approach makes it possible to take into consideration and utilize other channels and ways in which relationships can be built with various publics. He continued to say that “(IMC) allows public relations practitioners to explore other tools such as events, personal selling, promotional campaign activities, etc., in order to reach publics and not depend solely on media to get their message across.”

Another participant said that IMC definitely broadens the scope of public relations practice because it diversifies publics, thus making the job of a public relations practitioner to be “360 degree public management.” She also mentioned a trend toward

public relations consulting becoming prominent in areas such as reputation management and issue/crisis management. This trend not only enhances the need for research in the field, but these specializations also use a good combination of theory and practice.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This research presents how an integrated communication approach is perceived and practiced among corporate public relations practitioners in South Korea despite much negativity about IMC in Western based public relations academia (Duncan & Everett, 1993; Miller & Rose, 1994; Kitchen et al., 2004). Also, since most of the literature review on IMC was derived from an academic perspective, this thesis examined the South Korean academic perspective on IMC as well.

Perception of IMC in South Korean Corporate Public Relations

This study showed that the overall perception of IMC was positive among corporate public relations practitioners in South Korea. On average, practitioners gave a higher score than the neutral point on the questions asking about their knowledge of IMC, as well as on how necessary they thought it was in public relations practice. Although the mean score for knowledge was slightly lower than their perception of necessity for an integrated communication approach, the results can be interpreted as being positive on both counts. This also shows that although they may not be that familiar with an integrated communications approach, they are very open minded in adapting this concept to their public relations practice. Practitioners also thought that public relations and advertising were the most important communication tools in IMC, but they also thought highly of other tools as well with every sector registering a higher score than the mid - point.

Practitioners thought that the most beneficial aspect of an integrated communication approach was being able to maintain a consistent communication message, followed by IMC enhancing the professionalism in the communication field in general, and then enhancing the professionalism in public relations. Although, they thought that it was least likely that an integrated communications approach would be supported by top management, even this statement received a score that was well above the neutral point. This shows that the general tendency of the practitioners regarding the benefits of IMC to public relations was positive. Therefore, contrary to the findings from the literature which suggested that the public relations field viewed IMC as a form of marketing imperialism and that IMC would harm the practice of effective public relations practice (Kitchen et al., 2004; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1998), this study showed that at least with these public relations practitioners in South Korea this is not the case.

There was optimism about IMC in South Korea among the academicians as well. Academicians said that since corporations and marketing communicators alike are realizing the importance of diverse publics and the need to build and maintain good relationships with them for sustainability and business success, an integrated communication approach is inevitable. Although they did mention some negativity from the public relations academic field toward IMC due to turf battles and power control issues, they believed that the negativity is decreasing.

However, there was also one academic opinion that IMC was simply a passing phase that was neither needed nor beneficial. This coincides with Cornelissen and Lock's (2000) claim that IMC is a management fashion rather than a theoretical concept. Although the other two academicians interviewed for this study had a more positive

attitude toward IMC in relation to public relations, since these results cannot be generalized to the whole population, this study would have to conclude that similar to public relations academia in the United States, IMC seems to be a debatable topic in South Korea as well, with both advocates and opposition present.

Practice of IMC in South Korean Corporate Public Relations

This study found that the overall practice rate of an integrated communication approach was fairly high among South Korean corporations. Although less than half of the practitioners replied that their organizations implement an IMC system (49.3 %), almost all of them said that their practices include some degree of communication campaigns that adopt an integrated approach (93 %).

This study also showed that public relations practitioners generally thought that various aspects of public relations were all important to the practice. Although media relations scored the highest, even the lowest score which was for government relations, was well over the neutral point, and the difference between the highest and lowest scores was small (1.00). The time practitioners spent on various aspects of the public relations job showed consistent results with what practitioners thought was important, with the most time spent on media relations and the least time spent on government relations. However, the gap between the scores for the actual practice time showed a larger difference (2.55) than that for perception, and while the scores for all of the sections in perception were above the mid point, for actual practice time several sections fell below the neutral line.

Through this study, in which government relations scored the lowest points in both perception and practice, it seems that South Korean corporate public relations practitioners regard government relations as the least important aspect of their practice.

However, a possible explanation for this result may exist due to the organizational structure of the corporations. Most practitioners who participated in this survey work in organizations where there is a separate department in charge of government relations. Since this survey only included those who work in public relations departments, they may have responded less favorably to government relations because it is not included in their territory at work.

Interview results also showed optimism that an integrated communication approach would broaden the scope of public relations practice. This is because an integrated approach would have to take into consideration more diverse publics, and under such a system public relations could not solely focus on one specific public such as the media. Examining the relationship between IMC and the scope of public relations among practitioners, results showed that practitioners who had positive perspectives of IMC tended to see more aspects of public relations as important functions to the profession. However, no significant results were found for the relationship between the practice of IMC and the time practitioners actually devoted to different functions of public relations.

These results show that overall the positive perceptions of an integrated communication approach and the importance of diverse publics did not correspond exactly to the actual practices executed in the field. This discrepancy could imply that although IMC sounds good in theory there may be factors that prevent this approach from being applied or showing the projected effects. Some obstacles in implementing an integrated communication approach were mentioned by interviewees and practitioners in

their answers to the open-ended questions. Although reasons varied from person to person, several obstacles in common could be identified.

Most of the issues recognized especially by the practitioners were related to organizational problems. Many practitioners felt that there would be territorial conflict between marketing departments and public relations departments. Similar to the turf battles mentioned in the literature review as well as the interview results, many practitioners felt that although an integrated communication system would benefit the public relations practice, territorial claims among different departments within the organization are an issue. Without a unified department overseeing the entire communication process or strong initiatives from top management this type of conflict would be difficult to resolve. However, many practitioners felt that top management currently does not have enough motivation to draw definite lines of responsibility or solve such problems. Another prominent issue was the short-term nature of some communication campaigns. Many practitioners saw IMC as a long-term initiative but a significant portion of the campaigns that they execute focus on immediate results, therefore making the process inadaptable. Others mentioned the reality of having to focus on media relations, which is another dilemma that cannot be resolved unless there is a top down initiative.

Some practitioners who work at agencies pointed out that there was not much need from clients for an integrated communication campaign, or that there was little awareness among clients. Academicians cited lack of awareness among top management as a possible obstacle as well as the lack of infrastructure for an IMC system.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) has been a research topic for over the last two decades (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, 2005). Among the various communication fields that have scholarship about IMC, there exist differences among researchers in the conceptualization of IMC, meaning that there are both advocates and those who are opposed to the idea. Public relations is no exception among this variety of communication disciplines, where there are advocates for an integrated communication approach among the field as well (Madhavaram, Badrinarayanan, & McDonald, 2005; Miller & Rose, 1994; Moriarty, 1994). However, based on the literature review, it seems that there is more tendency among the public relations academic field in the United States to view IMC in a negative light (Duncan & Everett, 1993; Miller & Rose, 1994; Moriarty, 1994; J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 1998; Kitchen et al., 2004). Although the concerns that many scholars have about adopting an integrated communication approach to the public relations field may be legitimate, this thesis sought to explore those opposing views, especially in the sector of corporate public relations.

Based on the perspective that corporations have a unified and ultimate goal, which is to enhance their corporate brand equity, communication has become a much more diverse and important function within organizations since corporations no longer are being valued solely on their financial performance. IMC literature has suggested that integrated marketing communications is an effective strategy in building and

maintaining brand equity (Naik & Raman, 2003; Keller, 2003). Therefore, this thesis studied whether or not there was a gap between the perception of IMC in public relations literature and the perception of IMC among public relations practitioners in the corporate sector. This study also studied whether the perspectives of Western based academia would apply to those of a different culture.

To conclude, although the overall perception of IMC in the South Korean academic field was as debatable and diverse as viewpoints in the United States, IMC had more positive connotations. In addition, although there were concerns about obstacles in implementing an IMC system and skepticism about the probability of being able to overcome those obstacles, attitudes toward an integrated communication approach among these Korean public relations practitioners were generally positive. This finding suggests more in-depth research about the relationship and effectiveness between IMC and corporate public relations is needed.

Public relations is a field of study that cannot be independent of practice. Furthermore, corporate public relations is a sector that cannot be understood apart from its business environment. When taking into consideration the fast moving pace of and rapid changes in the business world, it is possible that public relations academic research is not reflective of current trends and changes that need to be studied to bridge the gap between theory and practice. Although the thought of having a normative theory may be reassuring, in order for public relations to grow and develop as a professional field, scholars and practitioners alike need to continually adapt and challenge prevailing wisdom.

Contributions

There are two major contributions from this study to public relations. First, this study attempted to uncover the perceptions about an approach that is more practice related in nature but rarely examined from practitioners' view. Although there have been studies that have examined the perceptions of advertising practitioners, and partial studies of perceptions among practitioners at public relations agencies, none had a main focus on the relationship between public relations and an integrated communication system (Kim, Han & Schultz, 2004; Kitchen & Li, 2005). The academic literature review suggests that many scholars in public relations feel that IMC is an area of interest for research. However, this study showed that there is certainly some difference in attitude toward IMC within academia and practice. Therefore, this thesis may be able to evoke some interest into looking at what an integrated communication system means for the profession and re-examine assumptions about its effectiveness.

Secondly, this thesis added to the field of international public relations by examining the possibility of differences in perception about IMC among different cultures. Although the findings from the intensive interviews cannot be generalized to the entire South Korean academic field, the overall attitude toward an integrated communication approach seemed to be different from that found among academicians in the United States. It is difficult to say that these differences are absolute. There very well could be much positive attitude toward an integrated communication approach from the public relations field in the United States, or other Western cultures, that the researcher was not aware of. However, given the fact that the perception of U.S. based academia comes from literature review, views about the subject that are not published cannot be included and the underlying connotation of the overall literature that was found

could be interpreted to indicate such negativity. Also, since the interview data of this study cannot be generalized to the whole population, a more elaborate research on South Korean academia may show results that contradict the ones found here. This is one limitation of this study that is further explained in detail below.

In addition, among academicians and practitioners alike, IMC was thought to be beneficial to public relations in South Korea because it could diversify the scope of important publics beyond the media. This media relations orientation is not unique but definitely is an important aspect of South Korean public relations. So, this media focus may be one of the reasons why an integrated communication approach was more positively evaluated. This suggests for international public relations, a normative theory in one culture may not apply to another.

Limitations and Future Research

The key drawbacks of this study are that the sample size was relatively small, the majority of the survey respondents come from two particular corporations, and much of the analysis of perception comes from a quantitative study.

The researcher had reason to choose the two particular South Korean corporations to be the main target of the survey as explained earlier. However, since these two corporations tend to have a larger budget for communications compared to the average Korean corporation, the attitudes or perceptions that the practitioners had toward IMC may be different from practitioners who work at smaller organizations with a substantially smaller budget. Therefore, future studies could expand the sample to include practitioners from large, medium size, and small corporations, as well as agencies to see if practitioners' perceptions toward IMC differ according to the size and type of organization they work for. Also, both of the corporations that were represented in this

study belong to the electronics/information technology sector. Therefore, further studies could also research organizations by industry type (i.e., automobile, food, entertainment, etc.) to see if there are any significant differences between them, and to see if there are any characteristics that are unique to a specific industry as well.

Secondly, since the qualitative analysis was designed merely as a supplement to the survey, although there were some insightful findings, they cannot be generalized. Future qualitative studies could examine a larger group of academicians to see whether their perceptions of IMC differ from those of educators in the United States. Also, a qualitative study of practitioners would be insightful for examining whether there is a gap between theory and practice, and if so what the reasons are.

Finally, although this thesis based its literature review mainly on academic literature from the United States, the perceptions of practitioners that is researched was from a different culture. This is a factor that could be accountable for the differences found between theory and practice in this study because not only are there cultural differences between the two locations, but there are also other differences such as infrastructure, market, technology, etc. All of these factors make it hard for a direct comparison of the two cultures without controlling for variables. Therefore, a possible future study could research the perceptions of IMC among United States public relations practitioners in the corporate sector to examine if there is a gap between theory and practice. Also, an experimental study of the perception of U.S. practitioners and South Korean practitioners, where all other variables except culture are controlled, could be a future venture to study if there are in fact cultural differences that affect the practice of IMC in public relations. In addition, to further expand the study of the impact of

cultural differences in the perception of IMC in public relations, several countries could be researched and then compared to, to see if there are similarities or differences by country and by region (i.e. Asia, Western Europe, North America, Latin America, etc.) as well.

APPENDIX A
SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. IMC can be defined as “a strategic process used to plan, develop, execute and evaluate coordinated, measurable, persuasive brand communications programs over time with consumers, prospects, employees, associates and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences.”

According to this definition do you know what IMC is? Yes No

1-1. If you know what IMC is but disagree with the definition provided here, please specify your definition of IMC. (if this question does not apply to you please go to question 2)

2. How familiar are you with the concept of IMC? (Please indicate on a scale of 1 to 10)

Don't Know								Know very well
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>									

3. How necessary do you think IMC is in public relations?

Not necessary								Very necessary
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<input type="checkbox"/>									

4. Please rate the importance of the following communication tools in developing an IMC campaign by ticking the box that best corresponds to your perception:

	Unimportant								Very important
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
(a) Advertising	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(b) Public relations	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(c) Sales promotions / events	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(d) Direct marketing	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(e) Personal selling	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(f) Internet	<input type="checkbox"/>									
(g) Other (please specify).....										

**APPENDIX B
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is your perception of IMC? What do you think of it in relation to the public relations field (i.e. negative, positive, etc.)**
- 2. What is the general attitude toward IMC in the South Korean public relations academic field?**
- 3. What do you think is emphasized the most in public relations' practice in South Korea?**
- 4. Do you think an integrated communication system will be able to shift away some focus from media relations to building relationships with other publics?**
- 5. What do you think are possible barriers and obstacles in implementing an IMC system?**

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hyojin Jeannie Shin was born in Seoul, Korea, on October 10, 1977. She graduated with a bachelor's degree in mass communication from Ewha Women's University, one of the most prestigious colleges in South Korea.

She has worked in the corporate sector in public relations and advertising from 2000 to 2004, before returning to graduate school to further her education. She started her graduate program in the fall of 2004 and completed her Master of Arts in Mass Communication with a specialization in public relations from the University of Florida in 2006. During her graduate study, she was interested in corporate public relations, integrated communication, public relations and its application to branding, as well as international public relations theories.

After graduation she plans to continue her professional career in public relations and integrated communication.