

**Extent of Applicability of Inclusive Marketing Communication Strategies**

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**Abstract**

*Using an inductive approach, this exploratory research aims to understand the adaptability of inclusive marketing in the emerging market of the Philippines. There is a lack of literature regarding the subject matter of inclusive marketing in the Philippines, and this research aims to pioneer an understanding of inclusive marketing in the Philippines. Inclusive marketing adapts from the multi-ethnic marketing communications approach that aims to target different ethnic minorities and social groups through cultural representation in advertising. This study gauges the perception and possible effectiveness of inclusive marketing in an environment that is relatively new to it, by adapting the Theoretical Model of Inclusive Marketing by Licsandru & Cui (2018) which describes ethnic marketing effectiveness and subjective social inclusion and self-congruity. The methodology used in this study was the incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to gather insights through the focus group discussions and confirm the data gathered through survey questionnaires disseminated to the respondents. Results show that a marketing campaign has lesser chances to become a success if marketers will use a single strategy in a country with a diverse set of cultures. Furthermore, the inclusion of representatives from ethnic minorities and having a wider age range of respondents in the data gathering activity must be considered in order to generate a deeper understanding of adaptability to inclusive marketing strategies.*

**Keywords:** *inclusive marketing, diversity, social inclusion, emerging market, multi-ethnic*

**Introduction**

Gaurav Babel and Sakshi Jain (2012) defined inclusive marketing as widening the market of a product or services by not limiting itself to cater to a specific or exclusive group. In a way, it creates a context of “living together” in a society dominated by the value of individualism (Demangeot et. al, 2019).

While inclusive marketing increases the availability of the products and services to many people, it also creates a new concept wherein the “inferior” market is treated not only as consumers but producers and suppliers as well (Babel & Jain, 2012). This increases tensions between different cultural groups due to privilege inequalities (Demangeot et. al, 2019) which can, however, be addressed by marketing science and education. Examples of these tensions are black lives matter, electoral promises, Brexit, inter-ethnic unrest (Smith, 2020; Anderson, Toor, Rainie & Smith, 2019).

These examples emphasize the gray areas of a culturally diverse society that categorizes its individuals in a way that is not aligned with how people see or feel about themselves (Henderson & Christman, 2016). This is what makes the role of diversity in the marketplace more important as society becomes more diverse. In a culturally diverse society, marketing may act as a mechanism to enable social change and transform the well-being of each of its members; this is why taking a stand on a social issue is something that they should do to take advantage of their role in the society as a discipline having the capacity to drive social change (Demangeot et. al, 2019).

Marketing also serves as a tool to drive change. An ad made by H&M in 2016 entitled “She’s A Lady” inspires women to be more fierce and fearless (Wysk, 2016). In 2019, P&G released a video titled “The Talk ” which showcased the black community, raised the notion of the beauty of other races, and aimed to inform its viewers that beauty takes on different races, shape, size, etc. Microsoft released a commercial in 2019 entitled “We All Win”, showing children with physical disabilities and features their love for video games (Carson, 2019). Dove’s Real Beauty campaign was launched in 2004 and aims to celebrate ‘real women’ and to redefine beauty (Unilever, 2017). Advertisements like these often inspire people to be like them and the politicians that listen often made their promises based on the desires of the people.

Study shows that when brands fail to incorporate multicultural strategy in their systems, they do not execute a growth strategy as well (Nielsen, 2018). Marketers play a major role in shaping interactions between different groups of people (Demangeot et. al, 2019). With this, many brands have started using inclusive marketing in their advertising campaigns.

In the Philippines, 80 percent of the population are baptized as Catholics (Merez, 2018). Filipinos are known to be highly religious and conventional, wherein conservative beliefs are still highly prominent. One example of inclusive marketing done in the Philippines is a controversial billboard ad called “Love All Kinds of Love” (Occeñola, 2015). Netizens were concerned about the censorship in the pro-LGBT billboard campaign. However, allegations arose that the Ad Standards Council disapproved of the proposal and ordered Bench to censor it. Regardless, Bench still went on with their campaign. Moreover, GlutaMAX tried to sympathize with its market by highlighting morena skin tone, an ironic campaign for a skin whitening product. Skin White, another skin lightening brand, used ‘blackface’ on their campaigns with the message “*dark or white, you are beautiful.*” Both brands were heavily met with criticism and backlash (Nopuente, 2019). This did not work because the imposition of product purchases based on an individual’s identity makes them less probable to purchase a product, due to the campaign’s implied message of their identity tied to the products the consumer uses (Henderson & Rank-Christman, 2016).

Primarily, this study aims to explore the Filipino understanding of inclusive marketing; including the extent to which it can meet the needs of the majority if not all of the different market segments. This research recognizes that an inclusive marketing campaign's effectiveness may be affected by factors such as ethnic expressions, social inclusion, and self-congruity (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Inclusively designing marketing campaigns is ideal in order to appeal to a larger segment in a way that satisfies the values that the campaign wants to impart among its market (Babel & Jain, 2012). However, going beyond the boundary of the acceptable region of inclusivity

may subject a brand to an unwanted association with negative issues in society. This study is important to know the factors that can affect a Philippine setting's acceptability of inclusive marketing, in a way that provides a guide on how future inclusive marketing strategies should be made within the accepted bounds on an aspect of a social issue.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This research focused more on the Philippine context of inclusive marketing, more specifically, the extent of its applicability in the Philippine market. There have been numerous issues and failed marketing strategies that attempted to address multicultural markets. There is a lack of literature regarding inclusive marketing in the Philippines, and the literature available is often centered on first world countries that have diversified within several years. However, a culturally diverse marketplace is found to be highly susceptible to tensions from these different cultures due to the differences arising from the dominance of one culture over another. This research aims to answer the question as to how the Philippine market perceives inclusive marketing. This research, therefore, aims to extract an acceptable understanding and applicability of inclusive marketing in the Philippines.

### **Objectives of the Study**

1. To gather consumer insights and beliefs from the respondents within the limited time frame available, and compile all findings into one general definition and understanding of inclusive marketing in the Philippines.
2. To find out how inclusive marketing is perceived by the market in the Philippines and determine the extent (in percentage) of applicability of inclusive marketing in the Philippines in the emergence of new marketing communication strategies.

### **Review of Related Literature**

#### ***Social Inclusion***

In actuality, there is no central meaning as to what social inclusion pertains to (Davey & Gordon, 2017; Lloyd et. al, 2017). However, in this research, this construct is defined as the extent to which an individual can exercise their rights and participate in the activities for the benefit of the whole community (Gordon et. al, 2017). As a concept, its existence started upon the coining of the term *social exclusion*; which started during the failure of existing institutions to protect the interests of the population (Papagiannidis et. al, 2017).

It has also emerged back in the Medieval European era when laws were created to strictly regulate commerce in a way that preserves social hierarchies in a community. There has been a long history of colonization, slavery, immigration, and other forms of discrimination emerging since civilizations were formed; this is what makes it hard for the community to socially include ethnic and cultural minorities that used to be underserved by marketing campaigns (Penaloza, 2018). With this being stated, one can conclude that social inclusion has always been linked with the idea of social exclusion.

Other studies have also attempted to define the concept of social inclusion. The main theme of the definitions stated in various research is that social inclusion is all about the redistribution of social opportunities to participate or enjoy resources in the society, which is part of their basic fundamental right as a member of the community (Gordon et. al, 2017; Papagiannidis et. al, 2017). The need to belong is considered as a basic human motivation, as the human brain has been found out to be designed to connect and engage with other people; strengthening the significant impact that social inclusion and social exclusion have on someone's well-being. (Hymel & Katz, 2019; Papagiannidis et. al, 2017).

As for the effect of social inclusion on the effectiveness of a marketing campaign, recent studies show that social media impacts social inclusion in a way that it attracts more interest and attendance from a community when they are included on social media strategies employed by a brand (McMillen & Alter, 2017). Another study stated that dominant themes in advertisements that promote awareness on a social issue merely facilitate societal acceptance of emerging beliefs (Gong, 2019). This, however, still depends on a community's cultural attitude towards the theme of the advertisement.

### ***Ethnic identity***

Ethnicity is a social construction that is embedded in social, historical, and political contexts while ethnic identity constantly changes, they are emergent and not set in stone (Gjerde, 2014). It is also a matter of perception of being inside or outside a group derived from the kin and clan structure of human society (Dimofte et. al, 2013). The discussion of ethnic identification can be influenced by objective and subjective perspectives. Fishman and Garcia (2010) defined objective criteria as traits that are "given," or "inherited," or those cannot easily be changed. This includes common cultural traits, national origin, language, and social status (Licsandru & Cui, 2017). Subjective or idealist criteria on the other hand emphasizes how subjective perception motivates and influences social group formations (Fishman & Garcia, 2010). This includes attitudes, values, and preconceived ideas or notions. Furthermore, this paper focuses on subjective perspectives given that the researchers are testing the variables that are more subjective in characterization. These are (1) subjective social inclusion; (2) self-congruity; (3) ethnic marketing communications; and (4) ethnic self-referencing.

### ***Comparison between mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic marketing communications***

Addressing the diversity in the current marketplace has been increasingly important in recent years in the hopes of invoking more positive market feedback and experiences (Henderson & Rank-Christman, 2016). The strategy of target marketing is a highly important matter in business that deals with a firm identifying their consumers with similar characteristics, demographics, and psychographics to effectively advertise their product (Johnson & Grier, 2011). Advertising in the company's perspective is recognized as a tool to target different groups in society, however, for social groups, advertising is treated as a means of social recognition that is competitive by nature (Hazzouri, Main & Carvalho, 2015).

Mono ethnic marketing has been defined as the cultural representation efforts of marketers with the assumption that an ethnic group has one generic ethnic identity (Licsandru & Cui, 2018).

With the continuous growth of cultural diversity worldwide and the space between majority and minority groups continue to expand, targeting markets has become more challenging for marketers (Johnson & Grier, 2011). Earlier attempts on Mono Ethnic Marketing strategies were in the 1960s to 1970s where companies either appealed to directly targeting ethnic minorities or making marketing strategies that targeted a general audience in the hopes of also targeting ethnic minorities along the way. However, this was met with mixed feedback due to poor advertising (Cui, 2001). Large ethnic minorities are highly diverse, and there is no guarantee that all members of the ethnic group will react the same way even if it targets their ethnic group or another, and there is also no guarantee that advertisements will feature ethnic minorities all the time (El Hazzouri, Main & Carvalho, 2017). Results of the same study revealed that ethnic minority groups react negatively and feel ostracized when viewing advertisements involving other ethnic minority groups, which leads to a less approving attitude towards the material (Hazzouri, Main & Carvalho, 2015).

Multi-ethnic marketing strategies are defined as marketing efforts of representing multiple ethnic backgrounds by simultaneously reaching more diverse ethnic identities (Licsandru & Cui, 2018). Multi-ethnic marketing has proliferated to help businesses respond to cultural shifts and a wider market, and this diversification comes in many forms which include advertisements featuring ethnic minorities, employment of people from ethnic minorities, and more (Lo, 2011). Also, multi-ethnic marketing strategies take into consideration the importance of diversifying its audience by targeting ethnic identities through social inclusion, rather than amplifying social definitions and generalizations (Henderson & Rank-Christman, 2016). Multi-ethnic marketing simultaneously reaches different target audiences by the use of subtle cultural representation (through imagery, symbols, and more) and is seen as a more modern way of reducing costs of targeting different market segments (Johnson & Grier, 2011). In advertising, inclusive marketing could be a powerful tool to positively recognize ethnic minorities' presence and status and acknowledges that they are recognized and valued by the brand (Hazzouri, Main & Carvalho, 2015).

However, despite the popularity of inclusive marketing, some marketers still approach it with caution due to the complexity and risk inherent in inclusive marketing, which would be best understood by marketing researchers (Cui, 2001). Marketers have a bigger risk of alienating the majority by targeting minority groups due to cultural necessity (Johnson & Grier, 2011). Mono-ethnic marketing is employed by the 'melting pot' model of the United States, which expects those ethnic minorities will conform and incorporate themselves in the mainstream (Lo, 2011). However, this is where people receive advertisements more implicitly compared to other countries (Johnson & Grier, 2011). This 'melting pot' approach may not be successful in the Philippines due to the several key differences of an emerging market. Additionally, due to the intensely competitive environment of any market, marketers must be alert to any changes or shifts in socio-political, economic, demographic and psychographic situations and conditions, and must be able to quickly and effectively adapt to these changes to maintain brand awareness and ultimately the brand's success (Lo, 2009).

### ***The mediating role of ethnic Self-Referencing***

The manner of approaching ethnicity in marketing strategies should take into consideration the information processing strategy that an individual consumer uses to relate a message to an



aspect of one's self-structure; this is known as self-referencing (Hesapci et. al, 2016). In advertisements, the consumer becomes subject to *question phrasing*, also known as the problem versus benefit focus. This is where self-referencing becomes a mechanism to determine the impact of an advertisement on the consumer by measuring how the question phrasing of an advertisement affects a consumer's issue concern (Ku et. al, 2019). The persuasiveness of an ad increases when ad perceivers are exposed to messages which they can relate to, as it heightens the extent of their issue concern; these advertisements are known as *self-referent advertisements* (Phua & Kim, 2018). These advertisements increase the relevance of the message of an ad to oneself, which prompts more positive brand-related outcomes. Some variables included in self-referent advertisements are endorser ethnicity, gender roles, and language.

One factor affecting the self-referencing of an individual is the level of their self-awareness. Self-awareness is the state to which an individual is conscious of their ethnic membership, which allows them to classify themselves based on their "felt ethnicity"; a concept that is beyond simple ethnic classification. Ethnic self-awareness, in the context of consumption, can be prompted by factors such as personality, social situation, and social environment (Dimofte et. al, 2013). The likelihood of the acceptance of a product by way of marketing strategy is dependent on how the information relayed by a strategy connects to one's personal experience (Ku et. al, 2019). In the paragraph above, it was aforementioned that personality, social situation, and social environment has an influence on ethnic self-awareness. Ethnic self-awareness then affects how an individual relates the message of a marketing strategy to one's personality (ethnic self-referencing). In a research by the group of Dimofte (2013), it was stated that a consumer's social situation affects a consumer's ethnic perception in such a way that they are more likely to consume ethnic-associated products when the social context includes different ethnic groups.

Self-referencing is a personal encoding process or a process by which a person's memory of personal information is used as a reference for the interpretation of a message communicated to them (Ku et. al, 2019). Relating information to the self-increases the recall of information, as it is associated with previously stored information in the memory of an individual; therefore, self-referencing acts as a mediating variable between ethnic marketing communication efforts and the intrinsic intention of the parties to be socially included in marketing campaigns. Exposing an ethnic minority consumer to a message that activates self-referencing, the processing of the message is then influenced, which makes it possible for the consumer to feel subjected to social inclusion. In the same way, an individual concerned on an issue addressed by an advertisement is more likely to respond to the message of an advertisement by purchasing the product advertised, thinking that it would be the answer to their problems (Hescapi et. al, 2019).

### ***Self-Congruity and Effectiveness of Marketing***

Self-congruity is defined as the psychological process wherein a consumer compares a perceived brand image with their own self-image and self-perception (Sirgy, 2018). Consumers relate themselves to certain characteristics and premonitions of a brand. Consumers that are located in an emerging market may have differences in self-congruity and perception of marketing strategies. An emerging market has an environment that is radically different from a first world capitalist society (with five major characteristics that differentiate such as "market heterogeneity, socio-political governance, resource shortage, unbranded competition, and inadequate

infrastructure”) and thus requires marketers to immensely reevaluate their marketing strategies (Sheth, 2011). This must be taken into consideration in ensuring the effectiveness of inclusive marketing in the Philippines. Emerging markets usually have institutionalized beliefs based on faith in which the public depends on (Sheth, 2011). The impact of economic activities and spatial context of an ethnic group shapes the behavior and experiences of consumers and even entrepreneurs who belong to the ethnic group, which leads to socialization and the formation of social ethnic identities (Lo, 2009). With this, self-congruity in the Philippines will be largely different and must be examined well by marketers in order to facilitate marketing effectiveness.

The social labels circulating around society are developed based on the characteristics that serve as a source of difference among consumers, providing a convenient way for marketers to organize the marketplace to allow them to address a specific segment of consumers based on their need to belong and conform with the status quo set in a society (Henderson & Rank-Christman, 2016). This is a method of serving consumers based on perceived stereotypes set by marketers which causes unfavorable impacts on the effectiveness of a marketing strategy, most especially when a stereotype or social label is not aligned with the consumer’s perception of his own social group. Not even positive stereotypes produce favorable effects when it is not aligned with the real social identity of consumers, for the reason that it makes a consumer think that they are perceived more as a social label rather than an individual.

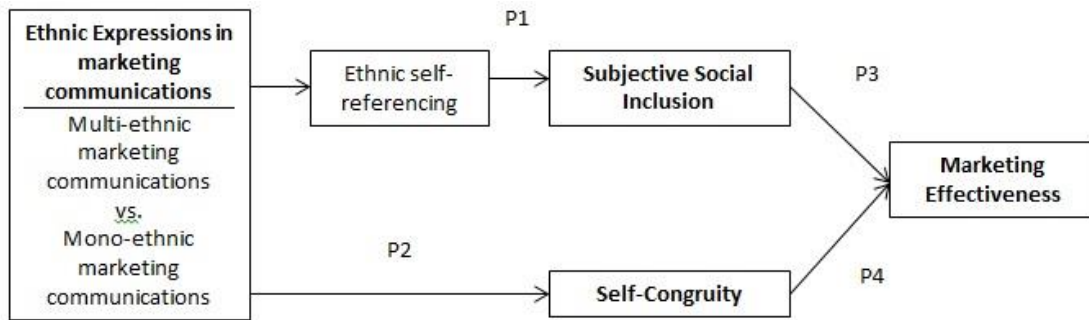
### **Conceptual Framework**

The created conceptual framework of this paper focused on two main fronts: (1) social inclusion and (2) ethnic marketing literature. This paper adopted the Theoretical Model of Inclusive Marketing (Licsandru & Cui, 2018) which is a model that describes the relationship of ethnic expressions and marketing effectiveness, which is heavily influenced by subjective social inclusion and self-congruity. This model was used to examine the extent of inclusiveness that inclusive marketing campaigns may adapt in the Philippine setting that is within the accepted bounds of their ethnic values.

The definition of the new construct, social inclusion was provided in this research. Subjective social inclusion includes subjective properties such as acceptance, belongingness, empowerment, equality, and respect. This was mildly discussed in the study for simplification purposes, as this construct was adopted to examine the dimension that affects the effectiveness of an inclusively designed marketing campaign. Ethnic self-referencing is hypothesized to be the mediating variable between ethnic marketing and subjective social inclusion, which results in the relationship of the latter with marketing effectiveness. Moreover, the self-congruity construct was also incorporated in the model as the mediating variable between ethnic marketing and marketing effectiveness.

**Figure 1**

*Conceptual Model of Inclusive Marketing*



Furthermore, the study has tested five null hypotheses pertaining to the relationship of the variables mentioned in the conceptual framework namely:

- Ho1.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a positive relationship with ethnic Self-Referencing
- Ha1.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a negative relationship with ethnic Self-Referencing
- Ho2.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a positive relationship with self-congruity
- Ha2.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a negative relationship with self-congruity
- Ho3.** Ethnic Self-Referencing is positively correlated with subjective social inclusion
- Ha3.** Ethnic Self-Referencing is positively correlated with subjective social inclusion
- Ho4.** Self-Congruity has a positive relationship with Marketing Effectiveness
- Ha4.** Self-Congruity is negatively related with Marketing Effectiveness
- Ho5.** Subjective Social Inclusion has a positive relationship with Marketing Effectiveness
- Ha5.** Subjective Social Inclusion has no relationship with Marketing Effectiveness

**Methodology**

**Research Design**

The study used a mixed exploratory and cross-sectional research design, adopting a qualitative and a quantitative method of analyzing the data gathered from respondents. A qualitative design was employed to gather consumer insights that are best described beyond quantitative means. The researchers believed that a qualitative research framework would assemble ideas, insights, and thoughts of the Philippine market with their full independence of thought and honest perception. A quantitative method was also used to profile the research participants to identify the body of the Philippine market. This method was utilized to support the findings of the focus group discussion, as well as to have an overall view of the perceptions of the market. Given the conceptual nature of the research objectives, the use of theoretical frameworks summarized discussions, and congregated ideas from the participants would yield findings that will fit the objectives of the research.

**Research Method**

The research method is inductive and quantitative. The inductive approach is defined by Marcoulides (1998) as the method of forming theories, as compared to deductive research of



testing theories. Although the research used a theoretical framework as the basis for the conceptual framework, this study dwelled more on testing the theory proposed in order to come up with conclusive results. The gathered empirical data and concepts are used to form a theory. An inductive approach works by starting from specific insights and patterns, to tentative hypotheses and finally to broader generalizations and theories (Burney & Saleem, 2008). The researchers' main objective is to gather consumer insights and beliefs, and compile all findings into one general definition and understanding of inclusive marketing in the Philippines. The researchers believe that an inductive approach fits best for the research compared to a deductive approach given its main objective.

### ***Research Participants***

The researchers distributed survey questionnaires and conducted focus group discussions (FGD) to gather their primary data for this research. The convenience sampling technique was used to get their sample. The 200 surveyees were male and female students from De La Salle University-Manila with an age range of 17-23. The group utilized Google forms and Facebook in distributing their survey questionnaire. Moreover, three rounds of focus group discussions were also conducted. The participants of the FGD were students from De La Salle University-Manila, ages 18-21. Each round had six participants, one moderator, and one transcriber.

### ***Research Instrument***

As mentioned, the researchers utilized two kinds of research instruments: (1) survey questionnaire; and (2) focus group discussion (FGD).

The survey was divided into three sections. The first section aims to gather demographic information from the respondents. In the first section, the researchers asked the surveyee about their biological orientation, age, and ID number. The next section asked questions about the market perception of inclusive marketing, as well as the extent of tolerance of the market on using social issues as part of a brand's marketing campaign. The last section will have four subparts. It will be composed of the four constructs that the researchers will measure in this study, namely: (1) subjective social inclusion; (2) self-congruity; (3) ethnic marketing communications; and (4) ethnic self-referencing. Each construct will have at least ten questions and will make use of a 5-point Likert scale. The results were analyzed using SMART-PLS and Statgraphics.

On the other hand, the focus group discussion was conducted simultaneously as the survey questionnaire was being distributed. The group conducted three rounds of FGD and had six participants, one moderator and two transcribers for each round. The discussion was guided by a set of objective questions, however, the exchange of question and answer between the moderator and the participants were not limited to that. The moderator asked different closed-ended, open-ended, or opinionated questions apart from the guide questions for the FGD.

### ***Data Collection Methods***

The qualification set for the respondents of this research was that they have to be updated with the current trends, news, and events that are emerging, most especially in social media. For both the

qualitative and quantitative research questionnaires, the researchers employed the use of convenience sampling in their data gathering procedure. Facebook groups were maximized in the dissemination of the survey questionnaire; while random people who fit the standards set by researchers were invited to participate in the focus group discussion. The target number of respondents for the survey questionnaire was 200 respondents; while for the FGD, 6 people each round were invited to participate.

### *Analytical Methods*

The analytical method that was used in this survey was the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method is a tool used to determine the complex cause-effect relationship models which have both observed and unobserved variables (Hair & Ringle, 2017). The unobserved variables were described as relationships that were not directly measured in the research design for a reason that these are not given by the data, rather it is based on previous researchers and derived from theories by the researcher or analyst (Escobar, 2018). These are also known as latent variables. On the other hand, the observed variables are those measured by the researchers such as responses on a survey or secondary data, and these relationships are used to represent the unobserved variables in a statistical model (Glen, 2019). These are also known as measurable variables.

### **Discussion of Results**

#### *Profile of Participants*

The participants of the Focus Group Discussion were composed of male and female students at De La Salle University. There were three rounds of FGDs conducted. For the first round of FGD, the first round of participants consisted of students from ages 19-21 having three males and four females. The second round of participants consisted of students from ages 18-20 having six females. The last round of participants consisted of students from ages 20-21 having two males and three females. The participants during the last round were more diverse, compared to the first two FGDs, which greatly represented the target participants.

For the survey participants, all were students of De La Salle University from ages 17-23 and majority were from the 20-year-old age group which was 56.3% of the participants; while % are from the 17-year-old age group, % are 18, % are 19, % are 21, % is 22, and % is 23.

Meanwhile, 28.9% of the participants were males and 71% of the participants were females. As for the population, % of the population were ID 118 students; while % were 119 students and % were 115 students.

#### *Data Results*

The researchers conducted three rounds of focused group discussion with a minimum of participants of six each group for in-depth insights toward inclusive marketing. All FGD rounds had similar questions, and based on the results, it can be concluded that a great number of the participants are not aware of what inclusive marketing is all about. The results also showed that

when they first heard the term, the top of their mind is inclusive marketing is a marketing campaign that is for everyone which includes all types of people with no bias. When asked to name local brands that use inclusive marketing, they usually think of Dove and Jollibee. The researchers also asked them if they think inclusive marketing is prevalent in the Philippines, their answers were divided. Moreover, the social issues that they think that *will* be tackled and *needs* to be tackled are as follows: PWDs; mental illness; poverty or social income; gender inequality; LGBT, and sustainable consumption. The researchers also asked the participants to mention factors that will affect the success of inclusive marketing in the Philippines. The factors are open-mindedness or mindset; execution or approach; legislation or government and mutual benefit or involvement of the market. Lastly, the participants were asked which of the ethnic marketing communication is the most effective in the Philippines. The majority answered multi-ethnic marketing communication and only one person said mono-ethnic marketing communication. They also said that multi-ethnic marketing communication can be a success in answering everybody's need for social inclusion.

The researchers also measured the extent of acceptance of the market on a brand inclusively marketing a stand on the social issues (1) gender diversity, (2) same-sex marriage, (3) liberated beauty standards, (4) women empowerment, (5) dominance of women in the workplace, (6) contraceptives, (7) body image and empowerment, and (8) social class inclusion. For *gender diversity*, 51.5% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 29.5% answered in favor; 14.5% were neutral; 2.5% were not in favor; and 2% were strongly against it. For *same-sex marriage*, 36% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 25.5% answered in favor; 20.5% were neutral; 10.5% were not in favor; and 7.5% were strongly against it. For *liberated beauty standards*, 46.5% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 25.5% answered in favor; 19% were neutral; 7.5% were not in favor; and 0.15% were strongly against it. For *women empowerment*, 63.5% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 23.5% answered in favor; 8.5% were neutral; 2.5% were not in favor; and 2% were strongly against it. For *dominance of women in the workplace*, 46% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 24.5% answered in favor; 23% were neutral; 4% were not in favor; and 2.5% were strongly against it. For *contraceptives*, 40.5% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 26% answered in favor; 19% were neutral; 10.5% were not in favor; and 4% were strongly against it. As for *body image empowerment*, 57% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 25% answered in favor; 11.5% were neutral; 5.5% were not in favor; and 1% were strongly against it. And finally, for inclusive marketing across *different social classes*, 45% answered that they were strongly in favor of the social issue; 23% answered in favor; 20% were neutral; 8.5% were not in favor; and 3.5% were strongly against it.

The reliability of the data results to test the hypotheses was measured using various measurement tools such as Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and Average Variance Expected (AVE) while its validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. Table 1 (see Appendix G) shows all of the 6 variables that were confirmed to be valid. A score between 0.7 and 0.9 in the Cronbach's Alpha confirms the data's validity. As to Composite Reliability, the acceptable range is wider with 0.7 and above (Alarcon & Sanchez, 2015). Only variable ME fell below the acceptable region, with composite reliability of 0.623. And finally, for AVE; the level of 0.5 is considered acceptable. All the variables fell below the acceptable AVE; with values ranging from 0.240 to 0.492.

The discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, which compared the square root of the AVE with the relationship of latent constructs (M. R. Ab Hamid et al, 2017). The results showed that each construct differs from each other.

Finally, in the decision-making of whether to accept or reject the hypothesis, the p values of each construct were used to evaluate the hypotheses. P values (P) less than 0.05 or  $P < 0.05$  were used to evaluate whether a hypothesis was to be accepted or rejected. In this study, the null hypotheses 1 up to 3 were accepted, with p values of 0.0 (perfect correlation); while hypotheses 4 and 5 were rejected, with p values of 0.328 and 0.766. With that being said, only three out of five null hypotheses tested were confirmed which are the following:

- Ho1.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a positive relationship with Ethnic Self-Referencing*
- Ho2.** Ethnic Marketing Communications have a positive relationship with self-congruity*
- Ho3.** Ethnic Self-Referencing is positively correlated with subjective social inclusion.*

Meanwhile, the following are the alternative hypotheses to replace the rejected null hypotheses that had lower p values:

- Ha3.** Self-Congruity is negatively related with Marketing Effectiveness*
- Ha4.** Subjective Social Inclusion has no relationship with Marketing Effectiveness*

### ***Discussion***

Initially, this study aims to determine the variable/s that would act as mediating variables between an ethnic marketing communication campaign and its effectiveness to assess the consumer behavior on marketing campaigns that attempt to inclusively sell to the market. The study used a mixed exploratory and cross-sectional research design, as well as the Theoretical Model of Inclusive Marketing (Licsandru & Cui, 2018) in examining how a marketer may be able to succeed in marketing a product inclusively. The results of the Construct Reliability & Validity shows that there is a relationship between the variables. However, whether it is positive or negative in correlation is different from what was hypothesized. Among the five hypotheses, only the first three null hypotheses were accepted. For the last two constructs with rejected null hypotheses, the respective alternative hypotheses replaced the null hypothesis. Looking at the results of the Path Model, it was shown that among the other constructs, it was subjective social inclusion that had the best correlation with marketing effectiveness.

The concept of embracing diverse ideals in society to socially exclude an individual varies through cultures (Barry, 2013). Like, for instance, the dove “real beauty” campaign which was a total hit in Western countries, but was a total flop in China that features the same idealized version of humans. Marketing must take into consideration the features of the society they are employing their inclusive marketing campaign in, whether or not the stereotypical attributes of the society is real or merely a stereotype (Robertson & Davidson, 2013). Based on the results of this study; in the Philippine setting, the more a marketing campaign tries to use a single strategy on the diverse set of cultures in the country, the less likely it is for a marketing campaign to be effective.

Moving forward, in a similar study it was found out that there is no significant relationship between self-congruity and the effectiveness of a marketing campaign (Najar, 2008; Vigolo & Ugolini, 2016). This may be rooted in the characteristic of the consumer being self-assured, to the extent that the level of relevance of a campaign in itself does not affect. Therefore, in the Philippine setting, the high self-congruity of a marketing campaign among local consumers does not automatically equate to its effectiveness.

As to the tolerance of the market on a brand inclusively campaigning a stand on a specific social issue, results show that most people in the market are tolerant of all the social issues. However, the market was mostly tolerant on the issue of women empowerment (63.5% are strongly in favor). Despite being in the same context, only 46% of the respondents were in strong favor of the dominance of women in the workplace. Although Philippine laws and politics give women access to almost all of the rights of men (Reyes & Valencia, 2018); these laws protecting women apparently “lack teeth” (Valencia, 2018). This is why although the Philippines promote women's equality, the country is still reluctant to provide equal opportunities to both men and women in the workplace; and that is the reality of the situation. In the same way that most of the respondents are pro-gender diversity (51.5%), but not as in favor of same-sex marriage (36%). This is rooted in the fact that Catholicism, which is highly against these values are an integral part of the Filipino society (Cueto & Lago, 2019). The religion is embedded in educational institutions, and even in professional and technical occupations. Also relevant to this fact is the result of contraceptives (40.5%). The next highest social issue that the Philippines are tolerant of is the issue of body image (57%). This is because body image is one of the factors that affect the self-esteem and psychological well-being of the younger generation (Hernandez, 2017). Liberated beauty standards, however, did not receive as high acceptance as body image; despite the two issues being related. This is due to beauty stereotypes still being desired to be achieved by the consumers in the country; which is what is still effectively used by some marketing campaigns (Chen et al., 2017). The results on inclusive marketing across different social classes (45%) falling below 50% of approval among the respondents is based on the significance of market segmentation; because of the different preferences on price and quality of a product, as well as the extent that a marketing campaign may be allowed to cross (Janssen et. al, 2020).

### **Conclusion**

The researchers have identified that many are still not aware of what inclusive marketing is about. In this study, the four variables that are examined are (1) subjective social inclusion; (2) self-congruity; (3) ethnic marketing communications; and (4) ethnic self-referencing. As mentioned in the discussion part, subjective social inclusion had the best correlation with marketing effectiveness. The results also showed that in the Philippines setting, it is better to use multi-ethnic marketing communications as a strategy. The marketing campaign has lesser chances to become a success if marketers will use a single strategy in a country with a diverse set of cultures. Furthermore, the result tells that there is no significant relationship between self-congruity and the effectiveness of a marketing campaign. In the Philippine setting, the high self-congruity of a marketing campaign among local consumers does not mean it will be an effective campaign. The researchers also have gathered data that shows that the majority of the people in the market are tolerant of all social issues namely: (1) gender diversity, (2) same-sex marriage, (3) liberated beauty standards, (4) women empowerment, (5) dominance of women in the workplace,



(6) contraceptives, (7) body image and empowerment, and (8) social class inclusion. The percentage of the market open to these social issues, however, varies about Philippine culture.

This study showed results that may be used by the brands or marketers that will incorporate inclusive marketing in their campaigns in the future. However, it should be noted that the actual results might be different from the outcome of this study given that the respondents and participants of the survey questionnaire and focus group discussions were limited only to the students of De La Salle University-Manila. The participants only represent a small portion of the population. A longer time frame for gathering data and a more efficient budget could yield a change in results.

### **Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research**

Limitations of this research have been evident from the start due to the lack of literature regarding inclusive marketing that is present in the Philippines. This gap is the research's primary aim to fill and pioneer a more in-depth and widespread understanding of inclusive marketing in emerging markets. The research adopts the framework from Licsandru & Cui (2017) due to the flexibility and adaptability of the conceptual framework presented. However, further research may diverge to other existing conceptual frameworks or frameworks that can be extracted from the meta-analysis of several other types of research and studies primarily on emerging markets. Given the broad and complex socio-political and competitive environment of the Philippines, not much research and literature directly pinpoint ethnic minorities and social topics that are dominant in the country. Additionally, the research only targets general consumers that identify mostly (if not completely) as Filipinos, in biological, cultural, and geographical means. Consumers that identify as Filipinos are considered the umbrella category wherein certain demographics and psychographics branch out from. The research does not include other ethnic minorities present in the Philippines due to the extent of the research until Filipino identity and understanding, and the lack of representation of these ethnic minority groups in Philippine advertising. Further direction for research may include 1) deeper analysis of inclusive marketing in the Philippines and its perception from various age groups; 2) ethnic self-identity of Filipinos and the more concrete basis on ethnic representation and perception on inclusive marketing; 3) empirically tested comparison between inclusive marketing deployed in first world countries and its adaptability on emerging markets such as the Philippines featuring concrete examples of advertising materials present; 4) the research can be extended and fully immersed in its literature by incorporating more sources from emerging markets.

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