Integrated Marketing Communication In The Era Of Online Environment.

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Abstract : *This paper is prepare in order to discuss about the implementation of the Integrated Marketing Communication(IMC) in the era of almost everything online. The discussion is start with the revolutionary of the IMC from traditional which consist of traditional media and mass communication and toward the online environment. The discussion also toward to the implementation, integration and challenge for the IMC in the online and internet platform, which has a huge opportunity. Even the discussion is not fully answerable to the issue raised, it is open for the future research to conduct the empirical study about the IMC and online environment.*
Keywords: *IMC, Online Marketing, Marketing Communication*

I. INTRODUCTION

After the millennium era, integrated marketing communication (IMC) was the major development in the marketing for most of the renown brands. Many academics and practitioners now accepting that the IMC is the way forward especially in the current complex multi-platform digital environment. Luck and Moffats (2009) conduct a research to debate on the misunderstanding and the identified the issued regarding the IMC. The development of the IMC is currently can be classified as in the middle range of the maturity stage. (Kerr and Patti, 2013). Schultz and Patti (2009) has working on the definitions and the measurements of the IMC. However, from various journal and study, its found that there is a variance of concept of IMC was defined and some of its are contradictory in some way. (Schultz et al. 1993; Smith et al., 1997; Kitchen, 1999,; Duncan, 2002; Kliatchko, 2008).There is a various area and research has been conduct by researcher regarding the evolutionary trend of the IMC. In fact, according to Durkin and Lawlor (2001), the studies about IMC with the impact from online environment is very limited. This conceptual paper is to discuss how far IMC has been implement in online environment.

II. BASIC UNDERSTANDING OF IMC

IMC as defined by Keegan *et al.* (1992) as "The strategic co-ordination of all messages and media used by an organization to collectively influence its perceived brand value".Kitchen (2004) giving the definition of IMC as a strategic business process used to plan, develop, execute, evaluate coordinated, measureable, persuasive brand communication program over time with consumers, customers, prospects and other targeted, relevant external and internal audiences. Proponents of IMC have provided slightly different perspectives on this definition and not all educators or practitioners agree on the precise meaning of IMC (Kitchen & Burgmann, 2011). IMC is the coordination of the promotional mix elements (advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing and online marketing/ social media) with each other and with the other elements of brands' marketing mix (product, place, price) such that all elements speak with one voice (Fawcett, 1993). Duncan (2002) proposed the definition of IMC as "A cross-functional process for creating and nourishing profitable relationships with customers and other stakeholders by strategically controlling or influencing all messages sent to these groups and encouraging data-driven, purposeful dialogue with them. From this various understanding and definition, it is more emphasize on the coordination and management of the information transmitted to the targetedaudiences. Never the less, Duncan (2002) acknowledge that the IMC is involving the cross-functional process, which indicate that there is an interact between customer and the strategic stakeholder such as employees, investors and suppliers. This interaction mush share a common understanding with collectively collaboration to develop a long-term brand relationship. IMC also provides and opportunity for an organizations to enhance the relationship as according to Beverland and Luxton (2005). All this communication tools and marketing co-ordination can lead to a consistent brand message to the target audience by using an effective media planning.

III. THE EVOLUTION OF IMC

Since 1990s, IMC approach has been received a recognition to be implement, where-by, it help the firm to reduce the cost and budget allocation at mass advertising campaigns and divert to personalized communication with end consumer. (Durkin and Lawlor, 2001). The revolution in mass communication as well with the new channel of communication such as mobile communication and internet has created the need for a new style of marketing communication, in order to deliver the message towards various audiences. Various discussion, article written about the dimensions of the IMC as well as the revolution from the traditional method toward the recent change. (Kitchen and Schultz, 1997, 1999). Most of the researcher has conclude that the effectiveness of IMC in order to deliver the message to consumer. In other ways, Fill (2002) relate the development of the IMC with the concept which is associate with the corporate communication, management and branding. Kanso and Nelson (2002) relate with the global branding and localized communications.

The development of the world wide web has changed a lot of things from the traditional communication procedures to borderless communication. Holtz (1999) claim that this change is associate with few character which are different from other channel of communication. Blattberg and Deighton (1991) and Holtz *et. al* (1999) specified that internet advantage are in term of interactivity, transparency and memory. Interactivity with the multiple possibilities of communication between individuals and the software application, give more opportunities to explore beyond. Most of the information that publish also is transparency, where can be accessed and viewed by most of the user. In the web also, the user not just to share the information, but at the same time keep the information as a history and memory for future. With this rapid development of the world wide web, the marketer should therefore adapt to the new ways on how consumer and customer are getting and used the information. In comparison with the traditional, the world wide web user has more control over the communication process and can adopt a proactive attitude toward various capacity such as easily search, select and access the information. The user also can have a communication by contact online between each other through e-mail, chat or forums.

IV. IMC IMPLEMENT IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENT

How far the IMC has been implement in online environment become a subject matter, as the online has a huge platform and not just open for the opportunities but also a challenges for the marketing process. Hart *et. al* (2000) explain that the transparency of the website makes all the information available online to the audience and its reinforces the need for consistency in the planning, design, implementation and control of online marketing communication. The variety of the information, sources and interpretations available online raises an important challenge related not just with the firm but the corporate image and identity. The voice of the corporation could not be considered anymore as the dominant in delivering a message as its only be a part of the communication activities. The information and the meaning is not simply transmitted, but has to negotiate separately with each of the online audience. The message delivered need to be adapted to the specific level of understanding and interpretation of the public, which in other hand its can express the truth message. Hoey (1998) has mention that the various competing messages transmitted by other organizations or individuals have to be taken into consideration and accommodate in such a way as the resultant effect to be favorable for the company.

The otherschallenge was the international dimension of the internets which create the author with the problem of the communication barrier. Complex choice have to made and implement in term of the communication strategy and tactics. The message need to be adapted with local cultural and language if the firm would like to attempt to the foreign audience and overseas public. In the global context, this matter should take into account while doing an online marketing and with this conditions, the firm should have a clear segmentation and positioning strategy. However, there is a tendency of the conflict from the internet characteristics which are the fragmentation of the audiences and communication contexts will requires the customizations of online marketing message, but the interactivity, transparency and memory of the web necessitates the consistency of communications of the transmitted meaning. Due to this, a strategic model has to be adopted by an organization in order for them to attempts into the online environment. IMC would be the primary subject matter in order for the firm or organization to achieve their objective. However in order to implement the IMC, they have to accommodate with the specific characteristic of the internet and using the technological capability of the new thing in order to solve the specific challenges from the online environment and target customers.

V. CONCLUSION

This discussion has attempted to identify a change which is determined by the development of internet technology in the area or marketing. A lot of opportunities and challenges has been raised from the online environment especially for communication practitioners. The consumer/ customer has many option, which make the company to be progressive in combining various modes and categories of information in a complex

message. The specific characteristics of the web are making the integration of online marketing to be efficient for an online organization or firms. With the characteristic of the internet, the organization can adopt a proactive attitude in online communication and combine consistency and continuity with the flexibility and customization. Designing and integrate a specific model with integrate online marketing communication can be form from this characteristics. The message that want to deliver online should be followed the planning design by organization and adapt it into online strategy which taking a consideration of the target customer or audience. The selection of the communication mix also need to take into account the characteristics of the target customer.This conceptual paper is just a discussion of the theory regarding the IMC with the online environment with the limitation of the actual case study. A further research is suggested with the relevant methodology in order to answer the relevant issue for the implementation of IMC with online environment and online marketing.

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