

Optimizing International Campaigns: The Power of IMC Touchpoints

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December 2023

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Abstract

Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) has become a crucial aspect of marketing in recent years, with businesses focusing on delivering a cohesive message across all touchpoints. However, the increasing complexity of media channels and international expansion has made it challenging for marketing professionals to create effective campaigns. This study addresses the need for more research on Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC) by examining touchpoints and channels in international campaigns, considering variables such as the number of countries and regions involved.

Inspired by the Quesenberry et al. (2012) research, the study analyzes 368 international campaigns over a decade from the Effie Awards Database. A Linear regression analysis revealed a weak relation between the number of touchpoints and the number of countries. A combined ranking and analysis of variance (ANOVA) methodology demonstrated that the variations in mean touchpoints among regions were not statistically significant.

The findings provide practical benchmarks for marketing professionals running international campaigns, emphasizing the need for tailored approaches across different regions. Moreover, this research contributes empirical insights into the GIMC landscape, laying the groundwork for future investigations into the impact of culture, language, and technology on GIMC touchpoints.

Keywords: GIMC, IMC Touchpoints, International Campaigns, Global Marketing, Effie Awards

Introduction

The Integrated Marketing Communications concept has been intensively discussed in the last two decades. Initially, scholars were working on a definition, and the differences between it and the previous approaches, and then the studies turned toward IMC effectiveness. In the beginning, scholars and managers looked separately at each marketing touchpoint, the points of contact between the communication message and the consumer. With the IMC concept, these elements work together to deliver a unified message and must be considered holistically for the planning (Zvobgo & Melewar, 2011).

Even though IMC does not look at the marketing communication channels separately, selecting the right mix and number of touchpoints is essential to deliver a consistent message to their prospects (Zvobgo & Melewar, 2011). In this scenario, a huge drawback is that modern marketing professionals face many new media options and need help to make good decisions (Keller, 2016).

Furthermore, the number of companies expanding their business internationally has increased over the years (Statista, 2022), making marketing communication decisions more complicated. Globalization, technological advancements, and changes in market dynamics have contributed to this trend. In addition, consumers have become more globally connected, and their preferences and demands go beyond borders. Companies are expanding internationally to cater to these global consumer preferences and capture the growing demand for their products and services in different markets (Zvobgo & Melewar, 2011).

In this scenario, many Integrated Marketing Communication Programs have become Global, known as GIMC. Moreover, the planning and dynamics of a GIMC are even more challenging than a local campaign. For this reason, certain studies regarding GIMC are essential.

Previous studies about the average number of touchpoints in effective IMC were done. Still, nothing was focused on International Business, or campaigns run in more than three countries in different regions. The complexity of dealing with people with different cultures, languages and other local influences can significantly impact the plan and communication options besides the message (Steinhoff et al., 2023). Moreover, the challenges of testing and monitoring the effectiveness of the activities and channels from a distance are significant barriers to some initiatives or usually lead to epic failures.

In addition, previous studies about IMC touchpoints should have included other variables, such as business purpose and market, to gather more fruitful insights. Knowledge about the main categories and combinations of channels used in global campaigns with trends by region will be precious for marketing managers planning and budgeting their next GIMC initiative. Each country has a unique media landscape with varying levels of digital penetration, regulations, and media preferences. So, usually, global companies rely on local support to adapt or manage some campaigns locally, and the synergy between the global and the local ones can be arduous. Previous knowledge about the number of touchpoints and the primary channels used in cross-country campaigns will reduce team friction and improve success rates. Even in a situation with no local representative, this knowledge can give the global manager different perspectives, facilitate their planning and implementation of communication activities, and drive the success of their campaign.

The primary goal of this research is to provide marketing professionals with some benchmarks regarding the number of touchpoints they should rely on in their subsequent international campaigns for engaging diverse international audiences. Moreover, the research seeks valuable insights and best practices for marketers embarking on global campaigns regarding the main channels used in effective communications and combinations relevant to international environments.

According to Zvobgo & Melewar (2011), the ‘ability to choose the right channel in the wide list of analogy and digital alternatives helps find the easiest way to connect with the required audience category.’ This research aims to give the marketer enough knowledge to choose their channel mix with more confidence and success possibilities. Planning and managing a campaign from a distance to different countries can lead to failure. Knowing what has been done by other influential companies will also give them confidence regarding implementing the campaigns, monitoring, and adaptation feasibility and easiness.

Furthermore, part of the goal of this research is to provide new knowledge to some experienced marketers who are used to local campaigns. It will help them adapt their strategies, identify effective communication channels, and avoid assumptions due to their experience that may not be relevant to an international campaign.

Ultimately, the research aims to contribute new knowledge to the field of global marketing, improving decision-making processes and enhancing the outcomes of future international marketing initiatives.

Research Objective

The main objective of this research is to provide a deeper analysis of the average **number of touchpoints used in an effective international campaign**. However, it is essential to consider other variables affecting GIMC to understand their relationship, differences, and trends in the results when combined.

Q1: Is there a relation between the number of touchpoints and the number of countries? A correlation analysis is to understand if the number of countries in the campaign influences the overall number of touchpoints used.

Q2: Does the Region influence the number of Touchpoints? An analysis to identify if there is any pattern in the average number of touchpoints regarding the regions involved in the campaign.

Literature Review

Integrated Marketing Communication

Businesses broadly use Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) in their communication strategy. Simply, it is a process that strategically connects several communication touchpoints, maintaining consistency between the messages sent. In the 80s, IMC was suggested as an integration of the various promotional mix elements, and with doubts about advertising being the best communication method, IMC arose (Dilenschneider, 1991). Then, the American Association of Advertising Agencies (AAAA) defined IMC as:

"a concept of marketing communications, planning that recognizes the added value of a comprehensive plan that evaluates the strategic roles of a variety of communications disciplines—for example, general advertising, direct response, sales promotion, and public relations—and combines these disciplines to provide clarity, consistency, and maximum communication impact" (Schultz et al., 1993)

A decade later, Duncan (2001) defined IMC as driving brand value by managing customer relationships. In detail, it is a cross-functional process that manages all the brand's interactions with its prospects, strategically connecting them and controlling the messages to nurture profitable relationships.

Regardless of the discussions about the IMC's definition and concept, there were disagreements about its effectiveness and measurement. Although in 2004, some still described IMC as a primary management approach to aggregate the communication impact of different areas (Kitchen & de Pelsmacker, 2004), in 2005, in the first special issue on Integrated Marketing Communication, the Journal of Advertising highlighted that most agencies believed in the IMC concept. However, managers still needed to understand the IMC process and how to measure their cost-benefit (Laczniak, 2005), a significant issue to tackle.

Therefore, researchers tended to redesign their focus in the same period to interpret the connection between IMC and successful results. (Reid, 2003) affirmed that the synergy between decisions and marketing activities led to performance improvement. Supported by his Australian market research, he concluded that highly integrated IMC management brands achieved stronger relationships with their stakeholders and performance. Sometime later, a group of scholars developed a conceptual framework to identify the role of IMC in brand management results, highlighting that the higher the synergy, the better the results in brand equity and awareness compared with the competition (Madhavaram et al., 2005)

Around twenty years later than it is the first definition, the discussions about the best formulas for the effectiveness of IMC continue. Some claim that each communication channel's effectiveness can be measured for their outcomes using quantitative methods, and these performance indicators' aggregated data can provide insights into the IMC's success (Reinold & Tropp, 2012). Batra & Keller (2016) added the importance of distributing these contacts through the customer journey and the rising technology allowing data integration for analyses. Still, the number and variety of communication channels pose a challenge for this data integration and effective measurement of IMC.

McGrath (2010) proposed a model to test the IMC effects focused on two main components: **the multiple touchpoints** and **the consistency of the message**. Although he could not support his hypothesis of a highly distinct result between communication projects using ICM and traditional approaches due to his sample size, he emphasized in his studies the importance of the number of marketing communication elements in the results of a campaign.

Touchpoints

The main characteristic of the IMC is the view of the consumer of all communication as a unique effort (Yeshin, 1998). It means that point-of-sales promotions, advertising, social

media, and other types of communication are not perceived as separate. So, even if each contact has an individual goal, their integration is the purpose of IMC (Kim, 2001). Each communication channel through which the consumer receives a message is called a touchpoint. They are also defined as the opportunity for communication between the company and the consumer (McKenzie & Royne, 2009) or their unique interactions (Belch & Belch, 2018).

With advances in digital media, several new touchpoints are arising and increasing the daily verbal and non-verbal signals people receive and relate to a brand in their customer journey (Pantano & Viassone, 2015). Focusing on the number of IMC touchpoints, Quesenberry et al. (2012) used the Effie Award winner's data to illustrate an evolution of these numbers. Their study covered thirteen years and highlighted the increase in the average touchpoints used in effective campaigns from 2.63 in 1998 to 5.78 in 2010, highlighting the evolution of interactive media and press relations. Further, Zwerin et al. (2020) updated the study and included data till 2018, discovering that the number of touchpoints continued to increase; between 2010 and 2018, the mean was over seven, meaning the complexity of the campaign may be growing too.

International Environment

Grein & Gould (1996) and Gould et al. (1999) studied the practice of IMC across countries and referred to it as Globally Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC). The initial view is that this global strategy is possible due to similarities between some countries and the standardization of products and marketing assets. On the other hand, Onkvisit & Shaw (1999) discussed that a global strategy needs to consider the differences, not only similarities and overcome them. They believe a mix of standardized and local strategies should be considered.

Johansson (2000) made an essential contribution to the literature, adding that a brand might be operating in several countries but not using a GIMC. They affirmed that a globally market-integrated strategy is in place when a global manager is accountable for the global brand performance and integrates activities across countries.

A lot is heard about Globalization and how the world is becoming one big tribe, and it is a fact that the number of companies operating internationally increases every year (Statista, 2022). Furthermore, the advances in technology are an essential driver in this context. With this international business environment ascending, it is crucial to focus a study on GIMC and its touchpoints. Previous research analyzing the number and types of touchpoints used in international campaigns has yet to be available.

Previous studies about the average number of touchpoints in effective IMC were done. Still, nothing was focused on International Campaigns or adding different Countries or regions as a variable. The complexity of dealing with people with different cultures, languages and other local influences can significantly impact the plan and communication options besides the message (Steinhoff et al., 2023). Moreover, the challenges of testing and monitoring the effectiveness of the activities and channels from a distance are significant barriers to some initiatives or usually lead to epic failures.

In addition, previous studies about IMC touchpoints did not include other variables such as business purpose and market to gather more fruitful insights. Knowledge about the main categories and combinations of channels used in global campaigns with trends by region will be precious for marketing managers planning and budgeting their next GIMC initiative. Each country has a unique media landscape with varying levels of digital penetration, regulations, and media preferences. So, usually, global companies rely on local support to adapt or manage some campaigns locally, and the synergy between the global and the local ones can be arduous. Previous knowledge about the number of touchpoints and the

primary channels used in cross-country campaigns will reduce team friction and improve success rates. Even in a situation with no local representative, this knowledge can give the global manager different perspectives, facilitate their planning and implementation of communication activities, and drive the success of their campaign.

Effie Awards

Inspired by the methodology of Quesenberry et al. (2012), this research will work with secondary data from the Effie Awards Database. The Effie Awards is a prestigious global competition recognizing and celebrating the most effective marketing communications campaigns worldwide. Effie Awards were first introduced in 1968 in the United States and have since expanded to numerous countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Brazil, India, and many others. Since 2004, they have had an edition of the awards dedicated to Global Campaigns, which were present in more than four countries and across two or more regions (Effie Worldwide, n.d.-a).

Although the awards honour campaigns demonstrating exceptional strategic thinking, creativity, and measurable results in achieving marketing objectives, its focus is on effectiveness, highlighting campaigns successfully delivering tangible and meaningful outcomes. Entries are evaluated based on their ability to meet the objectives, strategic approach, creative execution, and measurable impact on the target audience and business results (Effie Worldwide, n.d.-a).

Effie Award categories cover various sectors and disciplines, such as product launches, brand revitalization, social good, digital marketing, integrated marketing communications, and more. Each year, a panel of industry experts and judges review the submissions and select the campaigns that exemplify the highest standards of effectiveness (Effie Worldwide, n.d.-b)

Winning an Effie Award is highly regarded within the marketing industry, as it signifies excellence in planning and execution and acknowledges the campaign's ability to drive tangible results. The Effie Awards serve as a benchmark for marketing effectiveness, inspiring professionals to strive for excellence and encouraging the adoption of best practices in the field (Effie Worldwide, n.d.).

Based on the literature review, some critical variables were identified, and those variables can be gathered using the Effie Awards database:

- **Number of touchpoints:** The total number of channel types used in each campaign.
- **Number of countries:** The number of Countries where the campaign was present.
- **Regions:** The region information will be added based on the countries in the data.

The countries were grouped into eight regions based on their location and culture: 'Asia,' 'Australia and Oceania,' 'Central America and the Caribbean,' 'Europe,' 'Middle East, North Africa, and Greater Arabia,' 'North America,' 'South America,' and 'Sub-Saharan Africa.'

This research provides an overall analysis and trends identified in the data collected and answers the main research questions regarding these variables.

Data and Methodology

This research will be inspired by the methodology of Quesenberry et al. (2012), using the subscription-based online database of the Effie Awards. The focus will be on successful international campaigns, and data contains a mix of campaigns run in 95 different countries and variations on the number of countries reached by each initiative. Three hundred sixty-eight campaigns over ten years, from 2012 to 2022, were analyzed.

The Effie Awards database collects the data from the entry form required for the award participation. This entry form collects vital information for these analyses, such as the period of the campaign, number of regions, countries, and touchpoint details (Check Table 1 for an example of the touchpoints section of the form in 2022). All information is provided by the candidates, along with references and proof of its veracity.

Using the online paid access database, each campaign was reviewed manually, and information for this research was gathered from the resume information on each campaign homepage or the attached .pdf file. Due to the lack of information, only some of the campaigns in the period were added to the research.

A macro table was created from the data provided through the entry forms, including all the information required for these analyses: unique campaign identifiers, regions, countries, and touchpoints. The unique campaign identifier is a unique code for each campaign that helps identify the campaign and aggregate data from other sources. The region and country fields refer to the geographic area reached by the campaign; both fields will be used to rate how international the campaign is and analyze trends and differences among the areas. The touchpoint field lists all the channels the campaign uses, regardless of their relevance. The data granularity is by touchpoint and country.

Table 1

Example of touchpoint section of Effie Entry form

ALL TOUCHPOINTS AS PART OF YOUR EFFORT		
Select all touchpoints used in the effort, based on the options provided in the below chart. Within your response to Question 3, explain which touchpoints from the below list were integral to reaching your audience and why. On the creative reel, you must show at least one complete example of each touchpoint that was integral to the effort's success. For example, if you mark 14 boxes below and 8 were key to the driving results and explained as integral in Question 3, those 8 must be featured on the reel.		
Branded Content – Editorial	Digital Mktg. - SEM	Print - Magazine
Branded Content – Product Placement	Digital Mktg. - SEO	Print - Newspaper
Cinema	Digital Mktg. – Short Video (:15-3 min.)	Public Relations
Contests	Digital Mktg. – Social: Organic	Radio
Digital Mktg. – Affiliate	Digital Mktg. – Social: Paid	Retail Experience: Digital
Digital Mktg. – Audio Ads	Digital Mktg. – Video Ads	Retail Experience: In Store
Digital Mktg. – Content Promotion	Direct Mail	Sales Promotion, Couponing & Distribution

Digital Mktg. – Display Ads	Events	Sampling/Trial
Digital Mktg. – Email/Chatbots/Text/Messaging	Health Offices / Point of Care	Sponsorships – Entertainment
Digital Mktg. – Gaming	Influencer / Key Opinion Leader	Sponsorships – Sports
Digital Mktg. – Influencers	Interactive / Website / Apps	Sponsorships – Unique Opportunity
Digital Mktg. – Location based	Internal/In-Office Marketing	Street Mktg.
Digital Mktg. – Long Video (3+ min.)	Loyalty Programs	Trade Shows, Trade Communications, Professional Engagement
Digital Mktg. – Marketplace Ads	OOH – Billboards	TV
Digital Mktg. – Mobile	OOH – Other Outdoor	User-Generated Content & Reviews
Digital Mktg. – Product Placement	OOH - Transportation	Other:
Digital Mktg. – Programmatic Display Ads	Packaging & Product Design	
Digital Mktg. - Programmatic Video Ads	Print – Custom Publication	

Note. Section of Effie Global Multi Regions Entry form where the competitor needs to point out all touchpoints included in the campaign. From Effie Global IMR 2022 entry form (https://www.effie.org/25/entry_details/2). Copyright 2022 by Effie Worldwide, Inc.

The database compiles information from numerous campaigns, and these campaigns have different reporting practices, making it challenging to ensure uniformity in data presentation. While some campaigns provide detailed information on communication touchpoints, others have a more limited or abstract reporting style. To reduce the ambiguity and make direct comparisons less challenging, the touchpoints mentioned were aggregated into 35 main options: Branded Content - Editorial or Product Placement, Cinema, Contest, Digital Mktg. - SEM/SEO, Digital Mktg. – Audio Ads, Digital Mktg. – Content Promotion, Digital Mktg. – Display Ads, Digital Mktg. – Email/Chatbots/Text/Messaging, Digital Mktg. – Gaming, Digital Mktg. – Location-based, Digital Mktg. – Mobile, Digital Mktg. – Social, Digital Mktg. – Video, Direct Mail, Events, Health Offices / Point of Care, Influencers, Interactive / Website / Apps, Internal/In-Office Marketing, Loyalty Programs, OOH, Packaging & Product Design, Print, Public Relations, Radio, Retail Experience: E-commerce, Retail Experience: In Store, Sales Promotion, Couponing & Distribution, Sampling/Trial, Sponsorship, Street Mktg, Trade Shows, Trade Communications, Professional Engagement, TV, User Generated Content & Reviews, and Other.

Some additional calculations and data aggregation were created in the tool to count the number of Countries reached by each campaign, count the number of touchpoints, and calculate the average number of touchpoints.

A linear regression model was employed to investigate the relationship between the number of touchpoints and the number of countries in marketing campaigns, with the number of touchpoints as the dependent variable and the number of countries as the independent variable. This model aimed to quantitatively assess how variations in the number of countries could predict changes in the number of touchpoints, providing a statistical examination of the association between these critical variables and offering valuable insights into the dynamics of global marketing campaigns.

A dual-methodology approach was employed to address research question 2 (Q2). A ranking methodology was initially applied to assess the mean number of touchpoints in global marketing campaigns across distinct regions. This involved assigning ranks based on the average number of touchpoints by campaign, allowing for a comparative analysis. Subsequently, an analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to evaluate potential variations among the regions statistically. The objective was to explore and quantify any disparities in the mean number of touchpoints across diverse geographical areas.

Some limitations should be acknowledged in this research. Firstly, the data collected from the Effie Awards Database represent campaigns recognized for their effectiveness. While this provides valuable insights into successful Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC) campaigns, it is essential to note that this data may only comprehensively encompass some of the spectrum of GIMC initiatives worldwide. The scope of the database is inherently restricted to campaigns that have received awards or recognition, potentially leading to a bias toward exemplary or exceptional campaigns. This might not

account for GIMC efforts that, while effective, may not have been submitted for awards or might not have received recognition.

Secondly, a notable limitation in this research arises from the inconsistent nature of data within the Effie Awards Database. The absence of standardized data formats and the inconsistent availability of specific fields in all campaign entries present challenges for direct comparisons and comprehensive analysis. Researchers should approach the findings cautiously, considering the potential impact of these data inconsistencies on the research outcomes.

Future efforts should consider standardizing data entry practices and encouraging comprehensive reporting to enhance the utility of the Effie Awards Database as a source of data for analysis in the field of Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC) campaigns.

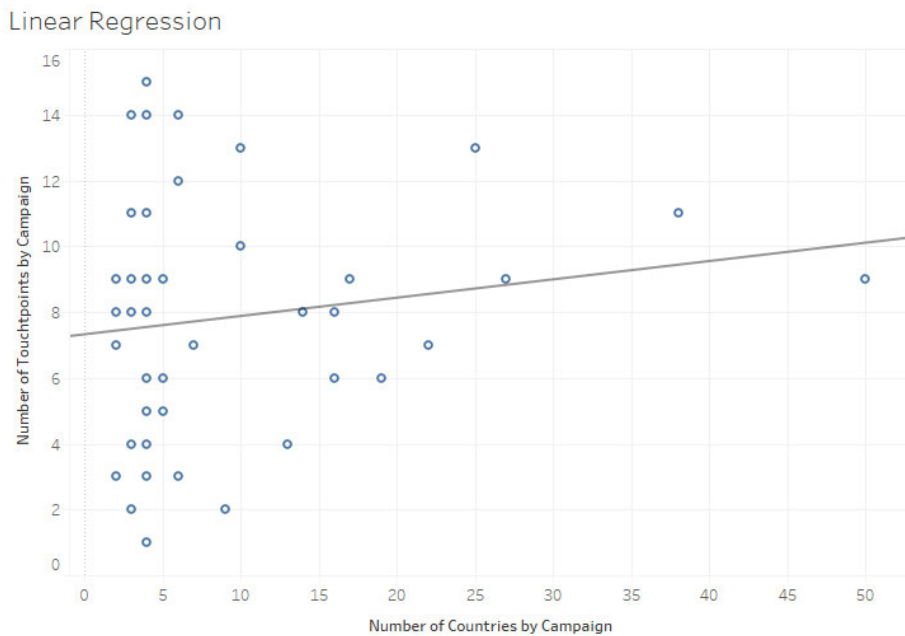
Findings

A linear regression model was employed to understand if the ideal number of touchpoints could be predicted based on exploring the potential relationship between the fixed number of touchpoints in a campaign and the corresponding number of countries involved. The model aggregates all the campaigns based on 41 observations. The analysis revealed that the model, with an R-squared value of 0.0246007, explained only a limited proportion of the variance in the number of countries, suggesting a **weak association**. The p-value for significance was calculated at 0.327419, exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.05. This higher p-value indicates that the observed relationship between the fixed number of touchpoints and the number of countries in a campaign is not statistically significant. Upon closer examination of the trend lines' coefficients, it became evident that neither the intercept nor the number of countries involved in a campaign significantly impacted the relationship.

To sum it up, the results of the linear regression analysis do not provide strong evidence for a meaningful correlation between the fixed number of touchpoints and the number of countries in international campaigns, underscoring the intricate nature of the various factors that influence cross-border marketing strategies.

Figure 1

Number of countries in the campaign and the number of touchpoints



Note: The linear regression analysis examining the relationship between the fixed number of touchpoints and the number of countries in international campaigns revealed a weak association ($R\text{-squared} = 0.0246$) with a non-significant $p\text{-value}$ (0.3274). The author's Calculation.

Research question 2 aimed to explore the mean number of touchpoints in global marketing campaigns across different regions. To achieve this, a two-step methodology was followed. Initially, a ranking approach was used to reveal that the highest mean number of touchpoints (8.54) was observed in Australia and Oceania, while the lowest (6.93) was reported in Central America and the Caribbean. This ranking provided a broad understanding of the regional differences in campaign touchpoints.

Table 2

Regions, Mean of touchpoints, and Rank

Region	Mean # Touchpoints	Rank of Avg. Number of Touchpoints by Campaign a..
Australia and Oceania	8.538	8
Europe	8.008	7
Sub-Saharan Africa	8.000	6
Middle East, North Africa,..	7.816	5
South America	7.706	4
North America	7.395	3
Asia	7.231	2
Central America and the C..	6.933	1

Note. Investigation of the mean number of touchpoints in global campaigns, utilizing a ranking approach that revealed Australia and Oceania with the highest mean (8.54) and Central America and the Caribbean with the lowest (6.93). The author's Calculation.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to delve deeper into the statistical significance of these observed differences. The results of the ANOVA test showed that the differences in mean touchpoints among regions were not statistically significant. This implies that although there are differences in mean touchpoints, these could be attributed to random variability rather than systematic regional distinctions.

Therefore, the combination of the ranking and ANOVA approach provided insights into regional variations in touchpoints and offered a statistical lens to discern the significance of these distinctions in the context of global marketing campaigns.

Table 3

ANOVA Test results

Anova: Single Factor						
SUMMARY						
<i>Groups</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Sum</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Variance</i>		
Australia and Oceania	26	222	8.538462	6.738462		
Europe	128	1025	8.007813	17.2834		
Sub-Saharan Africa	8	64	8	4.285714		
Middle East, North Africa, and Greater Arabia	38	297	7.815789	10.20839		
South America	51	393	7.705882	17.45176		
North America	152	1124	7.394737	13.77693		
Asia	39	282	7.230769	13.49798		
Central America and the Caribbean	15	104	6.933333	8.495238		
ANOVA						
<i>Source of Variation</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>F crit</i>
Between Groups	63.06875	7	9.009821	0.636479	0.725767	2.029971
Within Groups	6355.925	449	14.15573			
Total	6418.993	456				

Note. ANOVA analyses to assess regional variations in the mean number of touchpoints, revealing non-significant differences ($F = 0.64$, $p = 0.73$). The author's Calculation.

Discussion

The research on the complex dynamics of international campaign management, specifically within the broader context of Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC), has yielded nuanced insights. The study aimed to investigate the relationship between the number of touchpoints and the countries involved and the region's influence on the average number of touchpoints in global campaigns.

Number of Touchpoints and Countries: A Complex Relationship

Initially, the analysis aimed to uncover the relationship between the fixed number of touchpoints and the number of countries engaged in international campaigns. However, the findings challenged the conventional notion that increasing the number of touchpoints correlates with a higher number of participating countries. Contrary to initial expectations, the linear regression model demonstrated limited explanatory power, with an R-squared value of 0.0246007. This suggests that the fixed number of touchpoints needs to substantially account for the variance in the number of countries involved. The weak association and a p-

value exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.05 indicate that the observed relationship lacks statistical significance. Therefore, factors beyond touchpoints, such as cultural nuances, local influences, and market complexities, play pivotal roles in shaping the scope of international campaigns.

This finding highlights the need for global marketers to exercise caution in assuming a direct linear relationship between touchpoints and campaign reach. Further investigations and comprehensive analyses are warranted to unravel the intricate web of variables influencing international campaigns.

Regional Disparities in Touchpoint Preferences

The research delved into regional variations in the average number of touchpoints, aiming to provide marketers with insights to tailor their strategies effectively. The ranking approach revealed that Australia and Oceania exhibited the highest mean number of touchpoints (8.54), while Central America and the Caribbean reported the lowest (6.93). However, the ANOVA test suggested these variations were not statistically significant ($F = 0.64$, $p = 0.73$). This implies that the differences in mean touchpoints among regions could be attributed to random variability rather than systematic distinctions.

It is crucial to interpret this cautiously, recognizing that the nuanced nature of GIMC may be partially captured by statistical tests alone. Cultural nuances, market intricacies, and regional preferences could influence touchpoint choices that defy simple statistical categorization.

Implications for Global Marketers

The findings from this study provide a solid foundation for future research and offer essential insights for global marketers dealing with Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC). Firstly, the discovery that there is no strong link between the number of touchpoints and the number of countries involved suggests that international

campaign planning needs a well-rounded approach. Marketers should focus on understanding local factors, cultural dynamics, and market nuances to create effective strategies that work across different countries.

Additionally, the results emphasize the importance of finding a balance for global marketers. While it is essential to customize campaigns for specific regions, it is also crucial to recognize that some strategies can work universally. Understanding what people generally prefer can help streamline global strategies. In summary, these insights provide a good starting point for planning campaigns and encourage further research to better understand the complexities of GIMC in our ever-changing global market.

While analyzing the number of touchpoints, it was also possible to get insights about the usage of the channels by the regions reached, as the main touchpoints used in various regions exhibit some notable patterns. In Europe, campaigns lean towards employing a broad array of communication touchpoints, with "Digital Marketing - SEM/SEO" and "Cinema" standing out as the most popular choices, reflecting a comprehensive and varied approach. Australia and Oceania, on the other hand, show a predilection for "Cinema" and "Branded Content - Editorial or Product Placement," emphasizing visual and content-based strategies. South America, Central America, and the Caribbean prefer "Contests," aligning with engagement-oriented marketing tactics. North America places significance on "Digital Marketing - SEM/SEO" and "Digital Marketing - Email/Chatbots/Text/Messaging," emphasizing digital channels and personal communication. In the Middle East, North Africa, and Greater Arabia, "Cinema" and "Digital Marketing - Location-based" play crucial roles in campaigns, possibly capitalizing on the appeal of visual content and location-specific targeting. Sub-Saharan Africa relies on "Contests" and "Direct Mail," which indicate interactive and personalized strategies. Understanding these regional disparities in main

touchpoint preferences can guide marketers in tailoring their approaches to best suit the preferences and characteristics of specific markets.

In conclusion, this research contributes valuable insights into the intricacies of GIMC, challenging preconceived notions and urging marketers to adopt a nuanced, context-specific approach. The journey towards effective international campaigns involves understanding and navigating the intricate interplay of touchpoints, countries, and regions, emphasizing the need for continuous exploration and adaptation in the ever-evolving landscape of global marketing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Global Integrated Marketing Communication (GIMC) demands a nuanced understanding of communication touchpoints in the ever-evolving landscape of international campaigns. While the strategic integration of touchpoints remains vital, the fixed number of touchpoints doesn't significantly relate to the number of countries engaged. Cultural nuances, local influences, and market complexities play pivotal roles, challenging the simplistic notion of a linear relationship.

Regional variations in touchpoint preferences offer intriguing insights. Despite observable differences, statistical tests suggest these might be influenced by random variability. GIMC's nuanced nature, shaped by cultural dynamics and market intricacies, necessitates cautious interpretation. A comprehensive understanding of factors influencing global marketing strategies is crucial.

Implications for global marketers emerge: a holistic approach, prioritizing local factors, cultural dynamics, and market peculiarities, is vital. Balancing regional customization with recognition of potential universality in touchpoint strategies is key. The findings serve as a baseline for further research and provide a starting point for effective campaign planning in GIMC. The journey towards impactful international campaigns involves continuous

exploration and adaptation in response to the complex interplay of touchpoints, countries, and regions.

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