

Analysis of Marketing Program Effectiveness: The Case of Iligan Medical Center College

Reynaldo Mancia

Iligan Medical Center College, Iligan City, Lanao del Norte, Philippines

* Correspondence: reynaldo.mancia@imcc.edu.ph

ABSTRACT

The first implementation of the K-12 curriculum in basic education in 2016 became a source of concern among private HEIs in the Philippines because of the possible enrollment drop. Therefore, private HEIs constantly innovate marketing practices to remain afloat and survive. This study was conducted to determine the effectiveness of marketing programs conducted by Iligan Medical Center College (IMCC) before implementing the K-12 curriculum and propose action plans to improve the enrollment rates and retain prospective students at the school. Using a descriptive quantitative design, the study surveyed 201 new students and transferees of the school during the orientation period before the first semester of school year 2016-2017. Results revealed that majority of the students knew IMCC from friends, family members, alumni, former classmates, and batchmates. Despite enrolling in IMCC due to the high quality of education it offers, students reported several problems experienced and that might be experienced in the future such as inadequate school facilities and financial issues. They believed that the school could help them lessen these problems by continuously upgrading school services and providing tuition fee discounts and scholarships. Action plans were formulated to further improve the delivery of educational services to the students.

KEYWORDS: education; enrollment; K-12 curriculum; marketing

ARTICLE INFO: Received: 10 June 2020; Accepted: 15 October 2021; Volume: 01; Issue: Special; Type: Original Article

1. Introduction

Basic education is intended to meet basic learning needs which provide the foundation on which subsequent learning can be based. It encompasses kindergarten, elementary and secondary education as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs [1].

Section 4 of the Philippine Republic Act (RA) 10533 states that, “the enhanced basic education program encompasses at least one year of kindergarten education, six years in elementary education, and six years of junior high school and two years of senior high school education.” Thus, “the entrant ages to the junior and senior high school levels are typically 12 and 16 years old, respectively” [1].

The researcher noticed that there are two very important components of the RA 10533 that will affect the Basic Education System of the Philippines, to wit:

“strengthening its curriculum, and increasing the number of years for basic education...” [2].

The curriculum design of the K-12 program will lead to the updating and re-alignment of its content to the principles and standards set by the Department of Education (DepEd) in line with the provisions set forth by RA 10533 and the programs and standards of the other stakeholders. A major inclusion of the secondary curriculum is as follows, to wit: Grade 7-8, exploratory Technology Livelihood Education (TLE); Grade 9-10, specialized TLE; and Senior High School, Grade 11-12, which has core subjects and four (4) applied track subjects; Academic, Technical-Vocational-Livelihood, Sports, and Arts and Design [3].

The second component that affects the Philippine educational system is the two-year increase in the number of years for its basic education. The making of the curriculum can be done by teachers’ experts in curriculum revisions, but this increase in the number of years brought about anxiety, uncertainty, and financial burden especially in the private schools with basic education program.

When RA 10533 was approved by the Congress and Senate and passed into law on May 15, 2013, alongside with the DepEd Memorandum Order Number 43, series 2013, on September 4, 2013, the marketing committee of the Iligan Medical Center College (IMCC) convened, discussed, and forecasted possible scenarios come its implementation in June of school year 2017-2018. Among the things discussed and forecasted is the number of years when there will be no students in the different levels in the school, the financial expenses in building classrooms for the incoming grade 11 students, the faculty needed, what will happen to the faculty and staff of the college department, and most of all, the number of faculty who will transfer to public schools because the salary of the senior high school teachers are higher than those in the junior high school and more higher than those teaching in competing private schools.

These issues called for a plan by the IMCC marketing committee to meet the financial requirements for hiring teachers and staff, paying of bank loan for the new 20-classroom building amortization, and the maintenance of its facilities. During that time, the only way to achieve financial stability was to attract prospective students to meet the financial needs of the school.

In the second semester of school year 2015-2016, everything was in place for IMCC. The curriculum for the senior high school was in place, the 20-classroom building was constructed, the college faculty was already assigned specific subjects, many of them were sent to trainings, and the marketing plan was drawn. The marketing plan included radio advertisements, school career guidance programs, placement of tarpaulins in billboards, and activation of IMCC web site.

Two months before the opening of classes, some teachers resigned and transferred to public schools and the number of enrollees in the senior high school was way beyond expectations. Records obtained from the Registrar’s office revealed that there were 392 new students and transferees in college and there were more than 400 enrollees in the grade 11 of the Basic Education Department (BED) which totaled to more than 792 students enrolled in the first semester of the school year both in the college and grade 11 of IMCC. This prompted the principal of the BED to hire teachers

to fill the vacancies. This unexpected turn of events prompted the researcher to conduct this study.

From its humble beginnings until now, IMCC always seeks to develop its product-high quality education that leads it to undertake accreditations from the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA). Though IMCC have only meager resources at its disposal due to the presence of other colleges and university in the city, it always makes the best of everything to provide the needs of its stakeholders. It does not only deliver its best services but create value to its customers and build strong customer relationships to capture value from customers in return.

Hence, through assessing the effectiveness of its marketing program by knowing where the students knew the school and why they choose to enroll, students' needs, wants, and interests, the school can better create value to its clients and build strong client relationships to capture value from its clients in return, but most of all to make into reality its mission and philosophy as a higher educational institution.

The purpose of this study was to find out the effectiveness of the marketing program and recommend plans of action and provision of developmental plans for the school's physical facilities and activities to develop the potential and interests of students.

2. Methodology

This is a descriptive quantitative study conducted during the orientation period before the commencement of the first semester of school year 2016-2017 in Iligan Medical Center College (IMCC), Iligan City, Philippines. It was descriptive because it investigated the different responses of the respondents as to the source of information they have regarding IMCC, reasons why they choose the school, their problems, and their interests aside from their studies. To fulfill the objectives of the study, new students and transferees were chosen as the survey respondents. Of the 792 new students and transferees, a total of 201 respondents provided consent to participate in the study, which resulted to a response rate of 25%.

A self-made instrument consisting of two parts, was used to elicit responses. The first part sought to obtain the profile of the respondents while the second part determined how the respondents know about IMCC, why did they choose IMCC, what are the possible help they want the school to extend, and what are their interests other than their studies in IMCC.

Through the Guidance Services Office (GSO), questionnaires were distributed during the freshmen's and transferees' orientation for first semester of school year 2016-2017. After the respondents answered the questionnaire, the GSO personnel collected and submitted the same to the Office of the Student Affairs (OSA). The total number of enrollees for the freshmen and transferees during the semester was obtained from the Registrar's office of IMCC.

The gathered data were investigated using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were used.

Table 1. Profile of the students.

Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	117	58.2
Female	84	41.8
Age, in years		
16-22	179	89.1
23-29	19	9.5
30-36	3	1.5
Total	201	100.0

3. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the profile of the students. The majority of students were male (58.2%) and in the age range of 16-22 years (89.1%). Tables 2-6 show the grouping of the clusters of similar responses among the respondents in order for the researcher to determine which group has the highest degree of percentage distribution and be made basis for courses of future plan of action. The school spent thousands in order to market the institution and these responses shall determine if the goal of the marketing committee was achieved or not.

Based on the table, majority of the students responded that their knowledge about IMCC came from information from friends, family members, alumni, former classmates, and batchmates. These sources of information had good experiences in IMCC which led them to endorse the school to the respondents. Further, these sources of information were either an alumnus or still studying in IMCC. From this result, the researcher surmised that this group could help a lot in the marketing plans and programs of the school. Finally, there is a need to take care of the students and alumni in the school because they can make or break the institution depending on their experiences while studying.

Meanwhile, a total of 15 respondents got information from radio advertisements and the internet. This would show the importance of the radio advertisements when it comes to marketing of the school.

Thirteen respondents believed that they knew IMCC because of the annual school career guidance program conducted by the personnel of the Office of the Student Affairs (OSA) and the Guidance Services Office (DSA). This program seeks to guide students in their career choice and provide them the option to study in IMCC.

The results led to the generalization that taking care of the students and alumni by providing them high standard and competitive education and better experiences while studying in IMCC is a must for all teaching and non-teaching personnel of the school. Combining therefore all these endeavors in making the school popular in the community led to the unexpected number of enrollees for the first semester of the school year 2016-2017 as against the projection that there will be no freshmen and transferees in Higher Educational Institutions because of the K-12 program of the Department of Education (DepEd).

Table 2. Sources of information used by the students in enrolling.

Group/Sources of Information	Frequency	Percentage
Friends, alumni (family and relatives), students	142	70.7
No answer or wrong answer	31	15.4
Radio advertisements and the internet	15	7.5
Personal knowledge and endorsements	13	6.5
Total	201	100.0

Table 3. Reasons of students in enrolling.

Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
School, facilities, course offerings, tuition fee discounts and other tuition privileges, the teachers and their teaching	141	70.15
Persons choosing the school for the respondents	40	19.90
Proximity and others responses that does not fall to the other groupings	20	9.95
Total	201	100.0

Table 3 shows the groupings by clusters according to the responses of the students on why they choose IMCC. Majority of the students believed that they chose IMCC because the school has adequate facilities, school programs and activities are doing well, and the school is continually upgrading its accreditation. In addition to being an accredited school, the respondents answered that the faculty are teaching well. The students chose IMCC because the school can deliver and provide the students' needs.

A total of 40 respondents reported that they chose IMCC because of their parents, siblings and relatives who are either alumni or current students. One very important strategy in marketing is by word of mouth. The persons who endorsed or decided to enroll the respondents in IMCC have had good experiences or are satisfied with the services extended to them while they were studying in the school; otherwise, they will not continue to patronize IMCC. A person who has no good experience or is satisfied with a product or service would not recommend it to their friends, relatives, neighbors, among others so that they will not experience the same while using the product or service. Finally, a total of 20 respondents chose IMCC because of the school's proximity to their homes, the belief that it is more fun in IMCC, and the perception that students are friendly.

Table 4 shows the clustered similar responses of the respondents as to the problems encountered or foreseen problems while studying in IMCC. Majority of the respondents answered none or no answer at all because they are new to the school while 30 respondents reported that they might experience problems in the aspect of purchasing expensive workbooks and other requirements, voluminous course requirements imposed by their teachers and changing of schedules.

Table 4. Foreseen problems of students while studying.

Group/Foreseen problems	Frequency	Percentage
Students (no answer or none)	141	70.15
Faculty and staff	30	14.92
Facilities	22	10.95
School	6	2.98
Other problems	2	1.00
Total	201	100.0

A total of 22 respondents reported problems with the comfort rooms, hot classrooms, library, and place for eating at the canteen, among other things. These problems have been already addressed by the administrators. All of the mentioned problems can be solved provided that there are enough funds. The school is dependent on the tuition fee of students and thus, physical development of the school and its facilities are also dependent on the number of students enrolling each semester.

Meanwhile, there were six respondents who reported problems relating to the school such as experiencing hot and tiring queues during enrolment, lots of minor subjects, overloaded subjects, extended number of students in one class, among other things. It is worth noting that during enrolment, long lines are found only in two offices, namely, the Registrar's Office and Business office despite providing the enrollees with chairs and electric fans. The problem remained on the time consumed while enrollees wait for their turns. It can be noted that the canteen space is not adequate for the students and its menu does not change aside from its prices which are higher than those outside the campus.

Finally, there were two respondents who encountered problems on how to deal with Maranao students and about being disrespectful for Maranao students. Maranao is one of the largest Islamic groups in the Philippines. The IMCC personnel and students are composed of people with different social and cultural backgrounds, ranging from Muslims to Christians. Sometimes, clashes from among the different cultural groups or within its own cultural group erupt either inside or outside the campus. Programs and activities can be organized by the OSA and GSO to address cultural differences in order to lessen cross cultural differences in and among the cultural groups in IMCC.

Table 5 shows the cluster of similar responses of the respondents with regards to the possible help that school can offer while they are studying in IMCC. Majority of the respondents suggested that the possible help the school can offer to them is through scholarships, lowering of tuition fees, and continuous implementation of promissory note program. These responses mirrored the reality about the national economy, which is experienced by the families sending their children to school. There is that fear of dropping out from their studies and continuing their dream to finish and land better job opportunities after graduation. These responses clearly manifested the desire of the respondents to be assisted by the school in the aspect of financial obligations. It is not completely a call for free education but just at least to lower their expenditures in tuition

Table 5. Possible help the school can offer as perceived by the students.

Cluster/Responses	Frequency	Percentage
The school	75	37.32
School facilities and services	67	33.33
No answer, none or not interested	32	15.92
Teachers and staff	27	13.43
Total	201	100.0

fees, transportation, expenses in requirements and the like as manifested in their responses.

A total of 67 respondents provided suggestions to the school such as to improve the cleanliness of the comfort rooms, add electric fans, improve scheduling, implement tutorials for free or peer tutorials, and initiate more seminars and activities. These suggestions manifest the desire of the respondents to experience better services and make the school more conducive for learning. As discussed in Table 3, students chose the school because it offers quality education, with enough facilities and more so, people who endorsed IMCC have very high regard to their alma mater or the school where they are still studying as providing students good experiences. Hence, provision of the mentioned services can bring comfort and ease to the students while studying.

Finally, there were 27 respondents who believed that teachers might help them to attain their dreams by training them and providing low price for workbooks among other things. The researcher has been in the educational institution for 26 years and has seen the making and breaking of the lives of students. The teacher’s role in the development of the students can be manifested in students’ responses “help them attain their dreams and graduate”. Seeing students graduate and have good lives would fulfill the mission of teachers - the very reason why teachers are married to their profession.

Table 6 shows the cluster of similar responses of respondents as to their interests aside from their studies. Majority of the respondents reported that aside from their studies in IMCC, they are interested to have part-time jobs, read books, participate in school activities, engage in business, travel, and hang-out with friends.

A total of 55 respondents were inclined to sports like basketball, volleyball, physical fitness, taekwondo, karatedo, table tennis, soccer and sepaktakraw, among other sports. The school through the OSA can provide these students avenues where they can be trained and participate in local, regional, and national competitions which will thereby bring prestige to the school. Further, the school can be a venue where students can avail the sports scholarship privileges duly approved by the members of the board of directors of IMCC. The total development of the person is the final aim of education; therefore, this is one way of developing their character, values and decision-making leading to become responsible and productive members of society after their graduation.

Twenty-seven respondents were inclined in the arts like dancing, singing, acting, drawing, painting and some hoped to become members of the performing groups of IMCC. People who are inclined in the field of arts are known to be creative and expressive

Table 6. Students’ interests in enrolling aside from their studies.

Cluster/Interests	Frequency	Percentage
Other activities	76	37.81
Sports	55	27.36
No answer or none	29	14.43
Arts	27	13.43
To learn more and finish their studies	14	6.97
Total	201	100.0

and are well immersed with the humanities. The field of arts is a good area where these students can become good persons in the community.

A total of 14 students would just like to focus on their studies, finish their course and have a better future. This led the researcher to reflect that before these students become focus so much in sports, in the arts and other activities, they are first students. Sometimes, because of these inclinations, students will focus so much on extra-curricular activities and forget the academic part of being students. The faculty and staff can help these students in managing their studies and extra-curricular activities.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, several conclusions have been made. First, the uncertainty of “no enrollees” in college due to the implementation of the DepEd K-12 program is proven not true because of the presence of 392 officially enrolled freshmen and transferees. Hence, the uncertainty of losing one’s job as college faculty is no longer a reality because of the results of the study and they will therefore continue to teach in the college department.

Second, friends who are still studying in IMCC; alumni; members of the family who are either alumni or students of IMCC; relatives who are alumni or still studying in IMCC; radio advertisements; the internet; high school teachers and guidance counselors; and classmates and batchmates are the best sources of information about IMCC.

Third, the contributing factors that led to the popularity of IMCC include the delivery of quality education by the school to the students, good and kind-hearted teachers, better facilities, and a friendly and peaceful environment.

Fourth, despite enrolling in IMCC, the respondents reported several problems experienced and that might be experienced in the future. These problems include not well-maintained comfort rooms, scheduling, lack of electric fans, and financial problems due to expensive workbooks, requirements, and field trips.

Fifth, the respondents expressed several ways by which they can be helped by the school. These ways include the provision of tuition fee discounts, scholarships both academic and non-academic, continuous implementation of promissory notes, clean facilities, and the continuous delivery of quality education.

Finally, the respondents believed that aside from their studies in IMCC, they would like to develop their potentials in sports, the arts, and other fields.

5. Recommendations

5.1 School Administrators

Additional fans at the college library and canteen may be developed. Tables and chairs may be added at the canteen and a variety of foods and other student budget meals may be offered. Existing comfort rooms should be regularly cleaned. The procedures during enrolment specifically at the business office and the registrar may be shortened. Schedules of classes and non-transferring of classroom assignments should be fixed. A school prayer room for students who would like to pray and those in need of silence, may be created.

Quality education should be maintained in order to satisfy the needs of the students by upgrading its curriculum and sending the faculty and personnel to seminars, trainings and workshops. The school administrators may continue to find ways in providing tuition fee discounts to the students in order to help them in their financial problems.

5.2 Dean of Student Affairs and Services

There is a need to continuously study the needs of students in order to formulate appropriate responses and strategies. There is also a need to plan programs and activities whether co- or extra-curricular that will develop the potentials of the students and monitor and evaluate these activities if they respond to the needs of the students.

5.3 Future Researchers

There is a need to replicate this study by including the other 75% population of new students and transferees for improved generalization of the findings. Other means of assessing the effectivity of marketing plan such as the determination of the satisfaction level of the students on the salient points of the marketing plan, may be conducted in the future.

Acknowledgment

Gratitude is directed to the two anonymous reviewers for the valuable suggestions that greatly improved this manuscript.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author Contributions: The author has approved the final version of this manuscript.

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