

Coverage index of various communication platforms: a segmented approach to philippine university marketing

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Abstract The digital era has ushered the rise in the utilisation of alternative communication platforms in integrated marketing communications (IMC). The contemporary business environment necessitates employing high-yield communication platforms to help sustain and further an institution's position in the industry. This paper aims to identify the most efficient platforms employed by the university, accounting the preference of the target audience and the platform's actual reach through a gauge termed coverage index (CI). Results from net 303 valid responses, gathered via an online survey, show that the following in descending arrangement: relatives/friends, open house, social media, and university website are in the upper quartile (CI>67.78%). Further, variance analysis uncovered differences in the preference and reach ratings of certain platforms when respondents are classified according to demographic characteristics. Universities then can strategize their IMC applying high CI platforms. Additionally, the segmented approach to marketing can be incorporated depending on the prospective students' profile.

Keywords: communication platform; coverage index; integrated marketing communications; university

INTRODUCTION

Marketing communications is the assemblage of all the elements in an organisation's marketing mix that enable exchanges by establishing shared meaning with their clients or customers (Chitty, et al., 2018). Due to the advancement of digital channels in contemporary times, marketers have experienced one of the most vital changes with a profound effect on customer behaviour: the creation of online platforms

that allow consumers to express their opinions publicly. This led to a large-scale alteration in the power relationship between brands and their consumers by enabling the latter to have more authority over the way a particular brand is conferred within the media (Munro and Richards, 2011; Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2011). Furthermore, recommendations coming from relatives, friends, colleagues, and others can be contributory to one's decision when choosing a brand. User-generated content (UGC) has reached great importance since people trust their peers significantly more than they trust corporate promotion, viewed by Munro and Richards (2011). This overwhelming modification of consumer behaviour is a consequence of "participatory culture" (Ashman, et al., 2015). In simple term, it is a lot easier to share opinion online and to contribute knowledge virtually, especially through social media which can be done with anonymity. This culture type which arose organically somehow transferred the power away from organisations to consumers. Thus, nowadays, organisations are seen by the public through three various forms of digital media such as owned media, bought media, and earned media. Owned media are the organisation's own website and its interaction with its existing consumers. Bought media is any form of purchased digital media like digital ads, while earned media is more of engagements and conversations - what people are saying online about the brand, either on the organisation's website or beyond it (Munro and Richards, 2011). With the aforementioned in mind, UGC or messages via earned media call for a corresponding response from the organisation or its marketers. Since the generations Y and Z are the current target cohort of the universities for tertiary education and are the protagonist of this technology-based time, it is inevitable to consider diverse communication platforms which can deliver consistent messages with a synergistic effect that is favourable to the brand or organisation. In support, a number of studies recognise that the synergy of various marketing communications can aid achieve the utmost impact when conveying messages to an organisation's target audience (Miller and Rose, 1994; Porcu, et.al. 2012; Rimkienė, 2013).

The above-cited phenomenon is probably one of the reasons for the increasing popularity of the integrated marketing communications (IMC) approach which is also considered to be one of the biggest marketing innovations. Integrated marketing communications can be an instrument that can assist professionals and managers in responding to current environmental changes (Rimkienė, 2013).

Kotler et al. (1999) defined IMC as 'the concept under which a company carefully integrates and coordinates its communications channels to deliver a clear, consistent and compelling message about the organisation and its products.' IMC is an approach where firms communicate their brands through the integration of different elements of a promotional mix, working together to create a seamless experience for the customer, and are presented with similar shades and styles that reinforce the brand's core message. The fundamental goal of IMC is to

exploit the synergistic abilities of different marketing communications discipline as a whole and not in isolation, which in most cases maximises their cost-effectiveness (Csikósová, et al., 2014).

The challenge now is to identify the most efficient mix of marketing communications that can send across desired messages to prospective customers/clients. Needless to say, there are several considerations when employing platforms, one of which is - coverage. This is the degree of various communication options, reaching the chosen target market and the same versus different consumers who make up that market. The other considerations, namely cost, contribution, commonality, complementarities, cross-effects, and conformability are similarly essential (Keller, 2001; Keller, 2013; Batra and Keller, 2016); albeit, minus the coverage- the intended audience will not receive any messages, no matter how good they are. Likewise, coverage is significant to the financial efficiency of the communication plan. In addition, this is affirmed by the report of Solis (2012) stating that reach is one of the three foundations of influence.

There are five principles underlying IMC: customer prospecting through identification of customer's needs, effective and efficient use of relevant contacts or touch points to reach target consumers, communicating with a single voice - meaning that all messages relayed to targets across communication channels and touch points should be consistent, consolidating relationships with customers, and lastly, it must generate an appropriate behavioural response (Shimp and Andrews, 2013). Underscoring the second, which is the effective and efficient use of relevant contacts or touch points to reach target consumers, there is indeed a necessity to scrutinise which among the major communication platforms have the greatest coverage.

Another concept that influenced the paper is demographic segmentation (Marshal and Johnston, 2019), which pertains to the division of consumer cluster based on an assortment of readily measurable descriptive factors about the group like age and sex. With the stated idea, there is a need to analyse if the mentioned variables affect the target markets' preferred platforms, as well as those that actually reach them. Knowledge of such can aid the university in scheming its IMC strategy through the right assortment of communication platforms.

The related literature is composed of articles underlining integrated marketing communications (IMC), IMC and its effectual applications, IMC process, major communication platforms, university marketing tools and practices, drivers of communication platforms, and generations X, Y, and Z.

IMC is an amalgam of communication functions such as marketing, public relations, advertising, sales promotion, and direct promotion according to George (2000). Further, the IMC solution calls for recognising all contact points where the customer may encounter the company, its products, and its brands. Each brand contact will deliver a

message, either good, bad, or indifferent. The company must strive to deliver a consistent and positive message at all contact points (Kotler, et al, 2007).

IMC management uses diverse techniques to meet consumer needs and move them towards action. The combination of these chief marketing communications has changed over time. Accordingly, it contains: advertising, digital and social media marketing, point-of-purchase communications, direct marketing, sales promotion, personal selling, sponsorship marketing, and marketing public relations (Chitty, et al., 2018).

To achieve business objectives, large corporations like General Motors, Proctor and Gamble and McDonald's have incorporated their public relations, marketing, and promotion functions. These corporations use the combined strategies to promote themselves as leaders, strengthen old publics or markets and reach new ones, communicate the benefits of services or products, build relationships with the public, and obtain media exposure (Harris, 1991).

IMC process is composed of four main elements: the sender, the message, the channel and the receiver (Bakanauskas, 2004; Rimkienė, 2013), which is similar to the marketing communication process. However, integrated marketing communications offer an approach formulated to disseminate one consistent message to receivers through an establishment's promotion that may span in all media sorts.

Upon scrutiny of the latest and most relevant papers and literature, the paper entitled "Integrated Marketing Communication: Theoretical Approach" (Rimkienė, 2013) concluded that it is most important for the IMC to go through customer and stakeholder evaluation for the following intentions: to establish the perception of value and to find the best way to communicate, to ensure that all messages are sent to consistently and purposefully, to create and manage cross-functional approach to marketing communications planning, find new technologies, learn from the communication analysis, planning and implementation in order to allocate scarce resources more efficiently and profitably.

There are a number of communication channels that can be utilised by business organisations to reach their target market. Batra and Keller (2016) identified the following in their study: advertising; sales promotion; events and experiences; PR and publicity; online and social media marketing; mobile marketing; direct and database marketing; and personal selling.

Advertising is a type of either mass communication or direct-to-consumer communication that is paid for by an identified sponsor who anticipates to inform or convince members of a certain audience (Chitty, et al., 2018). It is closely linked to IMC in many respects. While IMC involves a message dealing with buyer-seller relationships, advertising seeks to inform or persuade members of a particular group.

Sales promotion is a form of promotion which persuades potential customers to buy products by offering incentives, such as contests,

coupons, sweepstakes, samples, free gifts and so on (Monash University, 2019).

Event marketing, also referred to as event creation, denotes designing or developing a themed activity, occasion, display, or exhibit like a sporting event, music festival, fair, concert, etc. to promote a product, service, brand, cause, or organisation through in-person interactions (Business Dictionary, 2019). There are numerous types of event marketing and each can be accommodated to address a marketer's specific goal. It can be hosting an event to build stronger relationships with prospects and customers. Attending an event as an exhibitor to educate prospective customers about the company's product offering can also be classified as one. Event marketing can even embody digital events like webinars or live-streamed workshops. The cited examples leverage the power of live experiences to achieve business goals.

Marketing public relations (MPR) contains non-personal communication to a mass viewer like favourable news item or editorial comments whenever a company's products or services receive free print space or broadcast time. MPR assumes credibility since it is supposed to be an unbiased report not paid for by the company benefiting from the publicity (Chitty, et al, 2018). Publicity, on the other hand, is a part of public relations which is in a news-story form about the organisation, its product or services, or both (Pride and Ferrell, 2019).

Businesses nowadays have been applying strategies that are put through media to deliver an interactive, focused and measurable way of reaching consumers. This approach is widely known as digital marketing (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). The advent of new social and mobile tools expanded the concept. From advertising-oriented technique for users to a concept of creating an experience that engages with them (Brosnan, 2012).

Social media marketing is a type of electronic communication in which user-generated content can be shared within the user's social grid (Chitty, et al., 2018). Related hereto is mobile marketing which is the marketing of value offerings via mobile communication devices like smartphones and tablets. Its extreme portability and ubiquitous nature provide marketers with numerous benefits, including the fact that both time-sensitive and location-sensitive communications can be most effectively delivered to the intended audience (Marshall and Johnston, 2019).

Direct marketing does not contain advertisements via television, radio, or even the internet. It also eliminates the intermediaries in the promotion process; instead, business entities directly send their messages to potential client or customer by utilising materials like catalogues, mailers, brochures, etc. (Investopedia, 2018). This sort of marketing works for companies with identified target groups that are likely to have an interest in their offerings.

Database marketing encompasses the gathering of data through a variety of sources, study, and interpretation of customer data in order to initiate more pertinent customer experiences. Customer data can be sourced from email communication, data warehouses, CRM system customer info, including external sources like social media (Galetto, 2017). This can be a vehicle to communicate with current and prospective customers. Further, due to the increasing availability of customer data, database marketing has become an important ingredient of the overall marketing strategy.

Personal selling pertains to the paid personal communication that attempts to inform customers and sway them to purchase products or services in an exchange situation (Pride and Ferrell, 2019).

Trade shows and fairs can be categorised somewhere between promotion and personal selling. Promotional incentives of some kind are often used to encourage attendance at trade shows and fairs; they are publicised through several media, and direct contact is made with customers and potential customers at the company's booth (Percy, 2018).

Marketing communication programs and campaigns can be built in various communication options. Following are nine different categories with different communication channels (Reid, 2012): 1)Advertising based media (television, radio, newspapers, magazines) 2)Target and interactive advertising (e-mail, telephone, print advertising, etc.) 3)Local and outdoor advertising (posters, movies, etc.) 4)Points of sale advertising (billboard, advertising a basket of goods, etc.) 5)Promotions (various proposals, etc.) 6) Proposals taking (product samples, coupons, etc.) 7)Private sales 8)Event marketing and sponsorship (sponsorship of sporting events, etc.), and 9)Public relations (product or company review).

In Trends in Higher Education Marketing, Recruitment, and Technology made by Hanover Research (2014) several higher education marketing tools and practices were mentioned. These are social and online marketing with an emphasis on the website, events-based involving direct interaction with prospective students, open houses and campus visit days for high school students, radio ads, asking alumni or students for referrals, and online fairs.

Similarly, universities and colleges in the Philippines are observed to be adopting combinations of the following marketing tools: 1)Participating in the career orientations and/or career fairs organised by different high schools, 2)Participating in educational fairs, 3)Billboard ads 4)Favourable newspaper articles, 5)Inviting prospective students to visit for a campus tour, 6)Conducting on-campus inter-high school competitions (academics and/or sports), 7) Sponsoring on-campus events like seminars, concerts, fashion shows, etc., 8)Referrals from alumni or students (some are also tapping high school teachers and guidance counsellors to refer their students to the higher educational institution), 9)Website, social media, particularly Facebook and Twitter,

10)Sponsoring of medals and other materials needed by the high school, 11)Scholarships, 12)Participation in the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) or National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), 13)Outreach programs, 14)Television, radio, newspaper ads. 15) Distribution of flyers/brochures, and 16) Tarpaulin displays

Utilisation of platforms is motivated by coverage, cost, contribution, commonality, complementarities, cross-effects, and conformability. Known as the 7Cs or the seven criteria found to be helpful in terms of capturing the key considerations raised by earlier IMC research (Keller, 2013).

Batra and Keller (2016) further explained the 7Cs. accordingly, *coverage* is the proportion of the target audience reached by each communication option employed, as well as the amount of overlap among those options. Marketing communications must be evaluated on all criteria against the second C - *cost*, to arrive at the most effective and most efficient communications program. *Contribution*, on the other hand, reflects direct “main effects” and the inherent ability of marketing communication to create the desired response and communication effects from consumers in the absence of exposure to any other communication option. The fourth C-*commonality* is the degree to which common associations are strengthened across communication options: the extent to which varied communication alternatives share similar gist. Communication choices are more operative once utilised in tandem, ideally, in the most fitting sequence. This is referred to as *complementarity* or the extent to which different associations and linkages are emphasised across communication options. Moreover, communications used in tandem are more powerful when they interact and create synergistic *cross-effects* with other communications through proper sequencing. Lastly, in any IMC program, consumers will encounter communications in different orders or sequences, or perhaps not at all. Any particular message may be new to some consumers, but not to others, and, for anyone consumer, it may be preceded or followed by a completely different set or sequence of communications from the brand. *Conformability* implies communication versatility and the range to which a particular marketing communication works for many target consumers in many times and places. Ergo, it is the ability to work at two levels—effectively communicating to consumers who have or have not seen a communication and will or will not see other communications—is critically important. A highly conformable or versatile communication achieves its communication goals regardless of the communications path consumers have been on or will be on.

The first two, coverage and cost, are relevant to the financial efficiency of the communication plan. On the other side, contribution, commonality, complementarities, cross-effects, and conformability focus on the success that the IMC program is persuading those

consumers along their decision journey to drive short term sales and shape long term brand equity.

Similarly, Marshall and Johnston (2019) underscored the importance of establishing appropriate and effective marketing metrics. This is to identify, track, assess, and provide key benchmarks for the improvement of marketing activities. With marketing metrics, management can evaluate with ease the success degree of a firm's investment in different aspects of marketing.

According to German sociologist Karl Mannheim (1952), generational location defines a generation. This means a group of individuals of similar ages share a similar collective experience that instigated that particular generation's characteristic.

Focusing on the three youngest generations, those who may be interested in universities either for their education or for their children's education: generations X, Y, and Z. Generation X or the post boomers are those born from 1965 to 1979. As of 2019, their age ranges from 40 to 54. Generation Y referred to as millennial and echo boomers followed Gen X. There are disagreements as to when exactly the generation began and ended, but many researchers/writers (Goldman Sachs, 2016; BBC, 2016; Resolution Foundation, 2016; Stein, 2013) used 1980 to 2000 to cover their report/article. Gen Z, also known as centennial is the youngest among the generations. They were born from 2001 to present, who may be children of either Gen X or millennial parents.

Knowledge of such market segments can provide leverage targeting in a product, sales, and marketing strategies. Thus, can lead to the development of marketing communications, both in ad messaging and advanced targeting on digital platforms (Qualtrics, 2019).

The studies presented herewith focuses on higher education marketing, IMC, segmentation, and pillars of influence. In George's (2000) study relating to University of Texas at San Antonio's (UTSA) integration of marketing and public relations strategies for student recruitment and image building, initial findings of focus sets indicate that a range of the enrolment growth may perhaps be ascribed to UTSA's effective use of the integrated communications approach to promoting its image. The study pointed out that the nexus among organisations that employ integrated communication is recognition of the synergy arising from cohesive and centralised communication strategies. This centralisation allows an organisation to present marketing, public relations, publicity, and advertising information that back up the same objective. Though the approach on how information is offered may differ (traditional or non-traditional media), the objective remains the same to suit the specific medium. In conclusion, the study recognises the vital role of communication technology to meet its audience demands for more and faster access to information.

The current trends and advances in higher education connected to branding and marketing, recruiting, enrolment, and technology were

scrutinised in the report called Trends in Higher Education Marketing, Recruitment, and Technology by Hanover Research (2014). Some of the key findings are: the largest area of innovation and growth in higher education marketing and branding, as well as in recruitment, is probably in the online and digital space; among the chief tools for social and online marketing is an effective and intuitive website, which should be regarded as the "ultimate brand statement" for an organisation; and despite increased digital activity, a recent survey found that the foremost effective marketing techniques for universities are events-based and involve direct interaction with potential students. Radio ads, asking students or alumni for applicant referrals, and online college fairs were conceived least effective, while the most operative techniques of outreach were open houses and campus visitation days for high school students.

The deductive research paper titled "Digital Marketing: A New Tool for International Education" (Fierro, et al., 2017) was driven by its recognition of the use of online strategies as an optimal channel to attract students, and that digital marketing has turned into the ultimate tool to proactively excel in the competition. The paper applied P.K. Kannan's Framework for Research in Digital Marketing, which highlights touch points regarding the marketing process as well as in the marketing strategy process, where the digital relationship within a company plays a key role in the case of the British multinational Big Choice Group. The touch points in areas such as environment, marketing outcomes, and company impact were organised and reviewed. It came out with the three commendations: (1) the company should adapt their web sites design to their different target countries; (2) The company should interact with the contextual elements such as geography and location with digital technology, and they need to implement in their Customer Relationship Management (CRM) the different regions in which they work to build an easier platform for the customer to interact with the client; and (3) improve the customer satisfaction by expanding educational agreements with higher educational institutions worldwide, for the advisors to diversify the portfolio of the universities and increase the offerings.

Nicolescu's study (2009) focused on the scope and limitations of applying marketing to higher education. It highlighted various marketing concepts used in higher education. Upon recognition of the peculiarities of the educational industry, it partly concluded that marketing principles and ideas can be employed in the academic sector but not in the same manner as they are applied in other businesses. It also mentioned that even though there is a considerable number of existing literatures on the marketization of higher education, it is disjointed and lacks theoretical models to reflect upon the context of higher education and the nature of its services. Accordingly, higher education can learn from the other sectors by using the marketing

concepts to the extent to which it makes sense and provides useful outcomes.

The paper of Batra and Keller (2016) about integrated marketing communications reviewed academic research and substantive findings to better comprehend how to develop and deliver fully integrated communication programs in today's changing marketing world. The paper concluded with two joint conceptual models: "top-down" communications optimisation model and "bottom-up" communications matching model, as part of a wide-ranging conceptual framework to satisfy imperative IMC questions concerning both academicians and marketing managers and researchers.

The communication optimisation model appraises all proposed communication options for effectiveness and efficiency to ensure the utmost collective effects outcome. Contrariwise, the communications matching model, structured on the consideration of consumer, contextual, and content factors that form communication upshots, reflects the specific outcomes and objectives at different stages of the consumer decision journey and the characteristics of different media types to recommend the best-aligned media and messaging options.

The figure below displays the IMC framework that emerged from the review.

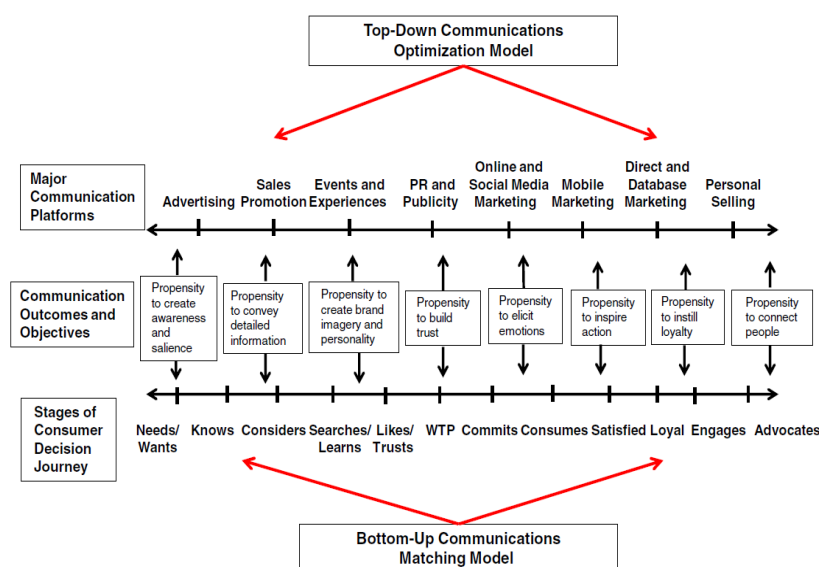


Figure 1. IMC Conceptual Framework (Batra and Keller, 2016)

In the study Oluwafemi and Adebisi (2018), the effect of IMC dimensions on customer loyalty to mobile telecommunication service among competing firms in the telecommunication service industry was examined. From 134 retrieved questionnaires, descriptive and inferential statistics were applied to analyse the data, and analysis of variance was used to test associations. The results revealed a significant relationship between customer loyalty and direct marketing; publicity; sales promotion; and advertising. While the multiple regression values

suggest that IMC dimensions accounted for a 48.3% variance in customer loyalty. The paper came up with two recommendations: (1) The use of IMC as a strategic tool for targeting subscribers to patronise and retain them with a mobile telecom service provider for a long time; and (2) telecommunication industry managers should prioritize their strategies on the basis of IMC dimension that makes the greatest contribution to the criterion of interest, with beta and high coefficient in their budgetary allocation for the optimal promotional mix to achieve the organisational goal both in short and long-run.

The study *Loyalty in High-Quality Hotels of Croatia: From Marketing Initiatives to Customer Brand Loyalty Creation* (Seric, et al., 2013) aimed to contribute to research on Information, Communication, and Technology (ICT), IMC, and loyalty in Croatian high-quality hotels. It covered 17 high-quality hotels situated in Dalmatia. The sample consisted of 120 respondents, of whom 68 stayed in seven 5-star hotels and 52 stayed in six 4-star hotels.

IMC perception was assessed using five items from the first dimension-unified communications for consistent message and image of the scale proposed by Lee and Park (2007). These items are consistency through communication tools and channels; visual consistency of message; linguistic consistency of message; brand image consistency; and long-term maintenance of brand image consistency.

Descriptive statistics and nonparametric tests were carried out for the hotel data analysis using SPSS software-17 due to the small census. The results of descriptive statistical analyses demonstrated a positive influence of ICT on IMC implementation as well as a positive impact of IMC on loyalty.

Baruah (2012) in her study about the usefulness of social media as a communication tool, aimed to investigate the effect of social media as a means of communication tool and to assess the usefulness of social media as a tool of communication. The paper found that 62.5% of the 200 respondents are in agreement that social media is a major form of communication tool while the rest believe otherwise. In addition, the preferred major social media forms of the respondents are as follows in descending order: social networking, wikis, video sharing, microblogging, blogs, news and bookmarking, social news and bookmarking, photo sharing, podcasts, and Really Simple Syndication (RSS).

Because of the conspicuous transfiguration of marketing caused by digital media platforms, presenting methods to reach, inform, engage, sell to, learn about, and provide service to customer, the article of Lamberton and Stephen (2016) about marketing evolution tracks the developments in academic researchers' perspectives on digital, social media, and mobile (DSMM) marketing themes from 2000 to 2015. It identified the key themes emerging in five-year time frames during this period. These are (1) DSMM as a facilitator of individual expression, (2) DSMM as a decision support tool, and (3) DSMM as a market intelligence

source. A portion of it emphasised that DSMM now represents an ordinary subfield within marketing on the academic side, drawing interest across methodological and philosophical borders. It likewise mentioned that we are hastily stepping into a "post-digital" world in marketing, with contained thought of dividing marketing into "digital" and "traditional", and that paradigm is shifting to digital marketing is just marketing. It is so basically because at present almost all marketing activities an organisation might consider can have some kind of digital aspect.

Ordun's (2015) research focused on the millennial (Gen Y) consumer behaviour, shopping preferences, and perceptual maps associated with brand loyalty. The millennial were compared against other age cohorts such as boomers, Gen X, and Gen Z. The four generations were differentiated based on thirteen (13) attributes for the predictors of buying behaviour, namely price, trend, loyalty, prestige, brand, fit, quality, recommendation, advertisement, ambiance, availability, variety, and service. A simple statement to explain each facet was provided. Some of the attributes and their corresponding definitions are as follows: Trend: being perceived as popular or being identified "cool" by social media, Loyalty: A mental or psychological state of faithfulness or devotion to a brand, Prestige: A good reputation and widespread respect, Brand: A well-known and widely recognised name, Recommendation: A suggestion or proposal for the preferred product, and Advertisement: A notice of the announcement promoting a product or service.

It is noteworthy that the majority of the 2068 participants belong to Gen Y. Based on the mean difference within the trend option (being perceived as popular or being identified "cool" by social media) - which is the biggest, the millennial are very active users of social media. The mean score of the trend for Gen Y is significantly higher compared with other age groups. It was surmised that buying decisions of Gen Y are more influenced by their friends in the virtual world and opinions in social media.

The study entitled "Marketing Communication Effects on the Specific Segment of Czech Singles" (Klepek and Matušínká, 2016) analysed Czech singles from the marketing communication point of view. It concluded that among the marketing communications, recommendations have the highest persuasive power for singles. It likewise revealed the high popularity of competition and sales, print flyers, loyalty programs, and point of purchase (POP) materials and display. On the opposite scale, events and mobile advertising have been evaluated to be least persuasive.

Moreover, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) showed underlying latent factors and through its ability of data reduction, the marketing communication instruments were divided into two main factors. The first factor is considered push-form of marketing communication dominantly used as a form of advertising: social networks; billboards;

internet banners; mobile advertising; TV, radio, and print; newsletter; and event. The second factor, on the other hand, is connected with the actual value proposition such as competitions and sales, print flyers, POP, and loyalty programs. The identified factors are highly similar to the theoretical categorisation of the communication mix. From a business standpoint, integrating communication-based on the second factor will be highly effective when communicating to the segment of singles, since the variables have relatively higher scores on admitted persuasiveness than those loaded in the first factor.

Solis (2012) presented in the report called "The Rise of Digital Influence and How to Measure It", the framework of the pillars of influence which include the reach, resonance, and relevance. Reach basically describes the distance information can travel across societies at large. This can be translated to the size of fan base an influencer has on social media. Moreover, it is imperative for the influencer to have followers parallel to the brand's target audience. The second pillar - relevance is the attribute that connects the focus group to the influencer. This can be equated as the resemblance and alignment and between the brand's image and that of the influencer. The focus group can easily empathise with the influencer if they share the same demographics, values, culture, and the like. Finally, the upshot of the marriage between reach and relevance is none other than resonance. It is the yardstick for the length, rate, and level of interactivity relating to a given topic, conversation, or content. According to Ebrahimi (2015), this is the extent of message amplification made by the focus community by sharing it with their own followers. Thus, it is elemental to recognise influential customers who can serve as a channel of promotion. These are the people whom the target market like and trust, thereby can handily reach out to them.

This research was crafted through the synthesised literature preceding this section. IMC, its effectual use and process, the major communication platforms, and the studies on higher education marketing enthused the researcher to examine the effectiveness of the popular communication platforms in the academic domain. Albeit there are numerous research papers pertaining to IMC and social media as platforms for marketing, there are no existing papers that focus on coverage measurement of diverse communication platforms actually being used in university marketing. The drivers of communication platforms as well as the pillars of influence led the paper to consider coverage as the criterion to identify the most efficient platform through the coverage index. The instrument was devised based on the university marketing tools, and the marketing platforms/practices used by universities in the Philippines, as experienced and/or observed by the researcher herself who has been a university marketer since 2006. Lastly, the articles about the different generations and their behaviour as consumers inspired the author to attempt to unfold the significant differences in the preferred communication platforms as well as the

platforms' actual reach in terms of the respondents' demographic traits. On one hand, Webqual 4.0, which is utilised to evaluate the quality website dimensions (Barnes and Vidgen, 2002; Dagumboy, 2018) provided ideas regarding the methodology.

METHODOLOGY

The succeeding portion discusses the research methodology, research domain, population, sample size, research instrument, and data collection procedure.

This is a descriptive and survey study, with the University of the East, Caloocan Campus, and Philippines as its research domain. The University of the East, founded in 1946, was once pronounced as the "largest university in Asia" when its past population reached over 65,000 (Manila Bulletin, 2004). The Caloocan Campus has four colleges (Business Administration, Arts and Sciences, Engineering, Fine Arts, Architecture and Design) and Basic Education Department (www.ue.edu.ph, 2018).

The respondents, chosen for their knowledge of the required information, are the freshmen students of the University of the East-Calooan, Philippines for the 1st semester of the school year 2018-2019. Calooan Campus's total freshmen population for the said period is 1,431. The researcher adapted Slovin's formula ($N = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$) with 0.05 error margin (Research Assignment, 2019) to determine the acceptable sample size which is 303.

The research instrument, comprised of 16 communication platforms, was based largely on the observed marketing practices in the region with the greatest number of higher education institutions (National Capital Region) in the Philippines. It was pre-tested by a group of 17, composed of graduating management students and faculty members, to check coherence and clarity of instructions. Subsequent to the modifications of the instrument, the respondents were asked about their degree of preference for each communication platform using Likert seven-point scale (Likert, R. 1932; Simon and Goes, 2013) wherein 1 = "totally not preferred" and 7 = "most preferred". In addition, the extent of the agreement as to the source of information regarding the university was solicited from the respondents using response anchors: 1 = "strongly disagree" and 7 = "strongly agree" (Survey Legend, 2017). An option NA or "not applicable" was incorporated to ensure that responses were not compelled. An unstructured question was added to the instrument, "other means where you learn about the university", in order to acquire related information which might not be covered by the questionnaire.

From the respondents' profile, age and sex likewise served as variables.

PREFERENCE: How do you prefer the following as ways to learn about a university?
1 - Totally NOT preferred, 7 - Most preferred, NA - Not applicable

AGREEMENT: I learned about UE from _____ (supply each item below)
1 - Strongly Disagree, 7 - Strongly Agree, NA - Not applicable

1. Billboards *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
Preference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Career Convocation organized by the UE Basic Education Department (held in UE) *

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA
Preference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Agreement	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure 2. Survey Interface
Source: Author

Freshmen students of the university were requested to accomplish the survey which was administered online (Figure 2). From a total of 354 survey participants, it wound up to 303 valid responses after weeding out the invalid responses, which is equal to the specified sample size.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Employing a variety of statistical methods for data analysis, this section chronicles the outcomes of the survey. The demographic data collected shows that the majority (67%) of the respondents' age is between 19 and 24 years and the rest are 18 years of age and below. A large portion (61%) of the sample is female. The respondents who graduated from privately owned high schools (93%) outnumbered those who came from the publicly operated educational institution (7%). Furthermore, the highest composition of the respondents lives in Caloocan City with 33%, followed by Malabon City with 23%, trailed by Valenzuela City and Quezon City with 16% and 13% respectively. Each of the remaining contributed a single-digit percent of the total sample.

Table 1. Demographic and Geographic Profile (n=303)

CHARACTERISTICS	CATEGORIES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
Age			
	18 years and below (Gen Z)	100	33%
	19 to 24 years old (Gen Y)	203	67%
Sex			
	Female	185	61%
	Male	118	39%
Type of High School			
	Private	281	93%
	Public	22	7%
Place of Residence			
	Bulacan	26	9%
	Caloocan City	101	33%
	Malabon City	69	23%
	Manila City	3	1%
	Navotas City	16	5%
	Quezon City	39	13%
	Valenzuela City	47	16%
	Others (Muntinlupa and Tarlac)	2	1%

The data summary provided in Table 2 shows a number of items for discussion based on 303 responses. In order to illustrate the responses for major variables under study, descriptive statistics for all variables of interest were obtained. This type of analysis was carried out for convenient grasp and interpretation of the transformed data.

The preference rating for each communication platform is presented in Table 2 via mean together with the standard deviation (SD). In the last column, the communication platforms are ranked based on the acquired means. Interestingly, open house, events held on the campus, social media, and relatives/friends (in descending order) are the platforms highly preferred by the respondents as indicated by the means in the upper quartile (Means > 5.008332). Conversely, those with means below 4.732839 are the platforms least preferred by the respondents in ascending order: billboards, telephone call, text, or email from the university, tarpaulins/posters, and career convocation organised by the university's basic education unit. The rest fall somewhere in between the abovementioned groupings and the median is 4.803249.

It is notable that among the four least preferred, career convocation organised by the university's basic education unit, billboards, and tarpaulins/posters have standard deviations below 1.878186 which denote certainty in the responses. On the other hand, the University Athletic Association of the Philippines (UAAP) registered the highest standard deviation of 2.011394 implying that the respondents do not regard the communication platform similarly relative to the other items.

Table 2. Means, Standard Deviations, and Ranks of the Questionnaire Data (n=303)

NO	DESCRIPTION	PREFERENCE		
		MEAN	SD	RANK
1	Billboards	4.1770833	1.790382	16
2	Career Convocation organised by the UE Basic Education Department	4.7272727	1.765768	13.5
3	Career Orientation or career fair organised by your High School	4.8275862	1.852128	8
4	Events held in UE like concert, fashion show, seminar, etc.	5.1036789	1.998142	2
5	Flyers/Brochures	4.7364865	1.930527	11
6	Inter-High School Competitions held in UE (academics, sports)	4.7789116	1.924008	9
7	Medals and certificates of scholarships distributed by UE during graduations	4.9691781	1.978165	6
8	Newspaper articles	4.7346939	1.883380	12
9	Open House: Free College Entrance Test, campus tour, and orientation	5.2790698	1.982051	1
10	Relatives/friends	5.0841751	1.939016	4
11	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)	5.1010101	1.965040	3
12	Tarpaulins/Posters	4.7272727	1.862602	13.5
13	Telephone call, text, or email coming from UE	4.2446809	1.969624	15
14	UAAP (Basketball, Fencing, Volleyball, etc.)	4.7491525	2.011394	10
15	UE's Outreach Programs (<i>Brigada Eskwela</i> , Bloodletting, Medical and Dental Mission, Supplementary Feeding Program, Milk Feeding Program, Computer Literacy Program, etc.)	4.8703072	1.962902	7
16	UE Website	4.9830508	1.908552	5

The weighted score presented in Table 3 allows accentuating the differences in the degree of preference of the respondents for each platform. It is the reach rating (Reach R) for each communication platform multiplied by the preference (Table 2, Mean) attached to it by the respondents. To provide a better outlook of the platform's effectiveness in reaching the target audience, the weighted score is indexed against the possible maximum score (Barnes and Vidgen, 2002; Dagumboy, 2018).

The highest possible score that a platform can achieve is the preference mean from Table 2 multiplied by 7, and the Coverage Index is (CI) is computed by dividing the weighted score (WGT S) by the maximum score (Max S). Based on the coverage indices (CI) shown in Table 3, the following in the upper quartile ($CI > 0.677772$ or 67.78%) are the most efficient communication platforms in descending arrangement: relatives/friends, open house, social media, and university website. Contrariwise, the least efficient are billboards, telephone call, text, or email coming from the university, career convocation organised by the university's basic education unit, and newspaper articles (CI below 0.615774 or 61.58% in ascending order).

The other items are in between the two mentioned sets and the median is 0.648531 or 64.85%.

Table 3. Coverage Indices and Rank of the Communication Platforms (n=303)
(Reach Rating, Maximum Score, and Weighted Score)

NO.	DESCRIPTION	REACH RATING	MAX S	WGT S	CI	RANK
1	Billboards	3.60526	29.23958	15.05948	0.51504	16
2	Career Convocation organised by the UE Basic Education Department	4.23345	33.09091	20.01267	0.60478	14
3	Career Orientation or career fair organised by your High School	4.32500	33.79310	20.87931	0.61786	12
4	Events held in UE like concert, fashion show, seminar, etc.	4.71918	35.72575	24.08517	0.67417	5
5	Flyers/Brochures	4.59722	33.15541	21.77468	0.65675	7
6	Inter-High School Competitions held in UE (academics, sports)	4.36713	33.45238	20.87014	0.62388	11
7	Medals and certificates of scholarships distributed by UE during graduations	4.67133	34.78425	23.21266	0.66733	6
8	Newspaper articles	4.26667	33.14286	20.20136	0.60952	13
9	Open House: Free College Entrance Test, campus tour, and orientation	5.00000	36.95349	26.39535	0.71429	2
10	Relatives/friends	5.13559	35.58923	26.11026	0.73366	1
11	Social Media (Facebook, Twitter)	4.97966	35.70707	25.40130	0.71138	3
12	Tarpaulins/Posters	4.51736	33.09091	21.35480	0.64534	9
13	Telephone call, text, or email coming from UE	3.95290	29.71277	16.77879	0.56470	15
14	UAAP (Basketball, Fencing, Volleyball, etc.)	4.56207	33.24407	21.66596	0.65172	8
15	UE's Outreach Programs (Brigada Eskwela, Medical and Dental Mission, Supplementary Feeding Program, Milk Feeding Program, Computer Literacy Program, Bloodletting, etc.)	4.40714	34.09215	21.46414	0.62959	10
16	UE Website	4.82007	34.88136	24.01865	0.68858	4

The last item on the questionnaire, intended to discover other platforms or sources of information that are not included in the list, revealed that the majority or 32 of the 46 learned about the university through "word of mouth". Although relatives or friends, website, social media, and scholarships are stated in the questionnaire 28 reiterated their sources as shown in Table 4. In addition to information from other people/institution and the internet, some of the respondents learned about the university through reading materials and because of the campus's proximity/visibility.

Table 4. Other Sources of Information about the University

SOURCE OF INFORMATION		FREQUENCY	TOTAL
WOM	Alumni	6	32
	Family	12	
	Friends	9	
	Former teacher	1	
	Batchmate	1	
	Schoolmate	1	
	Neighbour	1	
	Previous school	1	
Internet	Website	2	8
	Social media (including UE Gags, memes)	4	
	Portal	1	
	Google	1	
Reading Materials			
	Handbook	1	2
	UE Dawn	1	
Proximity and visibility of the campus			3
Scholarship			1
			46

Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS, IBM 24) was used in processing the data into the desired analyses in line with the research hypotheses. The significant differences in the communication platforms preferred by the respondents and in their reach to the respondents when classified according to age and sex were tested using independent sample t-test. The tool requires the assumption of homogeneity of variance, and through Lavene's test assumptions were established; thereby identifying the appropriate value to use. Equal variances are assumed for large p-values, while equal variances are not assumed for those with small p-values.

As shown in Table 5.1, the respondents have similar communication platform preferences when classified according to age, except for item 9 (Open House: Free College Entrance Test, campus tour, and orientation) that registered a significance value of 0.049 which is below the alpha value of 0.050. Thus, the Millennial or Gen Y with a preference rating mean of 5.44 appreciate this particular platform more than their

younger counterparts - centennial or Gen Z with a preference rating mean of 4.96.

Table 5.1. Independent Samples t-Test Based on Age (Preference)

	VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	t	SIG	REMARKS
Q1	<18 years old	4.11	1.842	-.443	0.658	Not Significant
	19-24	4.21	1.759			
Q2	<18 years old	4.70	1.846	-.159	0.874	Not Significant
	19-24	4.74	1.730			
Q3	<18 years old	4.88	1.986	0.317	0.752	Not Significant
	19-24	4.80	1.786			
Q4	<18 years old	4.89	2.075	-1.306	0.192	Not Significant
	19-24	5.21	1.956			
Q5	<18 years old	4.65	1.955	-.568	0.570	Not Significant
	19-24	4.78	1.921			
Q6	<18 years old	4.62	1.992	-.986	0.325	Not Significant
	19-24	4.86	1.889			
Q7	<18 years old	4.99	1.939	0.125	0.901	Not Significant
	19-24	4.96	2.002			
Q8	<18 years old	4.61	1.943	-.761	0.447	Not Significant
	19-24	4.79	1.856			
Q9	<18 years old	4.96	2.093	-1.980	0.049*	Significant
	19-24	5.44	1.910			
Q10	<18 years old	4.93	2.032	-.973	0.331	Not Significant
	19-24	5.16	1.892			
Q11	<18 years old	5.03	2.023	-.433	0.666	Not Significant
	19-24	5.14	1.940			
Q12	<18 years old	4.81	1.926	0.528	0.598	Not Significant
	19-24	4.69	1.834			
Q13	<18 years old	4.41	1.981	1.026	0.306	Not Significant
	19-24	4.16	1.964			
Q14	<18 years old	4.61	2.114	-.842	0.401	Not Significant
	19-24	4.82	1.961			
Q15	<18 years old	4.85	2.088	-.144	0.885	Not Significant
	19-24	4.88	1.903			
Q16	<18 years old	4.94	1.915	-.281	0.779	Not Significant
	19-24	5.01	1.910			

*Analysed Under 95% Confidence Level

The independent T-test results displayed in Table 5.2 indicate that both male and female share similar regard for the different platforms as indicated by the Sig values above 0.05. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the communication platforms preferred by the respondents when clustered according to sex is accepted.

Table 5.2. Independent Samples T-Test Based on Sex (Preference)

	VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	T	SIG	REMARKS
Q1	Male	4.28	1.856	0.793	0.428	Not Significant
	Female	4.11	1.751			
Q2	Male	4.71	1.764	-.159	0.874	Not Significant
	Female	4.74	1.771			
Q3	Male	4.79	1.953	-.282	0.778	Not Significant
	Female	4.85	1.789			
Q4	Male	4.91	2.162	-1.333	0.184	Not Significant
	Female	5.23	1.811			
Q5	Male	4.72	2.020	-.088	0.930	Not Significant
	Female	4.74	1.876			
Q6	Male	4.70	2.022	-.532	0.595	Not Significant
	Female	4.83	1.863			
Q7	Male	4.75	2.072	-1.492	0.137	Not Significant
	Female	5.11	1.909			
Q8	Male	4.83	1.960	0.730	0.466	Not Significant
	Female	4.67	1.835			
Q9	Male	5.13	2.103	-1.030	0.304	Not Significant
	Female	5.38	1.901			
Q10	Male	4.99	1.940	-.660	0.510	Not Significant
	Female	5.14	1.941			
Q11	Male	4.99	2.015	-.769	0.442	Not Significant
	Female	5.17	1.935			
Q12	Male	4.67	1.894	-.451	0.652	Not Significant
	Female	4.77	1.846			
Q13	Male	4.07	2.036	-1.147	0.253	Not Significant
	Female	4.35	1.926			
Q14	Male	4.74	2.174	-.081	0.936	Not Significant
	Female	4.76	1.908			
Q15	Male	4.81	2.087	-.405	0.686	Not Significant
	Female	4.91	1.888			
Q16	Male	5.03	1.985	0.310	0.757	Not Significant
	Female	4.96	1.863			

*Analysed Under 95% Confidence Level

As seen in Table 6.1, T-test results revealed that only item 9 garnered a significance value (0.042) less than the assigned alpha of 0.05. It can be inferred that open house is reaching the two age groups in significantly dissimilar extent. This particular platform which allows prospective students to tour the campus, and be treated with free career orientation and College Entrance Test (CET) is reaching the millennial more than the centennials as suggested by their mean values of 5.17 and 4.65 respectively. Whereas for the other 15 items, the null hypothesis that there are no significant differences in the communication platforms' reach to the respondents based on their age is accepted.

Table 6.1. Independent Samples T-Test Based on Age (Reach)

	VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	t	SIG	REMARKS
Q1	<18 years old	3.73	1.824	0.791	0.430	Not Significant
	19-24	3.54	1.810			
Q2	<18 years old	4.35	1.858	0.787	0.432	Not Significant
	19-24	4.17	1.834			
Q3	<18 years old	4.41	1.987	0.517	0.605	Not Significant
	19-24	4.28	1.980			
Q4	<18 years old	4.51	2.122	-1.230	0.220	Not Significant
	19-24	4.83	2.086			
Q5	<18 years old	4.60	1.962	0.030	0.976	Not Significant
	19-24	4.59	1.943			
Q6	<18 years old	4.26	2.048	-.642	0.521	Not Significant
	19-24	4.42	2.071			
Q7	<18 years old	4.66	2.107	-.088	0.930	Not Significant
	19-24	4.68	2.051			
Q8	<18 years old	4.14	1.976	-.768	0.443	Not Significant
	19-24	4.33	1.926			
Q9	<18 years old	4.65	2.111	-2.043	0.042*	Significant
	19-24	5.17	2.031			
Q10	<18 years old	4.94	1.978	-1.237	0.217	Not Significant
	19-24	5.23	1.902			
Q11	<18 years old	4.80	2.085	-1.124	0.262	Not Significant
	19-24	5.07	1.915			
Q12	<18 years old	4.61	1.840	0.586	0.558	Not Significant
	19-24	4.47	1.894			
Q13	<18 years old	4.05	2.076	0.601	0.549	Not Significant
	19-24	3.90	1.950			
Q14	<18 years old	4.49	2.093	-.418	0.676	Not Significant
	19-24	4.60	2.070			
Q15	<18 years old	4.30	2.129	-.633	0.527	Not Significant
	19-24	4.46	2.014			
Q16	<18 years old	4.70	1.948	-.742	0.459	Not Significant
	19-24	4.88	1.934			

*Analysed Under 95% Confidence Level

For the significant differences in the responses grouped according to sex, it is noticeable in Table 6.2 that the values of significance are all above the assigned alpha of 0.05. This palpably shows that both sexes were reached in similar degree by each of the communication platforms.

Table 6.2. Independent Samples T-Test Based on Sex (Reach)

	VARIABLE	MEAN	SD	t	SIG	REMARKS
Q1	Male	3.81	1.745	1.432	0.153	Not Significant
	Female	3.48	1.848			
Q2	Male	4.27	1.723	0.303	0.762	Not Significant
	Female	4.21	1.918			
Q3	Male	4.31	1.961	-.068	0.946	Not Significant
	Female	4.33	1.997			
Q4	Male	4.60	2.165	-.799	0.425	Not Significant
	Female	4.80	2.059			
Q5	Male	4.61	2.033	0.069	0.945	Not Significant
	Female	4.59	1.895			
Q6	Male	4.55	2.035	1.205	0.229	Not Significant
	Female	4.25	2.075			
Q7	Male	4.57	2.091	-.655	0.513	Not Significant
	Female	4.74	2.054			
Q8	Male	4.54	1.959	1.892	0.060	Not Significant
	Female	4.09	1.915			
Q9	Male	4.91	2.113	-.576	0.565	Not Significant
	Female	5.06	2.043			
Q10	Male	5.04	1.962	-.655	0.513	Not Significant
	Female	5.19	1.912			
Q11	Male	4.85	2.010	-.884	0.378	Not Significant
	Female	5.06	1.952			
Q12	Male	4.53	1.840	0.066	0.948	Not Significant
	Female	4.51	1.901			
Q13	Male	3.93	2.016	-.134	0.893	Not Significant
	Female	3.97	1.982			
Q14	Male	4.54	2.221	-.110	0.912	Not Significant
	Female	4.57	1.982			
Q15	Male	4.42	2.115	0.111	0.912	Not Significant
	Female	4.40	2.017			
Q16	Male	4.88	1.983	0.393	0.694	Not Significant
	Female	4.78	1.912			

*Analysed Under 95% Confidence Level

Market Analysis and Interpretation

Open house and events held on the campus ranking first and second in the preferred communication platforms. Both fall under the category of events and experiences of the major platforms of the IMC. This finding is similar to other investigations (Noel-Levitz, 2013; Hanover, 2014). Event marketing which capitalises the power of live experiences indeed can aid achieve enrolment goals.

Social media and friends/relatives ranked third and fourth in the preferred communication platforms which are interrelated. These can be testimonies, recommendations or comments given by others who can also be friends or relatives. Earned media (Munro and Richards, 2011) certainly influence one's decision in choosing a university.

The top four are followed by website, medals and certificates of scholarship distributed by the university, the university's outreach programs, and participation of the university in career orientations/fairs

organised by different high schools; all having preference rating above the median. IMC truly requires an amalgamation of different communication platforms (events and experiences, online and social media marketing, and public relations) as shown on the preference of the respondents.

In contrast, students are least interested in billboards and they despise receiving calls/messages from universities. This is corroborated by the bogus telephone/cell phone numbers students affix in the info sheets, as experienced by other university marketers.

CI wise, those platforms preferred by the respondents have maintained the top spots with minor order change. The most efficient platforms are relatives/friends, open house, social media, and the university website. With relatives/friends and social media ranking first and third, it is evident that word of mouth marketing or oral/written recommendation by a delighted customer to the prospective customers indeed is considered the most effective form of promotion (Nielsen, 2012; Business Dictionary). While the presence of social media and university website in the top spots validates that the tech-savviness of generations Y and Z greatly influence the appropriate medium for the two youngest cohorts.

The next four with the highest CI are events held on the campus, medals and certificates of scholarships given by the university, flyers/brochures, and UAAP (or university athletic leagues); together with the top 4 platforms, affirm the IMC concept of commissioning blend of major communication platforms such as online and social media marketing, events and experiences, and PR in sending desired messages to the target audience.

Variance analysis revealed that among the communication platforms, the open house is the only platform reaching and regarded by the Gen Y and Gen Z differently. Though it has a high CI, it is more effective for the millennial than the centennials. Whereas the sex of the respondents does not affect the preference for and reach of the different platforms.

CONCLUSION

This segment presents the recommendations. Based on the foregoing, the paper recommends that online and social media marketing, events and experiences, and public relations should be given the highest regard when developing IMC for a university since the communication platforms that gathered the highest CI fall under these categories.

Universities should take advantage of social media, their website, and word of mouth. This can be done through: programs promoting "participatory culture" to generate more positive comments and stories which can uplift the university's brand and image; conduct of activities that can incite students' interest in the university's programs and services, thereby reflecting such in their daily personal dialogs or via

social media; and programs that can strengthen the university's ties with its alumni to further resonate "word of mouth". Improve prospective students' familiarity with the university and its culture through an open house, events held on campus and university participation in athletic leagues. These mentioned activities which can be classified as events and experiences are much welcomed by and are reaching the potential tertiary students. Less effort should be accorded to billboards and directly contacting the prospective students via telephone, text, or email. Universities targeting Gen Y should intensify the utilisation of open house.

In order to craft a more flexible segmented approach to university marketing, it is recommended to widen the scope of the study. It could be in terms of the domain (universities located in different areas) and/or respondents' characteristics (e.g. place of residence and the type of school origin – privately owned or publicly operated senior high school).

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