

# **Exploring Gen Z's Preferences Toward Higher Education Institutions' Promotional Strategies**

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## **Abstract**

This study was conducted to explore Gen Z's preferences for promotional strategies when choosing a university to enroll in. The study applied one-to-one semi-structured interviews with recent university students around Purbalingga as participants. The number of participants was determined by saturation, and the data collected were transcribed verbatim. The transcribed interviews were analyzed using ATLAS.Ti to identify emerging themes. The results of this study show that the most attractive promotional strategies for Generation Z students to enroll were printed brochures, Instagram social media pages, personal messaging via WhatsApp, and direct messages (DMs) on Instagram. The study reveals that Gen Z, as today's targeted consumers of HEIs, values both digital and traditional advertising, provided they offer relevant information clearly, feature aesthetic design, and include personal interaction that gives them a sense of real engagement without visiting the campus. Therefore, higher education institutions (HEIs) should also utilize social media pages to promote their academic programs besides the conventional promotional strategy using printed brochures. The results supported the previous studies and theory that broaden existing literature on brand knowledge, brand awareness and brand equity which led to brand loyalty. This study contributes to the knowledge and literature in marketing and education especially HEIs, as well as the practical in education marketing to consider the precise promotional mix in order to attract more prospective students from the Generation Z era.

## **Keywords:**

Promotional Strategies, Promotion Mix, Students' Enrolment

## **INTRODUCTION**

The results of the 2020 Population Census released by the Central Statistics Agency (Badan Pusat Statistik, BPS) at the end of January 2021 provide a picture of Indonesia's demographics which have experienced many changes from the previous year, namely 2010. The 2020 census shows that Gen Z (the generation born between 1997 and 2012) dominates the composition of Indonesia's population, namely 27.94%. The Millennial generation is smaller in number, namely 25.87% of the total population of Indonesia. This means that the existence of Gen Z plays an important role and has an influence on Indonesia's current and future development (Rakhmah, 2021).

Gen Z has very different traits and characteristics from previous generations. This generation is labeled as the boundary-less generation. Ryan Jenkins (2017) in his article entitled "Four Reasons Generation Z will be the Most Different Generation" states that Gen Z

has different expectations, preferences and work perspectives and is considered challenging for organizations (Kartawinata et al., 2021). Gen Z's character is more diverse, global in nature, and has an influence on the culture and attitudes of most people. Gen Z is able to take advantage of technological changes in various aspects of their lives and they use it as natural as breathing.

There are at least five main characteristics of Gen Z that differentiate it from previous generations. First, Gen Z is a generation that has never known a world that is completely isolated from the existence of other people. Social media confirms that one can talk to anyone, anywhere, and at any time. Gen Z considers social media as a bridge which make everyone connected, communicate and interact privately and publicly. Second, that Gen Z's connection with other people is the most important thing. Third, a skills gap is possible in this generation. This is why efforts to transfer skills from previous generations such as interpersonal communication, work culture, technical skills and critical thinking must be intensively carried out. Fourth, Gen Z's ease in exploring and connecting with many people in various places virtually via an internet connection, and this ease makes Gen Z have a global mindset because they are connected with many people from various parts of the world. Fifth, Gen Z's openness in accepting diverse points of view and mindsets, causes them to easily accept diversity and different views on things. However, the impact then is that Gen Z finds it difficult to define itself. The self-identity that is formed often changes based on various things that influence them to think and behave towards something (Tulgan, Bruce; RainmakerThinking, 2013).

Fear of Missing Out or known as FOMO is also one of the characteristics of Gen Z. Gen Z has a high curiosity about various things, especially new things. FOMO makes prospective students motivated to find out various things from information sources distributed which easily accessible today. Therefore, Gen Z chooses to always actively connect with their community so that information circulating within their community is not overlooked, one of which is through social media. Thus, education must accommodate information needed by students and prospective students and able to curate which information is useful to share with students and prospective students (Rakhmah, 2021).

In the educational context, understanding the characteristics of Gen Z is important to determine not only the effective learning strategies, but also to understand Gen Z's considerations and preferences in choosing university in order to university's marketers to develop appropriate promotional strategies to attract Gen Z to enroll.

## **LITERATURE RIVIEW**

### **Promotional Strategies**

Promotion refers to any incentive used by producers to encourage salespeople to aggressively sell it and trigger the consumers to buy a brand. It also can be defined as a one-way flow of information or persuasion made to direct a person or organization to actions that create exchanges in marketing (Swasta & Irawan, 1989). Today, the various promotional strategies applied by business firms from the profit organization such as banking and industrial companies to non-profit organizations include universities. These promotional strategies are applied by the business organization in order to survive in the global business market (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013). Promotional strategies known as Promotion Mix or Marketing Communication Mix is a term used to describe the set of tools that a business can use to communicate the benefits of its products or services effectively to its customers. Hence, the challenge is to select the right mix of promotional activities to suit the particular

business and organization (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013) especially for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Although marketing in education still on debate (Bartlett, Fredrick, Gulbrandsen, & Murillo, 2002; Bok, 2003; Newman, Couturier, & Scurry, 2004), it cannot be denied that the marketing education helps the HEIs in financial benefit, improve the quality of service offered, increase brand knowledge, and building positive image in the society (Gibbs & Knapp, 2002; Geiger, 2004; Eckel, 2007; Al-Fattal, 2010).

The theoretical framework regarding the promotional strategies known as promotion mix is taken from Kotler and Armstrong (2018), which is a combination of communications tools used by a firm to carry out the promotional process and communicate directly with the consumers, persuasively, to communicate the customer value and build customer relationship. The five (5) promotion mix includes Advertising, Sales Promotion, Personal Selling, Public Relations, and Direct and Digital Marketing (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Recently, society is exposed by various promotions in various media and channels known as Promotion Mix or Marketing Communication Mix. Therefore, the organization agreed that the effective promotions nowadays are not only in the form of traditional and rely on a single channel, but also using the digital and internet media and other forms of channel into a unified and integrated as a whole (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Thus, when those 5 dimensions of Promotion Mix are combined, they can produce message clarity, consistency, and persuasively with high impact but minimum cost (Percy, 2018). In line with other prior researchers, when the promotional strategy is implemented in combination, it will produce better marketing performance results such as increase in market share, sales, and corporate profits (Tleuberdinova & Sabdenbekova, 2018).

## **Advertisement**

Advertisement is any form of paid and non-personal communication about ideas, organization, products, and services by identified sponsors (Jobber, 2007). It is paid due to the media and channel used by the organization, and it is non-personal since the advertising messages are for society either individual or public which uses mass media and the most effective cost promotion to reach a large audience (Belch & Belch, 2009). Whereas, advertising promotional strategy is the promotion of goods, services, companies and ideas that must be paid for by a sponsor and usually delivered in mass media. Advertising consists of traditional and electronic advertising media. Traditional advertising media is in the form of print media such as newspapers, pamphlets, brochures, leaflets, banners, billboards. Meanwhile, electronic advertising media includes television, radio, and the internet or social media (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). However, today's marketing expert considers the advertising on mass media was less effective due to high cost and unpredictable target audience. Thus, most of the company recently emphasize on maximizing the brand association and good image convince to the minds of targeted consumers, as well as convince them about the quality of the product and services by delivering the benefits and customer value (Theodora, 2021).

Commercial advertising has played an important role in creating more brand awareness and therefore increasing purchase intention hereby students' enrolment. Company uses advertising with the purpose that consumers will switch to their brand and remain loyal (Baker, Nancarrow, & Tinson, 2005; Zhafira, Andreti, Akmal, & Kumar, 2018; Ri, CHang, Lee, & Kim, 2020). Advertising in this study is aimed to gain students' attention and interest in HEIs, increase brand recognition of HEIs, and persuade students to enroll in the university.

### **Sales Promotion**

Sales Promotional strategy is a form of direct persuasion through the use of various incentives to encourage the purchase of product or service. It can be in the form of coupons, contests, discounts, premiums, and others (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

### **Personal Selling**

Personal Selling promotional strategy is a direct interaction with one or more potential buyers in the form of presentations, answer questions, and take orders. Personal selling is the most effective tool in building buyer preferences, beliefs, and actions (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Krussell & Paramita, (2016) believed that personal selling can help the company to form brand knowledge, positive quality perception which lead to brand loyalty (Krussell & Paramita, 2016).

### **Public Relation**

Public Relation promotional strategy is a process or activity that aims to establish communication between the organization and parties outside the organization. It can be in the form of press-conferences, customer service, or public events (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Public relation strategy can help the company to build a positive image delivered to the public through positive association (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Moreover, participating or holding an event can help targeted customers to memorize the brand, embed the brand in the targeted customer's memory, and create brand image in association with the events held or participated (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Krussell & Paramita, 2016).

### **Direct and Digital Marketing**

Direct and Digital Marketing promotional strategy is a promotion by direct communications with carefully targeted individual consumers to obtain an immediate response. It can be in the form of direct mail, telemarketing, email marketing, text (SMS) marketing, catalog, leaflet marketing, online marketing, mobile marketing, and social media marketing. Direct marketing targets a specific customer or customer community and it allows a dialogue between marketing team and the consumers when messages can be altered based on consumers' response. This method is well suited to create customer engagement and building one to one customer relationship (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

### **Previous Studies**

Neha and Manoj (2013) agreed that promotion plays a significant role in consumer purchase decision hereby is student enrollment (Neha & Manoj, 2013). It is strengthened by the study of Uchendu, Nwafor, and Nwaneri (2015) which recommended that school website or social media, quality school programs, infrastructural development, and media advertisement should be used in the marketing strategies to boost students' enrollment (Uchendu, Nwafor, & Nwaneri, 2015). Furthermore, promotion mix has positive effects on brand equity (Karunanithy & Sivesan, 2013).

Those previous studies mentioned above never mentioned Generation Z as the prospective students targeted implicitly or explicitly. Therefore, this study highlights on

Generation Z as prospective students targeted so that it will be aligned with the current phenomenon of society 5.0.

Kotler and Keller (2016) define purchase decisions as the decision processes and actions of people involved in purchasing the products or using the services (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The consumer purchase decision in this study referred to the students' enrolment in the university, where the prospective students decided to enroll in the university based on the rich and related information gathered by the prospective students as well as the influence of the HEIs' promotional strategies.

Other previous studies agreed that promotional strategies using promotion mix has influenced the psychology of targeted consumers to have positive behavior on purchasing products or using services (Neha & Manoj, 2013; Damarjati, Kusumawati, & Mawardi, 2016) hereby students' enrollment in the university. Briggs (2006) suggested that the university needs to be able to predict the prospective students targeted so they can focus on particular promotional strategies suited those prospective students targeted (Briggs, 2006).

The promotional strategy is one of the ways for universities to provide related information in order to attract the prospective students to enroll. Meanwhile, the prospective students are the buyer which has their buying decision process. The buying decision process has five stages initially with the problem recognition, information seeking, evaluating the products or services alternatives, buying the product or services, and finally feedback of customers' post-purchase experience (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). This study follows the study of Al-Fattal (2010) in term of changes the term of the buying decision process into student choice of the university in order to adjust with the study conducted. In conjunction with the students' enrollment, the students were seeking the related information about a particular university first before finding themselves interested in making an enrollment in the chosen university. Since, one of the functions of promotional strategy is to deliver the related information needed to the prospective students. Therefore, this study assigns the promotional strategy in the second stage of student's choice of university before the prospective student decides to make an enrolment (Afifah, 2022).

Regarding the information seeking, the student will do the internal search first based on the student's knowledge and experiences which usually obtained from the close surrounding such as family, friends, and relatives (Palmer, 2001; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). When the internal search provide insufficient information, the student then initiates an external search by collecting information from several sources such as mass media, prospectuses, surfing more on the social media and website, and even contacting the call center or sending direct message to the admission administrator (Al-Fattal, 2010; Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Thus, the promotional strategies are important in order to create brand awareness and broaden the brand knowledge to gain more prospective students' interest (Geiger, 2004).

Purbalingga has five Universities established around such as Kampus II Universitas Jendral Soedirman (UNSOED), Universitas Perwira Purbalingga (UNPERBA), Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis Muhammadiyah Purbalingga (ITBMP), Universitas Terbuka Pokjar Purbalingga (UT Purbalingga), Kampus II Universitas Islam Negeri Prof. K.H. Saifuddin Zuhri (UIN Saizu) (Google, 2022). Those universities applied various promotional strategies in order to attract more prospective students to enroll. However, two of those universities such as UNPERBA and ITBMP continued to face decreasing in prospective students' enrollment in the past couple of years (Afifah, 2022). Since those both universities are considered brand new, thus, their brand value is not as strong as the other three old brand universities such as UNSOED, UT Purbalingga, and UIN Saizu. Therefore, this study

believes that this study needs to be carried out in order to explore the role of HEIs' promotional strategies in attracting new students to enroll. So that, this study can help struggling universities to prioritize promotional strategies in order to attract a larger number of prospective students to enroll in the following years.

This research emphasizes on the role promotional strategies which are implemented by HEIs around Purbalingga, at a particular time hereby is when the new school year approaches, and then use it correctly to achieve a result hereby the number of student enrollment. Therefore, it can be concluded that promotion is not only using several communication-based activities, but also, all of the promotional dimensions should be deliberated, implemented, and combined in a way that will satisfy the organizational objectives which is student's enrolment.

The previous studies mentioned above never mentioned Generation Z (Gen Z) as the prospective students targeted implicitly or explicitly. Therefore, this study highlights Gen Z as prospective students targeted so that it aligned with the current phenomenon of society 5.0. This study contributes to the knowledge and literature in marketing education especially HEIs, as well as the practical in education marketing to consider the right promotional mix in order to attract more prospective students in the Generation Z era.

## **METHODS**

Qualitative method approach is a research method based on the philosophy of post-positivism used to explore the condition of natural objects where the researcher is the key instrument. This method approach allows researcher to gain deeper information about the actual situation through participants' minds by interviewing them directly (Sugiyono, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

One to one semi structured interview was employed in this study. The researcher was involved directly in the study and used a small number of HEIs students around Purbalingga which belong to Gen Z as participants. Purbalingga is chosen because it has more universities in town than other districts around. The participants are selected by their age which belongs to Gen Z, and they are in their current first semester with various backgrounds of studies.

The recent students were chosen as participants because the researcher wanted to have clear and fresh information regarding the Gen Z's preferences of HEI's promotional strategies in attracting them to enroll in the university they are in now. The number of participants was determined by saturation which means that the data collection stopped once no further information was received through the interview which comes to a total of 33 participants.

The audio interviews were transcribed verbatim. This study implemented inductive data analysis which emphasizes more to the meaning rather than generalization. ATLAS.Ti was implemented as a tool for analyzing the data. Besides primary data through interviews, this study used secondary data as well by collecting data and information from universities' admission department, website, books, and journal. To assure credibility and conformability, a peer review process was conducted to review the data and coding to refine categories and develop the most descriptive labels at each level (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

To meet the prospective students' need about university related information, HEIs in Purbalingga offered various promotional strategies to deliver the related information regarding the universities, includes advertising in print media, electronic media, social media, and website; personal selling strategy such as visiting schools and companies, individual selling, and call center; Public Relation strategy such as press-conference, admission office, and events; direct and digital marketing strategy such as email, instant messaging, and personal messaging; and sales promotion strategy such as university scholarship, tuition waiver, and Kartu Indonesia Pintar Kuliah (KIPK). KIPK is education fund assistance provided by the Indonesian government for high school graduates (SMA) or equivalent that has good academic grade but have economic limitations (Pusat Layanan Pembiayaan Pendidikan, 2022).

Based on the interview analysis, this study found that HEIs in Purbalingga have implemented the promotional strategies using various traditional, digital, and internet media and channels which has broadened its market reach. It is proven by the interview which disclosed 16 students knew the university from close related people such as family and friends, 10 students knew the university from social media, and 7 other students knew the university from other forms of promotion such as brochures, leaflet, billboards, former school, and radio news. This result disclosures and supports the previous studies and theory which promotional strategies can broaden the brand knowledge, create brand awareness and brand equity which lead to brand loyalty (Krussell & Paramita, 2016; Damarjati, Kusumawati, & Mawardi, 2016; Theodora, 2021).

The interview discovered that the HEIs in Purbalingga were not only posted the advertisement in print media such as newspaper, magazine, leaflet, brochure, banner, and billboard, but also in digital and social media such as TV, radio, website, YouTube, Instagram, and Tiktok, as their Advertising Strategy. The students explained that the most attractive form of digital and traditional advertisement delivered by the HEIs respectively is Instagram and brochure. The students claim that they can find the complete related information and attractive design in both advertising form as the P2, P28 stated,

*“Brochure, since it provides clear information about prospective student registration, so I became convinced to join as a university student. It also says that the fees are very affordable, that's why I decided to enroll in that university”,* said P2.

*“Instagram, because there is a lot of information regarding the activities carried out, we can follow positive activities from uploaded photos and videos, and much more. Anyway, there are many interesting things from activity posts on Instagram, that's why I'm interested in enrolling at a university”,* said P28

The university admission and promotional department claims that visiting the school or workplace is one of the ways of Personal Selling Strategy for the university to promote and attract prospective students to enroll. The 26 students claim that their school or workplace has never been visited by the university. Meanwhile, 7 other students claim that their school or workplace have been visited by the university to make promotion. The universities comes to the school or workplace, and then enter each class or make a forum in auditorium, after that the university would elaborate in detail about the university such as vision, missions, school fees, facilities, university activities, student activities, and the course and study programs as the P28 and P30 explained,

*“They come to my school and then introducing the various existing departments or study programs as well as the activities and the student’s organizations that exist in the university”,* said P28.

*“The university told in detail about fees, facilities and so on.....”,* said P30.

P30 also claims that one explanation that interests him is that the recent students in the university are gathered from not only within the city, but also from other cities around Indonesia.

*“.....They also told that students at the university were not only from within the city of Purbalingga, but also from various cities as well”,* said P30.

The participants are from Gen Z, and their answers are in line with the prior research from Stanford scholars stating that Gen Z values diversity more than other older generations. Gen Z strives for a diverse community and is highly collaborative and social (Katz, Ogilvie, Shaw, & Woodhead, 2021).

Universities also provide call center or admission service center under the university admission and promotional department as part of Personal Selling Strategy to serve the prospective students who seeks more detail information personally such as scholarship and tuition waiver information, tuition fee payment, registration method, registration documents, and university accreditation, as P7 and P25 explained,

*“I asked a lot about how to register, the requirements for registration documents, and about the scholarships available at the university”,* said P7.

*“I asked about university accreditation and the tuition fees”,* said P25.

Other Personal Selling Strategy implemented by the HEIs is creating an agent where the agent approach personally to the prospective students and persuade them to enroll in the university by explaining the admission details as P6 and P11, explained,

*“They go to every house which has children who will graduate from high school including my house, and then they describe in detail about their activities, course that I can take and which classes. Thus, my parents and I are very interested in it and decided to enroll”,* said P6.

*“They motivate me so that I am sure and want to continue my education at the university”,* said P11.

Most of students claim that the most attractive of the HEIs’ Personal Selling Strategy is the call center or admission service center combine with the personal messaging using WhatsApp (WA), since the students can personally contact the admission admin without visiting the premise and still get the expected detailed answers, as P28 explained,

*“I prefer contact them personally because when I contacted the call center via WhatsApp the response was very good like when I asked about the KIPK scholarship the admin responded very well. Even the admin explained about the KIPK scholarship itself to me. It makes me happy and satisfied”,* said P28.

HEIs in Purbalingga also offered some benefits to the prospective students such as university scholarship (fully funded and partial funded), tuition waiver, and KIPK as Sales Promotion Strategy. Total 26 students claim that tuition waiver was the university’s most attractive sales promotional strategy they enrolled for, since it can give the students opportunity to save the remaining money to make college preparation such as boarding house, transportation, college attributes, textbooks, and stationery, as the P29 explained. In addition, tuition waiver has no strict requirement compared to the scholarship.



*“Tuition waiver and discount. Yes, because with tuition waiver and discount I can save my remaining money to buy stuffs to prepare for college, hahaha”, said P29.*

This is in line with the prior study that consumers are passionate about discount (Zhafira, Andreti, Akmal, & Kumar, 2018), and it has been studied long before that by Gupta and Cooper (1992) who found that offering discounts on a brand name has bigger impact on customer’s purchase intention (Gupta & Cooper, 1992).

HEIs in Purbalingga also actively participate in various public events such as education expo, campus fair, and other exhibitions, which are organized by the local government or other third parties. Some of the students prefer visiting the education exhibition since they can visit the university’s booth and have direct conversation with the admin while having snacks and strolling around with friends.

The institutions were not only participating in events but also held their own events such as digital press-conferences including YouTube podcasts and live Instagram as the part of their Public Relation Strategy in order to provide a place for prospective students who want to know more about the campus without visiting the premises. Public relations of HEIs are a management function which aims to manage and maintain the relationships and communication between the university and various public groups such as government, industry, and new students in order to establish common goodwill and maintain the good reputation of the university (Arens, Weild, & Arens, 2011).

Besides press-conferences, HEIs also held their own event as part of Public Relation Strategy in order to attract more prospective students. Total 22 students explained that rather than university booth in the public event, those students were more attracted and interested by the university events such as academic contest, music contest, sport and e-sport competition, theater, stages, since the public can participate in the contest and competition which made the prospective students more interested to enroll, as P11 explained,

*“I love the events held by the university since I can participate in many interesting contest and competition for young millennials such as futsal, e-sport competition, and so on. Very entertaining and amazing”, said P11.*

This is in line with the prior study explained that the customers are influenced the most by premium and contest (Neha & Manoj, 2013).

Direct and Digital Marketing strategies implemented by the HEIs were email, text (SMS), prospectus, mobile marketing, and social media marketing. Direct and Digital Marketing strategy has purposed to communicate directly with or solicit response or dialogue from prospective students. Most of the students agreed that mobile marketing like personal messaging by WhatsApp (WA) and social media marketing like Direct Message (DM) by Instagram has managed to persuade them to enroll in the university, since the students can ask any information needed and related to the university without visiting the premises. Following by the text (SMS) and prospectus, and the least favorite is email because they almost never open their email since the information needed practically comes from WhatsApp and social media platform and it is easier for them to access. The participants agreed that personal or direct messages such as WhatsApp and DM have allowed them to feel the real and intense engagement with the university admission without visiting the premises.

*“WhatsApp directly, because it makes it easier for me to ask everything about the university clearly. It's also what got me into university”, said P9.*

*“WhatsApp directly and direct messages Instagram because it is more efficient and indicates directly to me to be invited to enroll in the university”, said P19.*

This is in line with the previous researches and theory that in order to attract more prospective students, HEIs need to apply the combination of promotional strategies which are unified and integrated. So that, HEIs have more power to produce stronger messages and help to boost impact sales (Kotler & Keller, 2016). In conjunction with another prior study which explained that promotional strategy works better in combination and can help to boost more customer purchase decision (Rohaeni, 2016). Furthermore, a study found that when the price dimension combined with advertising and featured with other promotional strategies, the sales volume increased by 24% (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The fact that today's target market of HEIs comes from Gen Z, thus, HEIs need to apply promotional strategies which suit best for Gen Z. Gen Z never experienced living without the internet and digitalization. Thus, Gen Z is very familiar with digital communication and prefers to surf the internet for information rather than visiting the premises (Katz, Ogilvie, Shaw, & Woodhead, 2021).

The results of this study is relevant and supports the previous studies which agreed that marketing for education is necessary in order to broaden brand knowledge, gain financial benefits, and enhance the positive image to the society (Gibbs & Knapp, 2002; Eckel, 2007; Al-Fattal, 2010; Amalia & Purwanegara, 2013). Moreover, when the organization implemented the right promotional strategies, it can enhance the company sales hereby students' enrollment in the university (Uchendu, Nwafor, & Nwaneri, 2015; Damarjati, Kusumawati, & Mawardi, 2016; Percy, 2018; Tleuberdinova & Sabdenbekova, 2018).

The most favorite Advertising forms for Gen Z participants are Instagram page and brochures since both provide clearly information and has aesthetic design. Meanwhile, the most favorite form of Personal Selling strategy is Call Center or Admission Service Center combine with the personal messaging using WhatsApp (WA) which stand by for 24 hours. Tuition waiver is the university's most attractive form of Sales Promotional strategy. In term of Public Relation strategy, the participants more interest to the event hosting by university rather than visiting them in the public booth. In relation to the Direct and Digital Marketing strategies, the most preferences are WhatsApp and DM by Instagram since those are easier to access and can be as intimate as having face to face conversation.

Those findings show that Gen Z as the main targeted consumer having the unique traits that they are valued both digital and traditional advertising as long as it gives them clearly related information, be as intimate as having face to face conversation without visiting the premise, has aesthetic design, and easier to access. Additionally, Gen Z also valued personal and intimate interaction even though through virtual space like WhatsApp or DM by Instagram. Therefore, the university needs adjust and design the right and appropriate promotional strategy to meet the Gen Z's preferences which can provide them with personal interaction and give them real engagement feeling without visiting the premises. Thus, based on the findings, HEIs need to emphasize and prioritize on WhatsApp chat, DM by Instagram, aesthetic Instagram pages and printed brochure, offer tuition waver, and hosting more university events as the appropriate promotional strategies for attracting Gen Z to enroll.

## **CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study was to explore the preferences of Generation Z promotional strategies in choosing a university to enrol. The objective was to show that Generation Z, as today's HEIs' targeted consumers, value both digital and traditional advertising as long as it provides clearly related information and has an aesthetic design, as well as offers personal interaction giving them a real engagement feeling without visiting the premise. This study concludes that

printed brochure and Instagram are more attractive and have more influence to the students' enrollment than other form of advertising media and channel, since both advertisements provides clearly related information regarding the universities such as departments, admission requirements, tuition fees, students' activities and have aesthetics design. Meanwhile, visiting the school and workplace of prospective students to give presentation of the university has little influence on students' enrollment, since most of the students prefer to have personal conversation or messaging on mobile with the admission admin or call center such as WhatsApp chat and Direct Message (DM) on Instagram, thus the students can get related information they need without visiting the premise. Furthermore, tuition waiver is more attractive than any other form of sales promotion strategy such as government scholarship, because the government scholarship has a more rigorous selection than tuition waiver offered by the university. Moreover, holding university events such as entertaining performances, contests, and competition have more influence on students' interest to enroll in the university rather than having booths in exhibitions.

Based on the conclusion, this study recommends the HEIs to utilize the combination of traditional and digital promotional strategies by using social media especially Instagram and aesthetic printed brochures to increase the advertising attraction and reach the broader market. In addition, HEIs are recommended to utilize direct and personal messaging such as personal WhatsApp and personal Direct Message (DM) Instagram in order to increase the prospective students' interest to enroll, since it allows the prospective students to feel the real engagement with the university without visiting the premise. Furthermore, this study recommends that for the next study to focus further on the relevance of traditional advertising in this Society 5.0.

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