

The Proactive ‘Talent Scouting’ Promotion Strategy to Boost Private University’s Student Enrollment

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Abstract:- The article outlines the research outcomes on ‘talent scouting’ proactive promotional strategies to increase student-enrollment’s numbers at the Darma Persada University (UNSADA). Using the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) theory, this research explores all of its four elements within the theory, which includes: advertising; sales promotion; publications; and personal selling. The results were collected and analyzed using Situations, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control (SOSTAC) Analysis. By using the case study method followed by descriptive qualitative approach, the study collects data through conducting in-depth interviews and equipped with documentation. The result shows that the objective of the implemented promotional actions is to introduce UNSADA to the public, while the most influencing integrated promotional strategy that being executed by UNSADA is persobal selling and publication activities/public relations strategy, which the activities that involves personal direct approach towards the prospective new students. In conclusion, the integrated promotional process works effectively through direct selling and public relations for this case. It is recommended for UNSADA, in the future, to optimize the usage of advertising media as the current marketing trend is all about digital media. Thus, the optimization could have been done by using social media, TV advertisement, as well as broadcasting an audio advertisement on the radio whose majority listeners are the youth (highschool students).

Keywords:- IMC, Analysis SOSTAC, Public Relations, Personal Selling.

I. INTRODUCTION

Every university serves the purpose to provide the society needs in acquiring a higher level of education. The growing numbers of existing universities are triggering tight competitions between those universities in drawing attention from prospective students to decide on which university they want to further their education; however, the benchmark of university’s success is not merely the numbers of initial registration from prospective students. Rather, it is the final numbers of students who are re-registering for enrollments at particular university as the measurement of university’s success, because students who re-registered at a certain university are making their conformational gesture to have their college education there.

It is essential for all the prospective students to do the administrative re-registration process, as they are required to complete all compulsory documents for the university’s administration’s archives. During the Academic Year 2015/2016, the Darma Persada University (UNSADA) recorded a total number of 1520 re-registered students, as well as the Japanese literature major were to become UNSADA’s highlight when promoting the university to the public during the talent scouting for the upcoming academic year (liputan6.com, 2018).

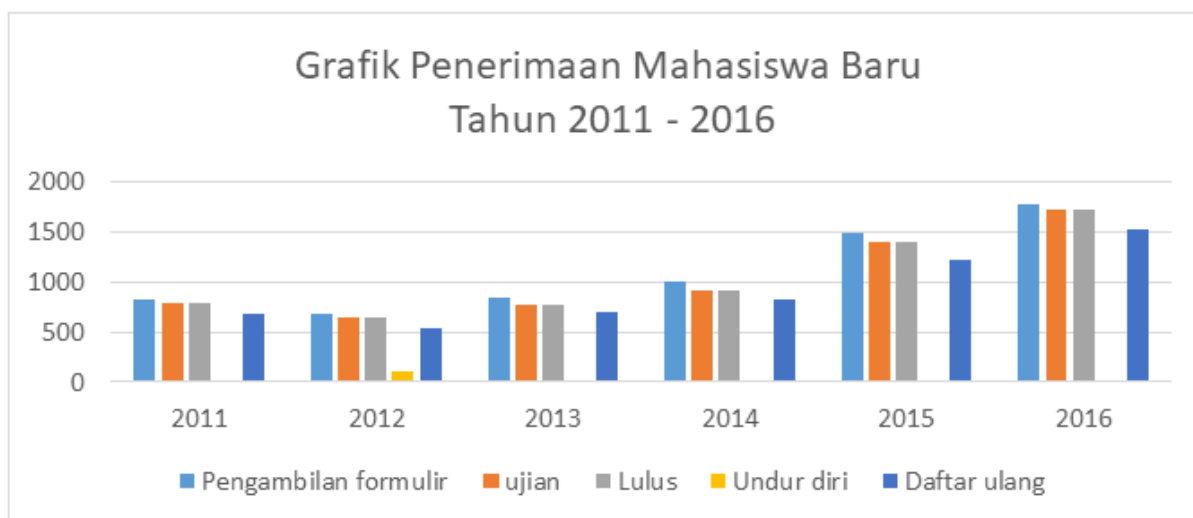


Fig 1:- Student Admission & Acceptance Rate Graph Year 2011-2016 (Persada)

The observed issue throughout these admission years UNSADA's track records is interpreted to the way they did their promotional efforts; between 2011 to 2013, UNSADA marketing division was using only 'distributing brochure' strategy around targeted schools, while the student admission committee (PMB) was fail to expand the promotional implementation widely. In 2014, promotional implementation began to be improved gradually by applying the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) strategy. After 2 years implementing the IMC, the result was started to become visible in 2016 with a significant increase of 1,500 new student admissions that reached the administrative re-registration phase.

In 2017, the government-established institution, the University Coordination-Region III (Kopertis III), counted a total of 646 universities exists within Jakarta region, and 51 among them are private universities. Being aware of UNSADA's superiority, the promotional efforts implemented by the Marketing Bureau and Public Relations team (BPH) were decided to feature all the facts about the university, as the information needs to be delivered to the prospective students. As the provided information was aimed to convey the public about UNSADA, thus, BPH started to conduct promotional efforts (Tribunnews.com, 2015).

Such promotional efforts were conducted through various activities such as direct selling, advertising, and implying good public relations to convey comprehensive information about UNSADA. Through the series of these promotional activities, student enrolment numbers are expected to show a significant increase. Moreover, in order to highlight UNSADA's eminence, the University requires the right promotional strategy due to the competition that grows tighten in the current economic condition; of which academic institutions, especially universities, are no exception to deal with competition.

The Integrated Marketing Communication is a marketing-communication planning process, which introduces the concept of comprehensive planning with evaluating the strategic role of various marketing elements such as public relations, advertising, direct selling, sales promotion, and interactive marketing. IMC is a process in managing relationships with the consumers to drive a brand value. The researcher is limiting the scope of the research between the years 2015 until 2016, as a significant increase of student enrolment was showcased within these specific years.

The Researcher also aware that there are similar studies conducted previously, with different object of study: A study by Asmiati, Muhammad Iqbal Sultan (Asmiati, Asmiati & Sultan, 2014) expound 'The Promotion Strategy of Alauddin Makassar Islamic State University in Increasing the Number of Student Candidates during Post-Transition Era from Institute to University.'; A study by Endang Sri Purwaningsih

and Dian Purworini (Purwaningsih & Purworini, 2016) study 'The Role of IMC in Consumers' Decision to Visit *Mommilk Archery Solo.*'; A study by Glynn Mangold from Murray State University and David Faulds from University of Louisville (Mangold & Faulds, 2009) overview the current state of social media that has become a distinct element of promotional diffusion – in traditional communication context, such media helps bridging the communication between the firm with its consumer, whilst in the non-traditional context, the communication between the producer and consumer is occurred interactively; A study by Adriana Csiksova, Maria Antosova and Katarina Culkova from Technical University of Kosice (Csiksova, Antosova, & Culkova, 2014) discuss 'Strategy in Direct and Interactive Marketing and Integrated Marketing Communications' through reviewing the IMC strategy concept on its direct and interactivity in presenting the message to boost learning process effectively.

Thus, this research will study about *how the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) promotional strategy impacts the increasing numbers of student enrolment's re-registration at Darma Persada University in the 2016/2017 Academic Year?*

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

George Belch and Michael Belch (Belch & Belch, 2012 : 6) describe marketing communications is an integral part of the entire marketing program in most corporations and organizations. In an effort to sell products, a corporation needs to establish good communication with customers by creating a satisfactory marketing exchange between sellers and buyers, through encouraging both parties to play their roles properly during the transaction. It is all about two-way information exchange between parties involved in marketing process (Dimiyati, 2015).

UNSADA's marketing communication objective is to provide an overview of UNSADA by introducing the university's profile through presentations and exhibitions. From these activities, public will learn about UNSADA's history of its establishment, its missions and the educational programs offered in this university. The attitude change also implied by the field team who introduce UNSADA directly to the community, by concerning the important elements of knowledge, moods, attitudes and improved behaviour changes to attract public in deciding to choose UNSADA as the university to enrol.

Promotion strategy is a strategy undertaken in the form of activities that serve to provide information, to persuade, and to influence consumer's purchase decisions. A promotion strategy that undertaken by a company is inseparable from the company's vision and missions and it is just as important as the ultimate goal to be achieved by the company – the profit and customer engagement. Strategies are often

associated with methods, techniques, and tactics. These things are useful in developing marketing communication strategies (Mansur & Ali, 2017); (Soemanegara & Kennedy, 2006).

Sutisna (Sutisna, 2002 : 264) wrote that marketing communication was developed from a diffusion of marketing mix that is promotion. The marketing mix consists of advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct response, and publicity. These components are part of the integrated marketing communications concept.

According to Kotler (Kotler, 2005:47), the marketing mix is a set of marketing tools that companies use to constantly achieve their marketing objectives toward their market's target. The marketing mix elements consist of all the variables that are biased to be controlled and are used to satisfy the targeted consumers. Additionally, the marketing mix is a tool used by the producers to influence customers' behaviour and actions. The identified mix consists of four elements: product, price, place, and promotion (dalam (Sutisna, 2002 : 264)

Traditionally, the promotion mix includes the following four elements: advertising, sales promotion, publicity, and personal selling. Each element of the promotional mix is considered as an integrated marketing communications tool that plays an important role in the IMC program.

The Integrated Marketing Communications is a cross-functional process in creating and maintaining mutually beneficial relationships with customers and other stakeholders, through controlling and disseminating message that being delivered to the particular group and drive them through consumer's data, which aimed to create dialogue. The main purpose of IMC is to create a long-term brand relationship through existing communication elements at the level of marketing management that will ultimately boost sales and generate profitability for the company (Duncan, 2005:12)

A company that applies the IMC concept to build relationships with customers would find it very beneficial. (Schultz, Barnes, Schultz, & Azzaro, 2015:3) describe the Integrated Marketing Communications is a process to accelerate the return of investment through assuring the communication objective is achieved and in-line with corporate goals.

In reference to Shimp (Shimp, 2014:10) IMC is a communication process that requires planning, forming, integration, and implementation that consisting of various marketing communication forms (advertising, sales promotion, release publicity, events, etc.), of which the communicated messages are delivered from time to time, to the brand's targeted customers and prospective customers. Ultimately, the goal of IMC is to influence, both directly and

indirectly, the behaviour of targeted audience on the marketing communication plan.

Promotional mix has several elements to be implied, which are: Advertising, Sales promotion, Personal selling, and Publicity. These four elements of promotional mix are doable by any corporation. When choosing to use advertising elements, then the promotion range is likely to be spread widely because many people are aware about it. The sales promotion elements would encourage consumers to make the purchase. The personal selling approach is relying heavily on interaction between individuals where direct communication occurred. Lastly, the publicity is a promotional approach using the advantage of mass media.

On this case, UNSADA is using all the elements suggested by the promotional mix; as UNSADA placing advertisement in several locations, as UNSADA participating educational exhibitions, as UNSADA is conducting school visits to do personal selling through presentation, and as UNSADA is using mass media like radio and newspaper for publicity.

The analytic model known as SOSTAC (*Situations, Objectives, Strategy, Tactics, Action, and Control*) is widely used in marketing communication, because SOSTAC analysis is well considered for its advance staging to develop marketing plans. Prisgunanto (2006:107) explain, with the advantage of SOSTAC's 3Ms lies on the logical structure and on the elements of planning development that could be combined towards measurement and in selecting a comprehensive strategy model.

Prisgunanto (Prisgunanto, 2006:108) breaks down how several dimensions of SOSTAC established relevance between one another for a successful marketing communications. The dimensions are including; *Situations* (where we are now), *Objectives* (where we are going), *Strategy* (how we are going to achieve the goals), *Tactics* (details of strategy), *Action* (details of tactics), *Control* (measurement and supervision). Once decided to use this model, it is critically important to assure that these 6 dimensions of SOSTAC are featured and implemented well on developing marketing strategy. The whole dimensions must be must be considered by the corporation, so that SOSTAC communication strategy will run soundly.

Every corporation has its own marketing strategy as the guidance in carrying out its business. Market segmentation becomes one of the most important highlight. Eric Berkowitz and friends, in Morissan (Morissan, 2015) define market segmentation as a way to divide a market into distinct groups that share similar needs and similar respond towards a marketing action. Segmentation is required to enable the corporation in improving a better service for its customers, especially towards the targeted costumers.

The targeted consumers of university's student admission are teenagers who are general/vocational high schools students on their senior year. Registrants coming from senior year high school students group are on the average age of 16-20 years old. Morissan (Morissan, 2015) write that consumers are divided by the age group. The Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) divides consumers by age, and one of the groups are people of the age 15-20 years old.

In order to provide an adequate theoretical ground for this research, framework thinking is generated based on the adoption and development from a number of theories and findings from former researches that available. The following chart is a visualization of framework thinking that will give the reader a brief yet comprehensive overview of phases of this study:

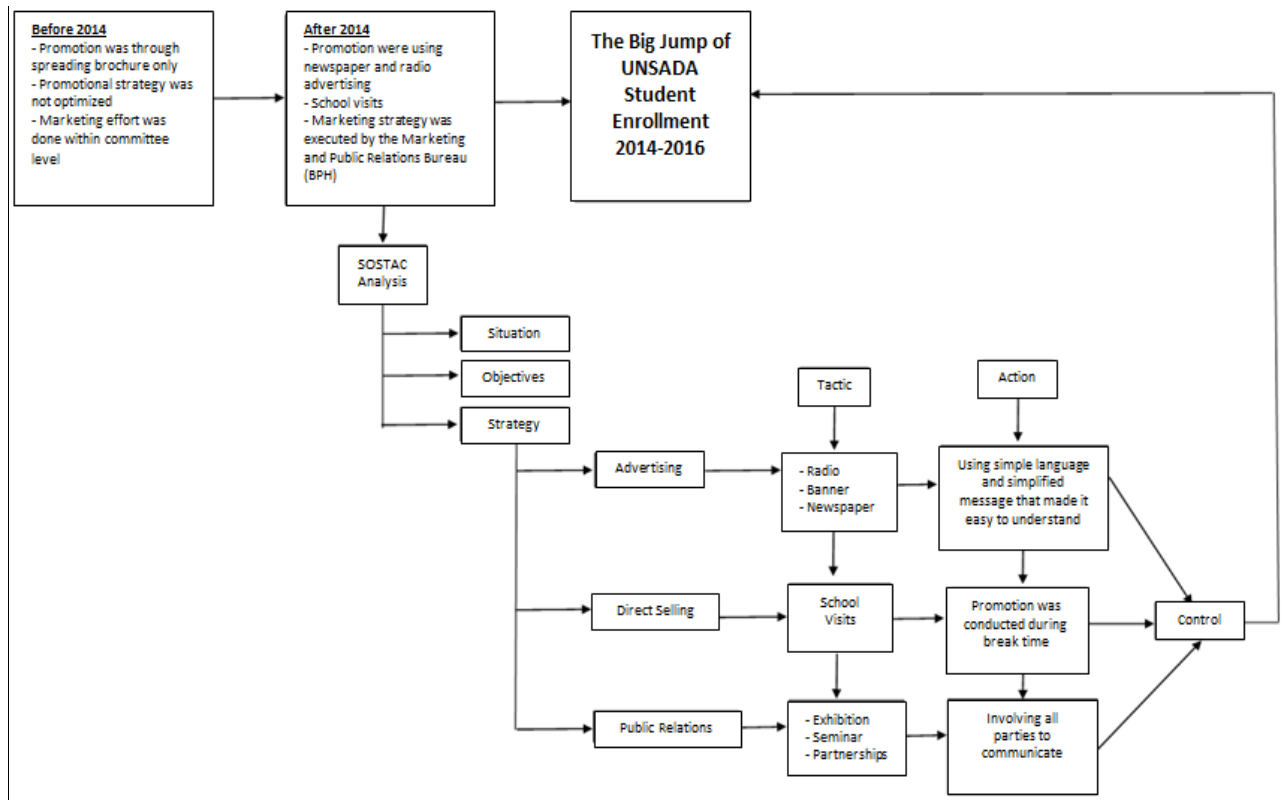


Fig 2:- Theoretical Framework (Developed by the Researcher)

III. MATERIALS AND METHOD

This research applies qualitative approach through descriptive case study method. The primary data gathered in this study was obtained straight out of the trusted sources through in-depth interviews; while, the secondary data was obtained indirectly by researcher through intermediary media (recorded by other parties), most of them were received in the form of evidence like notes, or attached reports from archives or documents. The study involved a total of four key informants and informants, they are: (1) Dwi Setyo Widodo: The Head of UNSADA Marketing Division since 2016; his involvement as one of the informants in this study is necessary to answer the research purpose. This informant has served as Head of Marketing Division from 2016. (2) Hendro: A staff in UNSADA marketing division who executes UNSADA's promotional activities; his involvement as one of the informants in this study is essential as he, himself, is the field personnel who deliver UNSADA's

promotional activities. (3) Murah Puji: The Head of UNSADA Student Admission Division (PMB) since 2016; this informant is the person in charge to run and the one who knows everything about the entire process acquiring new student for admission and enrolment. (4) Christine: The UNSADA Rector's Secretary; this informant was chosen for her role as the social media administrator in spreading all information about UNSADA on Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook.

The primary data was collected by using in-depth interview technique, while the secondary data was gathered through documentation study. The validity of data was confirmed by triangulation method. These data was then analyzed through some phases of process; compiling, categorizing the data, examining the content correlation from the massive data compiled and interpreting the meaning so it could be developed into the theory.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Throughout this part, the researcher will discuss the output assembled from the research objects as well as from the data obtained accordingly from the field through some interviews with the key informants.

In doing their tasks, the marketing team at The Bureau of Marketing and Public Relation (BPH) had to plan up and identify the right strategy to be implied for UNSADA promotional activities. Such promotional activities conducted by the marketing team are: **First**, placing advertising on various media like radio, banners and newspapers to disseminate information and to promote UNSADA to public; **second**, conducting direct selling by visiting high schools and vocational schools. The two promotional activities are different based on the intended target of each strategy. Consequently, by using different kinds of promotional strategy UNSADA hopes to boost student admission numbers.

Throughout observation period for this study, UNSADA is implementing the Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) for its promotional strategy. Additionally, throughout observing the promotional process, the researcher was provided with the data that showing UNSADA's student admission is increasing in the 2016/2017 Academic Year, which was affected by promotional strategy shift implied by the marketing team. Thus, all the strategies – print advertising, publication on online and broadcast media, participating academic exhibitions, and school visits, seems to contribute in each portion to significant increase of UNSADA student admission headcounts.

Based on UNSADA student admission data on Academic Year 2015/2016, between the period of February to September, included the distinct student admission group, the university recorded as many as 1721 registrant students. The faculty that counted the highest acceptance rate of new students is the Literature Faculty, with a total of prospective students who reach the re-registration phase were as many as 558. Moreover, 314 prospective students were re-registered in the Japanese Literature Faculty. 142 prospective students were re-registered in the English Literature faculty. 51 prospective students were re-registered at the Chinese Literature Faculty. 29 prospective students were re-registered at the Japanese language diploma program. Lastly, 22 prospective students were re-registered in the Chinese language program. Concluded from these outcomes, the Japanese Literature was became the program that outnumbered applicants compared to other Literature faculties.

The study figured out that UNSADA was applying both personal communication channel, as well as non-personal communication channel for its promotional activities. The Promotional mix implemented by UNSADA are including

advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, public relation, and direct marketing. Nevertheless, the direct selling and public relations were seemed to be the backbone for UNSADA promotional activities, because these two were the most influential in increasing the number of student admission. The promotional planning steps are broke down into the following stages: a) initial planning by identifying targets, promotional objectives, budget provision; b) implementing promotions through advertising placement in prints, online media (social media), radio, talk shows, participating academic exhibitions, and school visits; and c) monitoring and evaluation. UNSADA's Bureau of Marketing and Public Relation (BPH) has developed a well-planned and well-structured strategy to be executed properly and run smoothly as planned.

During the progress of performing direct selling, UNSADA's school visits agenda became the main promotional activity, for it developed a communication process that is integrated with direct selling approach. Upon the school visits program, direct selling was done through in-class presentation that helps constructing situation and established communication between the high school students and UNSADA, which carried out by UNSADA's Bureau of Marketing and Public Relation (BPH). By implying direct selling upon the school visits, the communication channel is established between UNSADA and high students, which consequently the promotional efforts are integrated with direct selling.

The main reason for these high school seniors who enroll themselves in UNSADA lies on UNSADA's superiority compared to other universities in Kopertis III, like Monozukuri, Trilingual, and Renewable Energy. Based on the applicant headcount, the most popular majors in UNSADA is the Japanese Literature, for it is indeed the flagship program of UNSADA. In relation with UNSADA cooperation with Japanese embassy through PERSADA in organizing scholarships for students, is explained as follows: (1) *Monbukagakusho*, initially called ASJA Japan International, it was established for ASCOJA (ASEAN Council of Japan Alumnae). The association alumni are managed by alumni of each country. The scholarships are given to 2 students for each country. The eligible participants are students graduated from PERSADA alumni and UNSADA lecturer. PERSADA was then appointed to manage *Monbukagakusho* in Indonesia. (2) *JLPT* (Noken), a Japanese language skills test. This program was implemented since December 2005 through PERSADA cooperation with *Japan Foundation*. The program is conducted in UNSADA for JABODETABEK region and cooperated with some schools in the eastern and southern regions, where PERSADA becomes the organizer of JLPT level 1-5. Eligible participants are general public, employees, students and lecturers. Responding to high demand of JLPT, it is then conducted every 6 months in July and December. The total participants from year 2011 to 2018 were recorded as many

as ± 4500. (3) *Takushoku* speech contest, held since 2002, aimed for high school students and college students. (4) *Hiroshima University Speech Contest*, this event has been held twice since the establishment of PERSADA cooperation with Hiroshima University in 2017. Participants came from various universities in Indonesia such as The University of Indonesia, Brawijaya University, Padjajaran University, University of Indonesian Education, Hasanuddin University, University of North Sumatera, Gadjahmada University, Udayana University, Airlangga University, as well as Private Universities in connection to UNSADA. (5) *Mitsui Busan*, is a scholarship program for high school, bachelor degree, master degree, and doctoral degree in Japan. This program is cooperation between Mitsui and PERSADA held at UNSADA since 1992. (6) *A cooperation of 11 Japanese Universities Consortium*, a consortium consisted of UNSADA and JAPINDO members such as Toyo University, Hiroshima University, Tokai University, Ritsumeikan University, Advanced Institute of Industrial Technology, and Human Academy.

Based on the public relations activities conducted by UNSADA in introducing its program superiority, which is the Japanese Literature, consequently make UNSADA's entire cooperation with the Japanese culture occupied the spotlight to attract the public attention in order to win the competition with the other universities.

The result of this study is complimenting some research's findings, including the followings researcher's names and research's titles: (1) Asmiati, Muhammad Akbar and Iqbal Sultan (2014) (Asmiati, Asmiati & Sultan, 2014) on explaining "*the Promotion Strategy of Alauddin Makassar State Islamic University in Increasing the Number of Post-Transition Student Candidates from Institute to University.*"; (2) Lucia Porcu from University of Granada, Salvador del Barrio from University of Granada, and Phillip Kitchen from Brock University (2012) (Porcu, Garcia, & Kitchen, 2012) who developed the IMC model that used for marketing communication.; (3) Camelia Mihart (2012) (Mihart, 2012) titled "*Impact of Integrated Marketing Communication on Consumer Behavior: Effects on Consumer Decision-Making Process*" as the study found out that the IMC gives influence towards decision making process. The consumer decision-making is complex process and requires an in-depth analysis of the relationships and instruments towards the practice of such communication practice.

Another study was done by Suleiman Al Khattab from Al Hussein Bin Talal University Jordan, As'ad Abu Rumman from Applied Science Private University, and Ghadeer Methqal from Applied Science Private University that was being featured on "*Impact on Customer's Attitudes*". The Impact of Electronic Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC) on consumer's satisfaction rate on various electronic devices in Jordan proved that each E-IMC channel (*online advertising, online public relations, and online sales promotion*) is indeed gives a significant influence towards

consumer's behavior in purchasing electronic products. The consumer is not merely just looking around at the product, they actually buy the product (Khatib, Rumman, & Zaidan, 2015).

Finally, a research by Wang Yu-Ju (University of Tennessee), Kenny Wu (National Kaohsiung University of Applied Sciences), and Jessica Yuan (Texas Tech University) that published in the *Quality Assurance in Hospital and Tourism Journal*, Volume 10: 218-231, 2009 (Wang, Wu, & Yuan, 2009) entitled "*The Role of Integrated Marketing Communications on Heritage Destination Visitations*". The results showed that communication tool as messenger is differentiated by three types, which are; public relations, advertising, and promotion and direct sales. Public Relations are a type of communication that affects middle age people who reside in Taiwan. Advertising affected teenagers with below-average monthly incomes. Direct sales and promotion actually have a highly effective impact for travelers under 50 that live in Taiwan.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through a comprehensive study conducted in the chapter IV, this research is able to conclude the following results: (1) the use of advertising for promotion is shown to give influence towards the increasing numbers of students over the last 5 years. Though, there seems to be some competition on the usage of advertising amongst the universities, especially the universities that included within the Universities Coordination-Chapter III (Kopertis III). Whilst, UNSADA includes its vision and mission statements in their advertising, as a way to assuredly introduce the University to the public, to make them well informed; (2) the integrated promotional process through direct selling, which was being done by visiting some schools around the area of Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, and Bekasi (JABODETABEK), is showing some laxities throughout this kind of promotional activities. One of those laxities is that the students tend to give less attention towards the information brought to them about UNSADA. The strategy that is being used during the 'school-visit' program is to publicize the close relationship between UNSADA and Japan, as well as the affordable tuition fees offered by UNSADA, which expected to increase the number of students to enroll from the schools that have got visited; (3) the integrated promotional process through public relations, which was being by implementing various on-campus activities and establishing cooperation with domestic and foreign institutions (Japan).

In the future, it is highly recommended for UNSADA to optimize the usage of advertising media as the current marketing trend is all about digital media. Thus, the optimization could have been done by using social media, TV advertisement, as well as broadcasting an audio advertisement on the radio whose majority listeners are the

youth (high school students). Whilst, the direct selling program should consider to wider the range of school visited-area and be selective towards the schools that actually have potential students to enroll in UNSADA by implying the study programs offered at UNSADA.

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