

# INCREASING PURCHASE ACTION RATIO (PAR) THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGN IN SELECTED ASIA COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF GLOBAL MILLENNIAL MUN

**Febrian Ahmad<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Institut Teknologi Bandung

Received : 20 November 2025

Published : 31 January 2026

Revised : 01 December 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijerlas.v5i6.5095>

Accepted : 30 December 2025

Link Publish : <https://radjapublika.com/index.php/IJERLAS>

## Abstract

The rapid development of digital marketing has transformed the way organizations engage with their audiences, particularly through the use of social media as a primary marketing communication channel. In the context of international marketing, campaign effectiveness is no longer assessed solely by exposure or engagement metrics, but by the ability to convert awareness into concrete actions. One key indicator of this effectiveness is the Purchase Action Ratio (PAR), which reflects the proportion of exposed audiences who proceed to take actual action. Global Millennial Model United Nations (GM MUN), an international education-based organization, faces a critical challenge in which high levels of international brand awareness generated through Instagram are not accompanied by proportional international participation. This study aims to analyze the factors contributing to the low conversion of international audience awareness into registration actions at GM MUN and to evaluate the effectiveness of its international marketing strategy implemented through Instagram campaigns. The research adopts a mixed methods approach with a primary qualitative orientation, enabling both the identification of performance patterns and an in-depth understanding of audience perceptions and decision-making processes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with internal and external stakeholders, observation of GM MUN's Instagram activities, and analysis of supporting campaign and registration documents. The analysis is guided by the integration of the Marketing 5.0 framework, marketing communication, social media marketing, and the 5A customer journey model (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate). The findings indicate that GM MUN has successfully generated strong international awareness and initial interest, particularly at the Aware and Appeal stages. However, the marketing strategy remains predominantly awareness-driven and insufficiently optimized to encourage progression toward the Ask and Act stages. Key conversion barriers include unclear international segmentation that relies heavily on geographic criteria, weak institutional credibility signaling, limited persuasive messaging and structured calls to action, and suboptimal management of later stages of the customer journey. This study concludes that GM MUN's low PAR is not a result of insufficient visibility, but rather a misalignment between awareness-building efforts and conversion-oriented strategies. Accordingly, the study recommends a strategic shift toward conversion-focused international marketing through role-based segmentation refinement, strengthened institutional credibility, improved persuasive communication, and optimized international customer journey management. The findings are expected to provide practical insights for international event and education organizers, while contributing to academic discussions on digital marketing effectiveness in cross-border contexts.

**Keywords:** *Digital Marketing, Instagram, Purchase Action Ratio, International Marketing, Customer Journey.*

## INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become a key platform in business marketing strategies, particularly for building brand awareness and driving sales conversions. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook offer extensive global reach at a relatively low cost compared to traditional marketing methods. However, the success of a social media campaign isn't solely measured by the number of impressions, reach, or engagement, but rather by its ability to convert awareness into concrete actions, specifically signups or purchases. Digital transformation has shifted the marketing paradigm from a one-way communication model to an interactive engagement model, where consumers are no longer passive recipients of information but active participants who evaluate, compare, and validate brand credibility before making purchasing decisions. In this context, superficial metrics like likes and

impressions are no longer sufficient to measure campaign effectiveness. Research shows that conversion rates from social media awareness to actual purchases or signups typically range from 1-3%, indicating that a significant portion of the audience exposed to content does not proceed to the action stage. This issue highlights the importance of having a structured and clear conversion strategy, beyond just a visibility strategy. Furthermore, in the context of international marketing, complexity increases with variables such as cultural differences, trust barriers, payment preferences, and the varying competitive landscape in each country. Brands seeking to expand globally through digital marketing must understand not only how to reach international audiences but also how to build trust and offer value propositions that meet specific market needs. Failure to understand these aspects often results in a "high traffic, low conversion" situation, which is inefficient from a return on investment (ROI) perspective. Global Millennial MUN (hereinafter referred to as GM MUN), an international education-based platform focused on public speaking, debate, and Model United Nations (MUN) competitions, is poised to address a classic yet crucial challenge in digital marketing: the gap between awareness and conversion. Despite claiming to be an "international" platform and targeting participation from various ASEAN countries, the reality on the ground shows a very high dominance of domestic participants. At the event in Jakarta in October 2024, of the total 350 delegates attending, 97% (approximately 347 participants) were from Indonesia, while international participation reached only 3%, with one participant each from Pakistan, Malaysia, and Singapore.

More comprehensive participation data from previous events shows a similar pattern. Of the 984 registered participants, 825 were listed as Indonesian (including various spellings such as "Indonesia," "Indonesa," "Indonesian"), representing approximately 83.8% of the total. The highest participation from abroad came from the Philippines (71 participants or 7.2%) and India (22 participants or 2.2%), while Malaysia contributed 16 participants (1.6%). Other countries, such as Afghanistan, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, and various African and Middle Eastern countries, had very low representation, with only 1-6 participants each. This phenomenon is paradoxical considering that GM MUN has allocated a significant digital marketing budget around IDR 30 million per month or IDR 6 million per week—targeting specific ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Vietnam, and the Philippines through TikTok and Instagram. Data from advertising insights for a 30-day period (September 25 - October 24, 2024) shows impressive metrics: 2,168,411 impressions, 1,016,501 reach, 506,967 engagements, 24,831 link clicks, and 3,873 followers. The advertising content has also been customized using complete English, professional visuals, and an international jury from various countries.

However, high awareness metrics didn't directly correlate with international attendee registration rates. Based on conversion rate calculations, only about 30 international attendees registered out of 24,831 link clicks (using previous event data as a baseline), resulting in a conversion rate of only about 0.12% well below the industry standard of 2-5% for event management. This indicates a misalignment in the customer journey from awareness to decision-making. Several factors are suspected to contribute to this phenomenon, including: (1) a brand position that is still too Indonesia-centric despite using an international label, reflected in the dominance of content featuring places in Jakarta, testimonials from Indonesian participants, and visual branding that does not fully convey a global identity; (2) the absence of official international certifications or affiliations that could increase credibility, such as partnerships with international universities, support from global MUN organizations such as the Association of United Nations, or accreditation from recognized international educational bodies; (3) a social media campaign strategy that is not optimized to attract an international audience, where content is still aimed at building awareness without a clear call to action or specific value proposition for the international market; (4) competition from competitors such as AIMUN (Asian International Model United Nations) and Jakarta MUN, which can attract more international participation even with fewer resources, indicating the need for differentiated values or a more effective positioning strategy.

A closer analysis of the landing page and registration flow also revealed several potential pitfalls: a complex registration procedure, a lack of information about accommodations for international participants, limited internationally friendly payment gateways, and a lack of social proof from previous international participants or judges. Furthermore, the campaign's timing didn't take into account the differing academic calendars in different countries, and a lack of personalized communication based on the cultural context of each target market, all of which contributed to the low conversion rate. The GM MUN case study is relevant to this research because it represents the challenges many local brands face in their international expansion efforts in the digital age. This study will delve deeper into how social media campaigns can be optimized not only to build brand awareness but, more importantly, to drive sales conversions (in this case, international attendee registrations). Using the marketing funnel framework (awareness-interest-consideration-conversion), this study will evaluate each stage of the customer journey for potential international attendees, identify barriers to conversion, and recommend actionable

# INCREASING PURCHASE ACTION RATIO (PAR) THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE INSTAGRAM CAMPAIGN IN SELECTED ASIA COUNTRIES: A CASE STUDY OF GLOBAL MILLENNIAL MUN

Febrian Ahmad et al

and measurable optimization strategies. The findings of this study are expected to provide practical insights for digital marketing practitioners, particularly in the international events and education industries, on how to maximize the ROI of social media investments, enhance brand credibility in international markets, and create conversion-focused campaigns that not only attract attention but also drive action. More broadly, this study contributes to the digital marketing literature on the challenges of localization versus globalization in content strategy, the importance of trust signals in international audience decision-making, and best practices for optimizing conversion rates for event-based businesses in an era dominated by social media.

## Demographics in Asia

The Instagram platform has been widely discussed in digital marketing literature as an effective social media platform for implementing marketing funnels compared to other platforms. Research by Chaudhary (2021) shows that Instagram has a higher level of user engagement than Facebook and Twitter, enabling more intensive interactions between organizations and their audiences. This characteristic makes Instagram a strategic channel for managing the early to middle stages of the marketing funnel, particularly in building audience awareness and interest in a brand or program. Furthermore, interactive features such as comments and direct messages allow for quick responses to audience questions, which plays a crucial role in shaping engagement or purchase intentions. Instagram's superiority is further reinforced by its visual-based nature, as explained by Park and Namkung (2022). The study showed that marketing activities on Instagram through photos, videos, Stories, and Reels were more effective in building brand equity, including brand awareness, brand image, and perceived quality, compared to social media platforms that place less emphasis on visual elements. This suggests that Instagram has a stronger ability to create visual experiences that influence consumer attitudes and behaviors throughout the customer journey. These findings align with research by Belanche et al. (2019) who compared the effectiveness of Instagram Stories content with Facebook Wall content, finding that the Instagram format was superior in driving audience engagement and delivering messages concisely and persuasively, supporting the effectiveness of the conversion process in the digital marketing funnel.

Furthermore, research by Singh, Kumari, and Kumari (2025) emphasized that Instagram-specific marketing activities, such as content relevance, interactivity, and the use of Stories and Reels formats, significantly contribute to strengthening brand equity and brand-consumer relationships. This suggests that Instagram not only plays a role in building awareness but is also effective in driving ongoing engagement through to the decision-making stage. These findings are reinforced by a systematic literature review conducted by Alisa et al. (2024), which concluded that Instagram advertising is effective in influencing consumer perceptions and behavior through engaging visual content and immersive formats, making Instagram a key channel in modern digital marketing strategies.

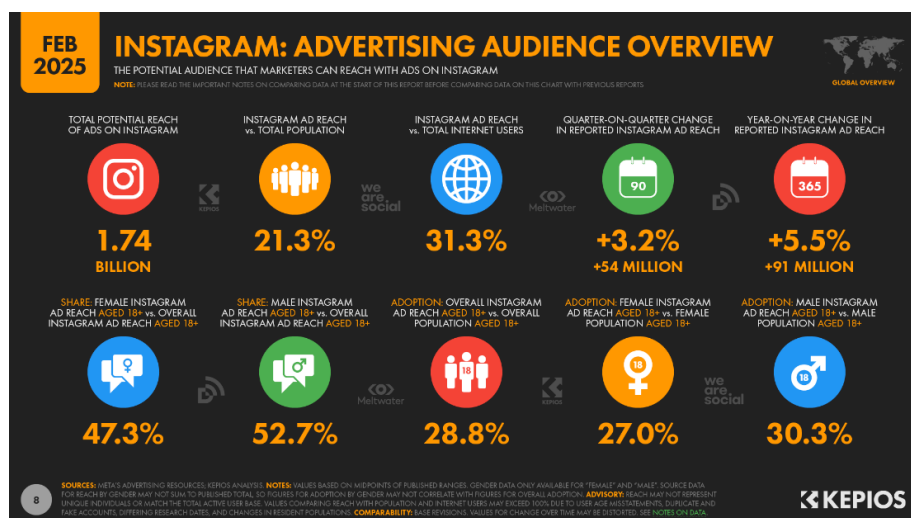


Figure I. 1 Instagram: Advertising Audience Overview

In terms of user demographics, data shows that Instagram has a user base dominated by young and productive age groups, which is relevant to the target market for international education-based activities and programs. Globally, the 18–24 and 25–34 age groups constitute the largest segments of Instagram users, reflecting the high adoption of this platform among the digitally active younger generation and open to global information (Data Reportal, 2025). In Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, Instagram is also one of the social media platforms

with the highest penetration rate. In Indonesia alone, the number of Instagram users has reached more than 90 million active users, placing Indonesia as one of the largest Instagram markets in the world and demonstrating significant potential for the implementation of Instagram-based digital marketing strategies (Napoleon Cat, 2025; Statista, 2025). The high penetration of young users in the ASEAN region strengthens the justification for selecting Instagram as the primary medium in international marketing strategies, particularly for building audience awareness, interest, and conversion within the customer journey and marketing funnel framework.

### **GM MUN Audience Target**

In the context of marketing international educational programs such as GM MUN, there is a clear distinction between end users (participants) and decision makers. Although GM MUN participants are primarily students ranging from adolescence to young adulthood, the decision to participate—especially for international participants—does not rest entirely with the participants themselves. In many cases, final decisions regarding registration, funding, and program legitimacy are heavily influenced, and even determined, by guardians or parents, who possess financial authority and predominant rational considerations. This phenomenon aligns with the characteristics of educational service products, where the decision-making process is multi-actor. Participants act as users driven by interests, personal aspirations, and social experiences, while parents or guardians act as buyers and decision-makers, considering long-term benefits, institutional credibility, security, and the value of educational investment. Therefore, GM MUN's audience targeting strategy cannot focus solely on the age demographics of participants but must consider a broader audience, namely those with decision-making authority.

In the context of digital marketing, these role differences have important implications for communication and targeting strategies. Content designed to engage attendees—such as conference experiences, international networking, and simulated diplomacy activities—needs to be complemented by messages specifically targeted to parents or guardians, such as the credibility of the organizers, the educational value of the program, the impact on developing global competencies, and clarity of long-term outcomes and benefits. Thus, GM MUN marketing must be able to simultaneously reach and persuade two audiences with different needs and motivations. Furthermore, this approach is relevant within the Marketing 5.0 framework, which emphasizes a deep understanding of the behaviors and roles of various stakeholders in the customer journey. In the context of GM MUN, the successful conversion from awareness to registration depends heavily on the organization's ability to communicate the right value proposition to decision-makers. Failure to target or align messaging with the needs of parents or guardians can potentially lead to a gap between high participant interest and low actual registration rates. Therefore, this study views GM MUN audience targeting not solely based on participant age, but also on their role in the decision-making process. Focusing on parents or guardians as decision-makers is crucial to understanding why the relatively high level of awareness of GM MUN has not fully translated into international participation, and how marketing and communication strategies can be adjusted to increase the effectiveness of such conversion.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Marketing**

Marketing 5.0 is a modern marketing approach introduced by Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan as a continuation of previous marketing evolutions, emphasizing the use of technology to serve human needs more effectively (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2021). This concept is based on the principle of "Technology for Humanity," where technology is used not only to improve operational efficiency but also to understand consumer behavior more deeply and build meaningful relationships with customers. In this context, Marketing 5.0 views consumers as individuals with rational and emotional needs, so marketing strategies must integrate data, digital technology, and human empathy (Kotler et al., 2021). This approach emphasizes the importance of managing the customer journey holistically, from awareness to purchase. Thus, Marketing 5.0 serves as a strategic framework that guides organizations in designing marketing activities based on data and consumer behavior. For the MUN GM, Marketing 5.0 serves as a strategic foundation for designing international marketing focused on understanding global audiences, not simply increasing brand exposure. This approach underscores the importance of converting awareness into concrete action as a key indicator of marketing success.

### **Marketing Communications**

Marketing communications refers to the strategic process by which organizations deliver value-based messages to target audiences with the goal of building understanding, shaping perceptions, and influencing



audience responses. Kotler and Keller (2016) explain that marketing communications has three main functions: to inform, persuade, and remind consumers about a brand or value offering. MarCom acts as a bridge between marketing strategy and consumers, focusing on how messages are delivered, through what media, and with what communication approach. In the digital era, marketing communications are no longer one-way but interactive, enabling dialogue between organizations and audiences (Schultz & Schultz, 2004). In this study, marketing communication is positioned as an implementation mechanism of Marketing 5.0, which enables GM MUN to convey its values and credibility to international audiences consistently and relevantly, especially through digital channels.

### **Social Media Marketing**

With the advancement of digital technology, social media has emerged as a key channel for marketing communications. Social media marketing enables organizations to reach a large international audience while facilitating interactive engagement. However, the effectiveness of social media as a communication channel is determined not only by the level of exposure but also by how the communication strategy is designed, monitored, and evaluated. The book *Data-Driven Digital Marketing & Marketing Analytics* explains that effective digital marketing strategies must be guided by measurable performance indicators and data-driven insights. Wedel and Kannan (2016) argue that leveraging data allows organizations to more precisely target audiences, optimize content strategies, and evaluate the effectiveness of cross-border campaigns. In this study, this theory is used to explain how GM MUN uses social media as its main communication channel and to assess the extent to which data utilization supports the effectiveness of its international marketing communication strategy.

### **Customer Journey**

The customer journey describes the step-by-step process a consumer goes through from first becoming aware of a brand to making a purchase or engaging with it. This concept was comprehensively developed by Lemon and Verhoef, who emphasized that the customer experience is dynamic and occurs through multiple touchpoints throughout the interaction with the brand (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The customer journey-based approach emphasizes that brand awareness does not automatically result in a purchase. Instead, consumers progress through several psychological and behavioral stages influenced by messages, experiences, and perceptions of the brand. Therefore, marketing success depends heavily on an organization's ability to consistently manage each stage of the customer journey (Court et al., 2009). In this study, the customer journey serves as an analytical context to understand how GM MUN's digital marketing activities influence the behavioral transformation of international audiences.

### **Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness refers to an audience's ability to recognize and remember a brand. In the Marketing Funnel Theory, brand awareness is placed at the top of the funnel, serving as a prerequisite before the audience moves on to the evaluation and decision-making stage. The Marketing Funnel Theory explains that social media-based marketing communications primarily aim to generate awareness before directing the audience to the next stage of the marketing funnel. High brand awareness indicates that the communication message has been successfully delivered and the brand has gained visibility among the audience. However, marketing literature emphasizes that brand awareness is important but not sufficient. High awareness does not automatically lead to action if it is not accompanied by positive brand evaluations. Therefore, in this study, brand awareness is conceptualized as an initial outcome of marketing communications and not as a final indicator of marketing success.

### **Purchasing Behavior**

Once brand awareness is established, the audience enters the consumer behavior stage, which is the evaluative phase where individuals process information, form perceptions, and assess the suitability of a brand. At this stage, Brand Positioning & Country of Origin Effects play a significant role in shaping how international audiences perceive a brand. Philip Kotler's Marketing 4.0 framework describes five stages of consumer behavior: Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, and Advocate (Kotler, Kartajaya, & Setiawan, 2017). This model emphasizes that consumer behavior in the digital era is non-linear and heavily influenced by social interactions and digital information. In the context of this research, the 5A model is used to analyze the transformation process of GM

MUN's international audience from awareness to registration. The primary focus of the research is on the transition from Aware to Act, as this stage directly impacts conversion rates and marketing performance (Kotler et al., 2021).

### **Purchase Action Ratio (PAR)**

The Purchase Action Ratio (PAR) is used as an indicator to measure marketing effectiveness in converting audience awareness and interest into actual action. This concept is rooted in the marketing performance measurement approach and conversion metrics proposed in the marketing performance measurement literature (Farris et al., 2010). PAR reflects the proportion of the audience that has reached the Act stage compared to the number of audiences in the early stages of the customer journey. In the context of GM MUN, PAR represents the ratio of the international audience exposed to a marketing campaign to those who actually register. Thus, PAR reflects not only sales performance but also the success of marketing and communication strategies in shaping consumer behavior (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). PAR is positioned as the final result (outcome) of the entire series of Marketing 5.0 strategies, marketing communications, social media marketing, and customer journey management based on the 5A model.

## **METHOD**

This study employs a mixed-methods research approach, primarily qualitative, complemented by quantitative data analysis. The aim is to understand the effectiveness of GM MUN's international marketing strategy, particularly through Instagram-based campaigns, in converting awareness into participation. Qualitative data were gathered using semi-structured interviews with both internal stakeholders (founders, management, marketing team) and external participants (domestic and international), supplemented by observations of GM MUN's Instagram activities. The interviews aimed to explore perceptions, marketing communication effectiveness, and barriers to conversion. Additionally, document analysis of campaign reports, registration data, and social media metrics were incorporated to triangulate the findings. Quantitative data was used to identify patterns in GM MUN's digital marketing performance, including impressions, reach, engagement, and conversion rates. These insights were analyzed using thematic and content analysis techniques to uncover key factors that affect the transition from awareness to registration. The 5A customer journey model (Aware, Appeal, Ask, Act, Advocate) guided the analysis to identify friction points along the journey, ultimately aiming to offer actionable recommendations for optimizing the conversion process and improving the Purchase Action Ratio.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This chapter presents the findings and analysis of the research based on the qualitative data gathered from interviews, observations, and document analysis. The aim is to investigate the factors contributing to the low Purchase Action Ratio (PAR) of GM MUN's international audience, despite high brand awareness and engagement metrics. The discussion explores how the international marketing strategy, particularly the use of Instagram-based campaigns, affects audience behavior and highlights the disconnect between awareness and actual registration actions.

### **Analysis of International Market Segmentation**

The first major finding reveals a significant gap between GM MUN's intended international market segmentation and the actual outcomes. GM MUN initially targeted a 30% international participant share but achieved less than 2% participation in recent events. This misalignment indicates that although geographic segmentation was identified at a strategic level, it was not effectively implemented at an operational level. The marketing strategy was largely awareness-driven, focusing on international exposure without tailoring the messaging for specific roles or behaviors. While countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines were targeted, the lack of behavior- and role-based segmentation for decision-makers—such as parents or guardians—resulted in missed opportunities to encourage registration. This finding is consistent with international marketing theories, which stress that effective segmentation should consider not just geography but also the behavioral and decision-making characteristics of the target audience.

### **Effectiveness of Marketing Communication**

The second key finding pertains to GM MUN's marketing communication strategy. While the organization successfully generated high awareness through its Instagram campaigns, the content lacked the necessary calls to action, value propositions, and trust-building messages that would drive international audience members from the awareness and appeal stages to the action stage. Observations of GM MUN's Instagram feed show professional

visuals, English-language content, and strong engagement metrics, but the content primarily focused on event exposure and general information rather than on encouraging specific actions. This content gap, coupled with weak institutional credibility, led to low registration rates despite high engagement levels. The marketing communication performed well in creating initial interest (Appeal) but failed to sustain the momentum through the Ask and Act stages of the customer journey.

### **Barriers in the Customer Journey**

A deeper analysis of the customer journey revealed significant drop-off points between awareness and action. International audiences who were exposed to GM MUN's content on Instagram expressed initial interest but did not proceed to seek further information or register. Key barriers included a lack of clarity regarding the international benefits of participating in GM MUN, weak institutional signaling (absence of internationally recognized certifications or affiliations), and a complex registration process. These findings align with the customer journey theory, which emphasizes that positive experiences in the early stages (Awareness and Appeal) do not automatically lead to action unless the journey is managed effectively across all stages (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016). The lack of perceived credibility and the absence of trust signals, particularly in the context of international education, contributed significantly to the audience's reluctance to register.

### **Institutional Credibility and Trust Issues**

Institutional credibility emerged as a critical factor influencing international audience behavior. GM MUN's lack of official international certifications or affiliations with well-known global MUN bodies weakened its credibility and contributed to trust deficits among potential international participants. International audiences, especially parents and guardians who play a significant role in decision-making, are often concerned about the legitimacy and quality of educational programs. The absence of clear institutional credentials signals created uncertainty and deterred potential registrants. From a signaling theory perspective, the credibility signals that GM MUN offers—such as its association with domestic institutions—are insufficient to reassure international audiences. This trust gap undermines GM MUN's ability to convert awareness into registration.

### **The Role of Social Media in Engagement and Conversion**

Social media, particularly Instagram, played a crucial role in GM MUN's marketing efforts. The platform's visual-based nature allowed the organization to create engaging content that resonated with the target audience. However, while Instagram proved effective at building brand awareness and fostering initial engagement, it was less effective in converting this engagement into action. Content analysis revealed that Instagram posts focused on event exposure and brand messaging but lacked persuasive elements such as clear calls to action, detailed information on registration, and social proof from past international participants. The findings suggest that social media campaigns need to be optimized not just for awareness but also for conversion by including tailored messaging, trust-building signals, and strong calls to action.

### **Strategic Recommendations for Improvement**

Based on the analysis, several recommendations are proposed to improve GM MUN's international marketing strategy:

1. **Refining International Market Segmentation:** GM MUN should move beyond geographic-based segmentation and adopt a more role- and behavior-based approach, targeting not only the participants but also the decision-makers, such as parents and guardians. Tailoring messaging to these different roles will help increase the relevance and effectiveness of marketing efforts.
2. **Shifting to Conversion-Oriented Marketing Communication:** GM MUN's marketing communication strategy should evolve from being awareness-driven to conversion-oriented. This shift includes incorporating stronger calls to action, clearer articulation of international benefits, and persuasive messaging to drive action. A structured call-to-action framework should be implemented across content formats to guide international audiences through the customer journey more effectively.
3. **Strengthening Institutional Credibility:** GM MUN needs to establish and communicate stronger institutional credibility by obtaining international certifications, partnerships, or affiliations with global MUN organizations. This will help enhance trust among international participants and their decision-makers.

4. Optimizing the Customer Journey: The registration process should be streamlined to reduce complexity and provide clearer instructions for international participants. Additionally, social proof, such as testimonials from past international participants, should be prominently featured in marketing content to reassure potential registrants.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Limitations of International Market Segmentation and Targeting Effectiveness**

Based on the findings presented in Chapter IV, this study concludes that GM MUN's international market segmentation and targeting strategy has been formulated at a strategic level but remains insufficiently clear and relevant to effectively support increased international participation. Although GM MUN has identified several international target countries, its segmentation approach is still predominantly geographic and does not adequately incorporate role-based and behavioral decision-making dynamics. The absence of differentiated targeting between students as end users and parents or guardians as financial decision-makers reduces message relevance and increases uncertainty during the decision-making process. Consequently, international market segmentation has not yet been translated into operational targeting that meaningfully supports conversion.

### **Structural and Communication Barriers in Converting Awareness into Registration**

The study finds that GM MUN has successfully achieved a relatively high level of international brand awareness through Instagram-based digital marketing activities. Strong visual content, professional design, and the use of English-language communication have generated high exposure and engagement among international audiences, particularly at the Aware and Appeal stages of the 5A customer journey framework. However, this high level of awareness has not translated into proportional registration actions. A substantial gap exists between GM MUN's strategic target of 30 percent international participants and the actual realization, which remains below two percent. This finding confirms that the primary challenge does not lie in insufficient reach or visibility, but in the inability to convert awareness into action, as reflected in the low Purchase Action Ratio (PAR). Several interrelated structural and strategic factors contribute to this low conversion rate. GM MUN's marketing communication strategy remains largely awareness-driven, with limited use of clear calls to action, explicit international value propositions, and persuasive messaging designed to guide audiences toward registration. As a result, significant drop-off occurs at the Ask and Act stages of the international customer journey.

### **The Role of Brand Positioning, Institutional Credibility, and Data Utilization in Building Trust**

The findings indicate that perceptions of brand positioning and institutional credibility play a critical role in shaping international audiences' trust and participation decisions. While GM MUN positions itself as an accessible and beginner-friendly MUN platform, this positioning is not sufficiently reinforced by strong internationally recognized credibility signals such as global affiliations, certifications, or endorsements. The resulting trust deficit is particularly salient in cross-border educational contexts, where perceived risk is inherently high. In addition, GM MUN's use of digital marketing data remains focused primarily on measuring exposure and engagement, rather than supporting conversion-oriented decision-making and customer journey optimization. This limits the organization's ability to identify and address trust barriers and behavioral drop-off points that inhibit international participation.

## **REFERENCES**

- Alisa, J., Rahayuningrat, P. S., Ardiani, G. T., Sugiarti, R., & Taufik, N. (2024). The effectiveness of Instagram advertising for digital marketing strategy: A systematic literature review. *Journal of Tourism & Hospitality in Asia Pasific*, 7(1), 14–26.
- Belanche, D., Cenfor, I., & Pérez-Rueda, A. (2019). Instagram Stories versus Facebook Wall: An advertising effectiveness analysis. *Spanish Journal of Marketing – ESIC*, 23(1), 69–94.
- Belanche, D., Flavián, M., & Ibáñez-Sánchez, S. (2019). Interactive advertising and mobile social media advertising: Engaging users and generating positive effects. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 45, 37–51.
- Belk, R. W. (2017). Extended self in digital worlds. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 44(5), 110–115.
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2019). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (7th ed.). Pearson Education Limited.



- Chaudhary, M. U. (2021). Impact of Instagram as a tool of social media marketing. *Media and Communication Review*, 1(1), 17–29. <https://doi.org/10.32350/mcr.11.02>
- Court, D., Elzinga, D., Mulder, S., & Vetvik, O. J. (2009). The consumer decision journey. *McKinsey Quarterly*.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- DataReportal. (2025, March 12). Essential Instagram stats.
- Dwivedi, Y. K., Ismagilova, E., Hughes, D. L., Carlson, J., Jacobson, J., Jain, V., ... Wang, Y. (2021). Setting the future of digital and social media marketing research: Perspectives and research propositions. *International Journal of Information Management*, 59, 102168.
- Farris, P. W., Bendle, N. T., Pfeifer, P. E., & Reibstein, D. J. (2010). *Marketing metrics: The definitive guide to measuring marketing performance* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education.
- Hollebeek, L. D., Srivastava, R. K., & Chen, T. (2019). S-D logic–informed customer engagement: Integrative framework, revised fundamental propositions, and application to CRM. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 47(1), 161–185.
- Kannan, P. K., & Li, H. A. (2017). Digital marketing: A framework, review and research agenda. *International Journal of Research in Marketing*, 34(1), 22–45.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0: Moving from traditional to digital*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), 69–96.
- NapoleonCat. (2025, January). Instagram users in Indonesia (January 2025).
- Park, C.-I., & Namkung, Y. (2022). The effects of Instagram marketing activities on customer-based brand equity in the coffee industry. *Sustainability*, 14(3), 1657.
- Schultz, D. E., & Schultz, H. F. (2004). *IMC, the next generation: Five steps for delivering value and measuring returns using marketing communication*. McGraw-Hill.
- Singh, R., Kumari, R., & Kumari, V. (2025). Instagram social media marketing activities (SMMA) and their impact on customer-based brand equity dimensions. *Academy of Marketing Studies Journal*, 29(6), 1–14.
- Verhoef, P. C., Kannan, P. K., & Inman, J. J. (2017). From multi-channel retailing to omni-channel retailing: Introduction to the special issue on multi-channel retailing. *Journal of Retailing*, 93(2), 174–181.
- Wedel, M., & Kannan, P. K. (2016). Marketing analytics for data-rich environments. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), 97–121.
- Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6(1), 97–113.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Fetters, M. D., Curry, L. A., & Creswell, J. W. (2013). Achieving integration in mixed methods designs: Principles and practices. *Health Services Research*, 48(6), 2134–2156.
- Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. (1989). Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255–274.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), 14–26.
- Lemon, K. N., & Verhoef, P. C. (2016). Understanding customer experience throughout the customer journey. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), 69–96.