

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATION IN LOGISTIC SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE IN THAILAND

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media and Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in logistic sustainable performance. Consequently, the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance was examined. To examine the concerned relationship between variables, employees of logistic companies were selected to collect the data. Particularly, the employees of marketing department were considered for data collection as the study variables such as IMC, target audience and social media are used in relation to the marketing activities. 384 questionnaires were distributed, and 215 valid responses were used for data analysis. Finally, outcomes of the study highlighted that social media has major role in logistic sustainable performance. Better use of social media has the potential to enhance logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, the IMC also has vital contribution to increase the logistic sustainable performance. Better implementation of IMC practices and use of target audience has major influence on logistic sustainable performance.

Keywords: Social Media, Integrated Marketing Communication, Target Audience, Logistic, Sustainable Performance

INTRODUCTION

The role of logistic industry cannot be neglected worldwide. Significant role of logistic industry in the business environment increasing the importance of logistic services. It is one of the basic needs in various industries. Therefore, logistic is the most crucial part of business industry. As increase in the logistic service quality has positive effect to enhance the business environment. Generally, most of the companies depend on the logistic companies to get success in the business environment. As in business market, business always requires timely delivery of goods for the customer. Similar to the important industries, logistic industry also has vital importance for the nation (Anguelov & Kenova, 2018; Chen, Hsu & Lee, 2019).

Furthermore, sustainability in the logistic is curial. Along with the firm performance, sustainability in the logistics is also most important which has major role in success of various operations (Chienwattanasook, Wattanapongphasuk, Prianto & Jernsittiparsert, 2019; Ditkaew, Pitchayatheeranart & Jernsittiparsert, 2020; Jernsittiparsert, 2021). Not only on logistics, is sustainability the requirement of each operation for success. In the current situation of high competition, sustainability in the performance is important in all operations of logistic. Because short term performance in logistic operations is not much beneficial for the companies. Therefore, consistency in the performance is the guaranty of success among companies. Both the concepts of sustainability and consistency are similar. Both has special importance for the logistic companies to sustain the performance which lead to consistency in producing good performance. Up and down in the performance is not suitable in the current situation of competition. As in the tight competition in the current market, there is no margin of low performance. That is the reason most of the previous studies are focusing to enhance logistic sustainability (Abledu, Buckman, Adade & Kwofie, 2016; Tarasenko, Derhaliuk, Blaga, Derkach & Budnyk, 2020).

Logistic industry of various countries is also facing the problems of low sustainability. The performance of logistic in different countries is not consistent. Due to lack of consistency in the performance, the other competitors are capturing the market share. Hence, in this situation, the companies are required better sustainability in the performance to compete with the competitor. Similarly, the Thai companies are also facing the same issues in which these companies are unable to carry on in a consistent way. In other words, we can say that these companies are not good to maintain consistency in the performance. They lose the performance which has negative effect on their success. Therefore, sustainability among the logistic companies in performance is one of the challenges (Gulumser, Levent & Nijkamp, 2009; Khairov & Khairova, 2019). Therefore, Thai logistic companies should develop different strategies to enhance the sustainability in the operations which will lead to the higher performance. Hence, logistic sustainability is the key element of logistic industry.

The consistency in the performance can be achieved through number of ways. According to the current study, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) is one of the major elements which has major role among the companies. Especially for the marketing prospective, IMC has major importance for the companies to enhance marketing performance. It is found that most of the companies has special focus on IMC to increase the performance. Consistency in the performance can be achieved through IMC. As the performance and IMC has major connection with each other which is significant for the different companies (Porcu, Garcia, Pilar & Almendros, 2019). Furthermore, audience has major influence due to IMC. Logistic companies should promote IMC to enhance the effect of target audience. In this whole process, the social media effect is most crucial. Involvement of social media in the logistic operations has most influential role to enhance the marketing of logistic companies. Better marketing of logistic companies leads to the higher performance of these companies. As marketing performance has relationship with the company performance (Al-Habil, Al-Hila, Al Shobaki, Abu Amuna & Abu Naser, 2017). Therefore, sustainability in the logistic companies can be achieved with the help of social media, IMC and target audience.

Therefore, purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media and IMC in logistic sustainable performance. Thus, the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance was examined. Furthermore, the mediation effect of IMC and target audience was examined between social media and logistic sustainable performance. Number of studies has carried out the role of IMC (Damarjati, Kusumawati & Mawardi, 2016; Prabela, Kumadji & Mawardi, 2016), however, the role of IMC is not examined in the logistic sustainable performance. Hence, the current study filled this literature gap and contributed in the literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Marketing is the influential idea to promote any business activity. Almost all the businesses in the work are following marketing activities to enhance the business performance. As marketing has several benefits which causes to increase the business activities. For instance, marketing increases the awareness amount the companies, most importantly, marketing provides the awareness about the products. New product awareness among the general the people required awareness. Awareness of the product or services feature by the people lead them to purpose these products or services which is quite possible with the help of marketing activities. Hence, marketing activities are vital to the business among the various companies (Ripoll, Barriopedro, Coronil & Pesántez, 2019). The current study is also connection with the marketing activities through social media and IMC to enhance logistic performance in Thailand. Marketing activities can enhance the sustainable logistic performance. Marketing activities with the help of social media and IMC has influence on logistic sustainable performance. As the IMC has major element which is involved in marketing activities (Saenko et al., 2016) and shows positive influence on logistic sustainable performance. Studies are discussed the IMC in various industries; however, it is not discussed among the logistic companies of Thai in relation to the

logistic sustainable performance. Thus, this study filled this literature gap and examined the role of social media and IMC in logistic sustainable performance. Further to this, this study also examined the role of target audience on logistic sustainable performance. The effect of IMC was examined on target audience. Therefore, the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance was examined which is shown in Figure 1.

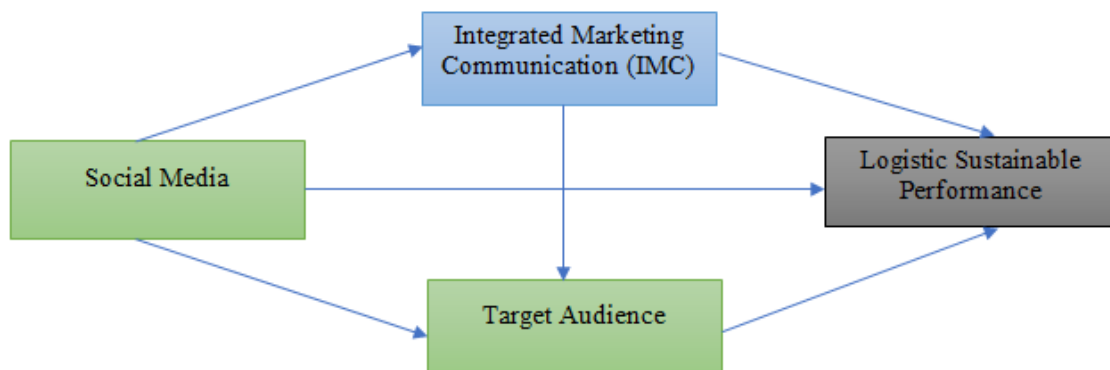


FIGURE 1
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY SHOWING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN SOCIAL MEDIA, IMC, TARGET AUDIENCE AND LOGISTIC
SUSTAINABLE PERFORMANCE

Social Media and Logistic Sustainable Performance

Social media are communicating computer-mediated machineries that ease the creation as well as sharing of various information, different ideas, career interests as well as other forms of expression *via* virtual communities along with the networks. Furthermore, sustainable performance indicates the organization professionally as well as effectively delivers quality products as well as services, is blessed with low absenteeism along with the low staff-turnover. Both the social media and sustainable performance in logistic has relationship with each other. Previous studies showing that social media has positive role in sustainable performance in logistic. Better utilization of social media has the potential to enhance sustainable performance (Orji, Kusi-Sarpong & Gupta, 2020). As the performance has major concern among the companies, therefore, in logistic it also has vital role which cause to increase the logistic performance. Increase in the efforts with the help of social media increase the sustainable performance among the logistic companies. It also has the ability to satisfy the customers and customer satisfaction is most important (Nadeem, Alvi & Iqbal, 2018).

Hypothesis 1: Social media has positive influence on logistic sustainable performance.

Social Media, Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Logistic Sustainable Performance

IMC is a simple idea which is used as an important tool for marketing purposes. It guarantees that all forms of communications as well as messages are wisely connected together. At its most rudimentary level, IMC, as we'll call it, means integrating all the promotional tools, so that they work together in harmony. IMC is influenced by the social media. Social media is an important way to enhance the IMC and increase in IMC increases the logistic sustainable performance. As the connection is already given between social media, IMC and sustainable performance (Abbas et al., 2019; Basri, 2020). Therefore, literature shows that social media has positive effect on IMC and IMC has positive effect on logistic sustainable performance.

Hypothesis 2: Social Media has positive influence on IMC.

Hypothesis 3: IMC has positive influence on logistic sustainable performance.

Social Media, Target Audience and Logistic Sustainable Performance

Target audience is also influenced by the social media. In any business to influence the target audience, social media is one of the most vital elements. Social media is majorly used as the important part of marketing activities. Increase in the utilization of social media technologies increases the target audience which further led to the logistic sustainable performance. As given in the studies that social media, target audience and sustainable performance has significant connection (Abbas et al., 2019; Charoensukmongkol & Sasatanun, 2017; Trainor, Andzulis, Rapp & Agnihotri, 2014). Social media utilization captures the audience and increases the logistic sustainable performance. Previous studies show that social media has positive effect on target audience which further lead to the logistic sustainable performance.

Hypothesis 5: Social media has positive influence on target audience.

Hypothesis 6: Target audience has positive influence on logistic sustainable performance.

Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Target Audience

IMC is the major part of all organizations. All the organizations use IMC for promotion of their products as well as services as it is significant tool to promote performance through the promotion of products and services. Logistic companies are those companies which also try to increase the importance of their services. These companies are also implementing IMC practices to enhance the performance. Generally, IMC is the process which target the audience to promote their products and services. Promotion of products and services through IMC require target audience. First of all, a researcher should know the target audience. IMC has direct effect on target audience. IMC has the ability to enhance target audience. Therefore, literature shows the relationship between IMC and target audience (Valos, Habibi, Casidy, Driesener & Maplestone, 2016). Therefore, companies should enhance IMC to capture audience (Nowak, Cole, Kirby, Freimuth & Caywood, 1998).

Hypothesis 7: IMC has positive influence on logistic sustainable performance.

Indirect Effect of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) and Target Audience

This study examined the mediation effect of IMC. The mediation effect of IMC is examined between social media and logistic sustainable performance. The second mediation effect was examined by target audience. The target audience as mediating variable was examined between social media and logistic sustainable performance. These two mediation effect was justified with the help of Baron & Kenny (1986) recommendations. The above discussion shows that social media has significant connection with IMC. IMC has significant connection with logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, social media has significant relationship with logistic sustainable performance. This situation is idea to use IMC as mediating variable between social media and logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, social media has positive connection with target audience. Target audience has significant connection with logistic sustainable performance. Similarly, with IMC, the situation is clear to examine the mediation effect of target audience between social media and logistic sustainable performance. Hence, flowing indirect hypotheses are proposed;

Hypothesis 8: IMC mediates the relationship between social media and logistic sustainable performance.

Hypothesis 9: Target audience mediates the relationship between social media and logistic sustainable performance.

METHODOLOGY

To examine the effect of social media and IMC in logistic sustainable performance, this study used quantitative research approach. However, the current study has not used qualitative research due to several reasons. For instance, this study is hypotheses based, as the hypotheses are proposed based on literature and tested with the help of software. Therefore, in this direction, for hypotheses testing, quantitative research is most suitable than qualitative research. Furthermore, while applying the quantitative research approach, this study used cross-sectional research design to collect the data.

Finally, by using quantitative research approach, a questionnaire was designed to examine the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance. With the help of questionnaire survey, data were collected and used for data analysis. Data collection is also one of the systematic process which is achieved through questionnaire and area cluster sampling was preferred in this study (Hamid, Shahid, Hameed, Amin & Mehmood, 2019; Ul-Hameed, Mohammad, Shahar, Aljumah & Azizan, 2019). Thailand was divided into several clusters and few clusters were selected randomly. The sample size of each cluster was examined, and data were collected from each cluster separately through a specific sample size. After making of clusters, simple random sampling was used in this study to collect the data. Simple random sampling is suitable in which each participant has equal chances of being selected (Siuly, Li & Wen, 2011).

Finally, 384 questionnaires were distributed, and 215 valid responses were used for data analysis. Few questionnaires were not complete, therefore not used in the data analysis. Only valid 215 questionnaires were used for data analysis. The data of all the valid responses were entered in the excel sheet. While entering the data in the excel sheet, there is always a chance of error which may effect on the results. Therefore, errors in the data must be resolved before to proceed for the data analysis. Majorly, the missing value and outlier may disturb the results (Aydin & ŞENOĞLU, 2018). Hence, data screening was performed as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
DATA STATISTICS

	No.	Missing	Mean	Median	Min	Max	SD	Kurtosis	Skewness
SM1	1	0	3.343	4	1	5	1.362	-1.225	-0.265
SM2	2	0	0.925	3	1	5	1.27	-0.944	-1.29
SM3	3	0	3.565	4	1	5	0.912	-0.598	-0.565
SM4	4	0	3.426	4	1	5	1.219	-1.667	-0.463
SM5	5	0	3.463	4	1	5	1.25	-1.029	-1.333
SM6	6	0	3.481	4	1	5	1.236	-0.66	-0.539
IMC1	7	0	2.909	4	1	5	1.134	-0.405	-0.525
IMC2	8	0	3.62	4	1	5	0.995	-1.673	-0.441
IMC3	9	0	3.75	4	1	5	1.27	-0.564	-1.727
IMC4	10	0	3.759	4	1	5	1.062	-0.787	-0.491
TA1	11	0	3.602	4	1	6	1.146	-0.686	-0.291
TA2	12	0	3.602	4	1	6	1.105	-0.607	-0.366
TA3	13	0	2.946	4	1	5	0.979	-1.657	-1.656
TA4	14	0	3.491	4	1	5	1.316	-0.928	-0.449
TA5	15	0	3.528	4	1	5	1.28	-0.61	-0.64
TA6	16	0	3.528	4	1	5	1.28	-0.61	-1.64
TA7	17	0	3.63	4	1	5	1.167	-0.357	-0.655
LSP1	18	0	2.928	4	1	5	0.982	-1.509	-0.545
LSP2	19	0	3.472	4	1	5	1.228	-0.928	-0.361

LSP3	20	0	3.546	4	1	5	1.15	-0.423	-0.56
LSP4	21	0	3.648	4	1	5	1.1	-0.671	-1.448
LSP5	22	0	3.741	4	1	5	1.265	-0.551	-0.723
LSP6	23	0	2.941	4	1	5	1.075	-1.603	-0.553
LSP7	24	0	3.611	4	1	6	1.137	-0.621	-0.337
LSP8	25	0	3.648	4	1	6	1.083	-0.446	-0.411

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC=“Integrated Marketing Communication”; TA=Target Audience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

FINDINGS

Findings of the study was attained with the help of Partial Least Square (PLS). There are various software’s to analyze the data, however, PLS is the latest software which is based on the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins & Kuppelwieser, 2014; Hair, Ringle & Sarstedt, 2013; Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper & Ringle, 2012; Henseler et al., 2014). Figure 2 is the first step of PLS-SEM which shows that social media is measured through six items. IMC is measured through four items, target audience is measured through seven items and finally, logistic sustainable performance is measured through eight items. According to J. Hair, Hollingsworth, Randolph, and Chong (2017), factor loadings must be above 0.7. Few studies also show that it must be above 0.4 or 0.5. In the current study, all the loadings are above 0.5 as shown in Table 2, however, two items have factor loadings below 0.5 and above 0.4 which is also acceptable.

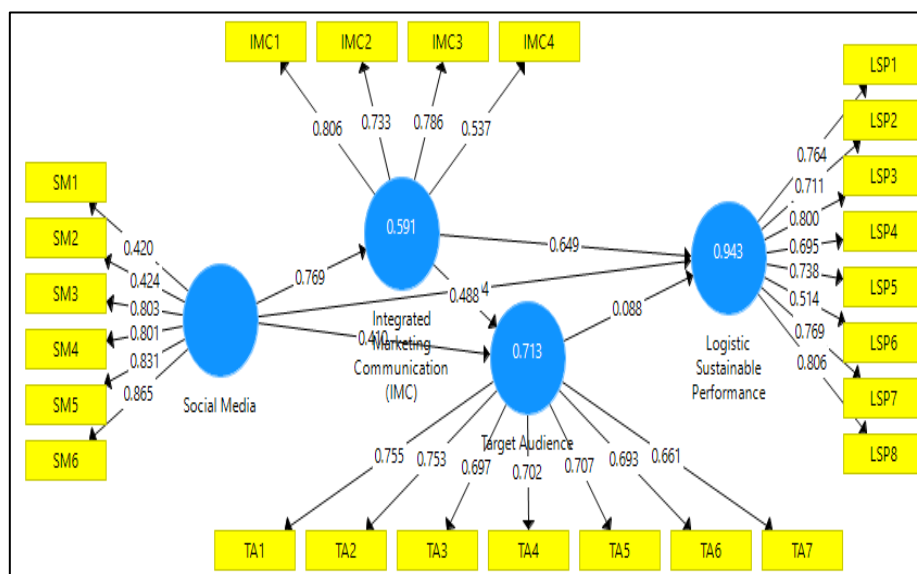


FIGURE 2
MEASUREMENT MODEL

	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)	Logistic Sustainable Performance	Social Media	Target Audience
IMC1	0.806			
IMC2	0.733			
IMC3	0.786			
IMC4	0.537			
LSP1		0.764		

LSP2		0.711		
LSP3		0.8		
LSP4		0.695		
LSP5		0.738		
LSP6		0.514		
LSP7		0.769		
LSP8		0.806		
SM1			0.42	
SM2			0.424	
SM3			0.803	
SM4			0.801	
SM5			0.831	
SM6			0.865	
TA1				0.755
TA2				0.753
TA3				0.697
TA4				0.702
TA5				0.707
TA6				0.693
TA7				0.661

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC=“Integrated Marketing Communication”; TA=Target Audience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

In Table 3, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is shown. Results of CR and AVE shows that all the variables have attached the minimum level. Finally, discriminant validity is highlighted in Table 4 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). It is evident that CR is above 0.7 for social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance. Moreover, AVE is also above 0.5 for social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance.

Table 3				
RELIABILITY AND CONVERGENT VALIDITY				
	Alpha	rho_A	CR	AVE
Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)	0.691	0.725	0.811	0.523
Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.872	0.881	0.9	0.533
Social Media	0.794	0.841	0.855	0.514
Target Audience	0.85	0.857	0.877	0.505

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC=“Integrated Marketing Communication”; TA=Target Audience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

Table 4				
CROSS-LOADINGS				
	Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)	Logistic Sustainable Performance	Social Media	Target Audience
IMC1	0.806	0.79	0.74	0.684
IMC2	0.733	0.686	0.496	0.586
IMC3	0.786	0.719	0.554	0.64
IMC4	0.537	0.509	0.372	0.354

LSP1	0.637	0.764	0.752	0.583
LSP2	0.59	0.711	0.61	0.527
LSP3	0.798	0.8	0.735	0.684
LSP4	0.53	0.695	0.488	0.595
LSP5	0.782	0.838	0.59	0.631
LSP6	0.53	0.594	0.374	0.344
LSP7	0.703	0.769	0.544	0.756
LSP8	0.719	0.806	0.669	0.721
SM1	0.277	0.268	0.82	0.512
SM2	0.307	0.298	0.624	0.535
SM3	0.674	0.715	0.803	0.65
SM4	0.684	0.792	0.801	0.616
SM5	0.58	0.707	0.831	0.514
SM6	0.621	0.713	0.865	0.582
TA1	0.699	0.751	0.522	0.755
TA2	0.737	0.804	0.668	0.853
TA3	0.364	0.37	0.412	0.697
TA4	0.395	0.392	0.405	0.702
TA5	0.417	0.383	0.46	0.707
TA6	0.404	0.378	0.453	0.693
TA7	0.671	0.725	0.761	0.861

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC=“Integrated Marketing Communication”; TA=TargetAudience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

Furthermore, to examine the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance, this study used PLS-SEM as shown in Figure 3 which recommended in previous investigations (Hameed, Basheer, Iqbal, Anwar & Ahmad, 2018; Henseler & Chin, 2010; Henseler et al., 2014; Henseler, Ringle & Sinkovics, 2009). The effect of social media was examined IMC and target audience. Moreover, the effect of social media was examined on logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, the direct effect of IMC and target audience was examined on logistic sustainable performance. Results in Table 5 shows that social media has positive effect on IMC and target audience. Social media also has positive effect on logistic sustainable performance. Along with this, IMC and target audience has positive effect on logistic sustainable performance.

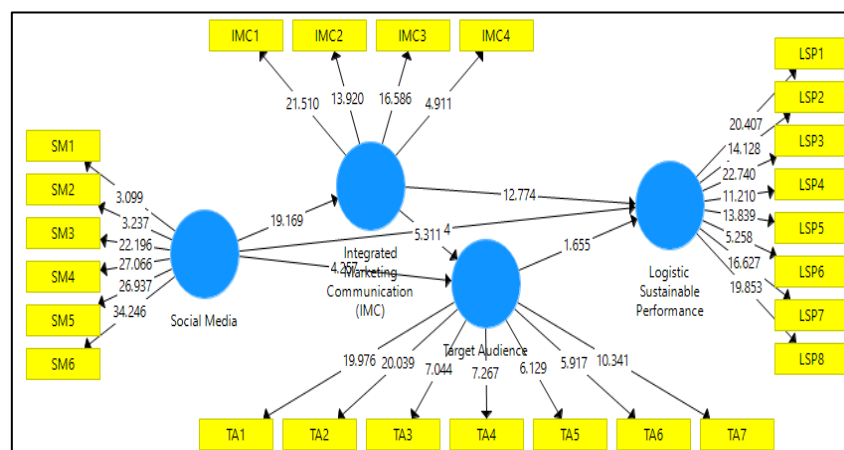


FIGURE 3
STRUCTURAL MODEL

	(O)	(M)	SD	T Statistics	P Values
Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.649	0.644	0.051	12.774	0
Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Target Audience	0.488	0.499	0.092	5.311	0
Social Media -> Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC)	0.769	0.77	0.04	19.169	0
Social Media -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.294	0.294	0.043	6.914	0
Social Media -> Target Audience	0.41	0.401	0.096	4.257	0
Target Audience -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.088	0.095	0.053	1.655	0.099

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC="Integrated Marketing Communication"; TA=Target Audience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

The mediation effect of IMC and target audience was examined between social media and logistic sustainable performance. The mediation effect of IMC between social media and logistic sustainable performance is significant with t-value 9.316 which indicates that IMC reflect the positive effect of social media on logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, the mediation effect of target audience between social media and logistic sustainable performance is not significant with t-value 1.372. These results are given in Table 6. The current study followed the recommendations of Preacher & Hayes (2008) to examine the mediation effect. Nevertheless, this study also examined the r-square value which is 0.943. This value is strong Chin (1998) which is indicating that all the variables; social media, IMC and target audience are expected to bring 94.3% change in logistic sustainable performance.

	(O)	(M)	SD	T Statistics	P Values
Social Media -> Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.499	0.496	0.054	9.316	0
Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Target Audience -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.043	0.049	0.031	1.372	0.171
Social Media -> Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Target Audience -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.033	0.037	0.022	1.482	0.139
Social Media -> Target Audience -> Logistic Sustainable Performance	0.036	0.037	0.02	1.791	0.074
Social Media -> Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) -> Target Audience	0.375	0.382	0.066	5.644	0
Communication (IMC) -> Target Audience	0.375	0.382	0.066	5.644	0

Note: SM=Social Media; IMC="Integrated Marketing Communication"; TA=Target Audience; LSP=Logistic Sustainable Performance

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance. Purpose of this study was to examine the role of social media and IMC in logistic sustainable performance. Additionally, the mediation effect of IMC and target audience was examined between social media and logistic sustainable performance. To achieve the objective, this study followed the quantitative research approach by using a cross-sectional research design. After collecting data from the employees of logistic companies, it is found that social media is most crucial for the improvement of logistic sustainable performance. Outcomes of the study highlighted that social media has major role in logistic sustainable performance which is crucial importance for the logistic industry of Thailand. Better use of

social media has the potential to enhance logistic sustainable performance. Marketing efforts through social media has the vital role to promote logistic sustainable performance in Thailand. Furthermore, it is evident that IMC playing a vital role to enhance logistic sustainable performance through social media. IMC has direct positive role in logistic sustainable performance. Furthermore, IMC reflect the positive effect of social media on logistic sustainable performance. Better implementation of IMC shows positive effect on logistic sustainable performance. IMC also has positive effect on target audience. Therefore, IMC has vital contribution to increase the logistic sustainable performance and better implementation of IMC practices has major influence on logistic sustainable performance.

The current study has major implications for the theory as this study examined valuable relationship between social media, IMC, target audience and logistic sustainable performance. This relationship is unique in literature as previous studies have not examined the effect of social media on logistic sustainable performance. More importantly, this relationship is not discussed in literature for logistic companies of Thailand. The effect of IMC on logistic sustainable performance is limited in the literature. Furthermore, the effect of IMC on target audience is also not discussed in relation to the Thai logistic sector by considering the logistic sustainable performance. Therefore, the effect of social media, IMC and target audience on logistic sustainable performance was not examined by literature in relation to the Thai logistic. Additionally, this study is also unique because this study examined the effect of social media on target audience in Thai logistic industry. Hence, this study contributed to the literature of Thai logistic sector. This study also filled the literature gap by examining the logistic sustainable performance in relation to the social media. Along with the theoretical implications, this study is vital for practical implications as this study providing the several suggestions to the Thai logistic industry. For instance, Thai companies can enhance the performance by using the social media as a tool to enhance logistic sustainable performance. These companies can enhance the logistic sustainable performance by introducing well managed IMC. Both the social media and IMC has vital role in logistic sustainable performance. Therefore, Thai companies can examine the framework of the current study while making the strategies to enhance logistic sustainable performance. As the framework of the current study provided valuable relationship among various factors which can enhance the logistic performance.

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