Samsung to launch QLED and OLED televisions

Poor literacy, infrastructure may hamper fintech sector's growth

THE lack of digital literacy and poor infrastructure are among the main hurdles to growth for the Philippine financial technology (fintech) sector, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) said.

"On the consumers' side, technical know-how on the procedural requirements to access financial products and services and using digital platforms and technology may hinder the interest in fintech and digital platforms," it said in a study released on Tuesday.

"Low levels of interest and knowledge can be associated with more reliance on traditional sources and less complex forms of financial products. This may also result in financial institutions' reluctance to offer products and services digitally," it added.

It also cited poor connectivity and high internet costs as challenges faced by the sector.

As of October 2021, the country ranked 67th in the global mobile download speed ranking at only 38.12 megabits per second, lower than the global average, PIDS said.

It also ranked 67th in terms of broadband download speed and 32nd among countries having the costliest monthly internet subscription rate.

There are also gaps in the current policies for fintech firms in the Philippines, it added.

"For instance, the lack of formal regulation or policy on fintech/insurtech (is) the sector's weakness because it makes the approval process for fintech services solely reliant on the regulator. Instead, a regulation/policy should set the principles or conditions for prospective fintech players to follow," it said.

The think tank also cited other challenges for the sector, which are the lack of access points and distrust towards technologies.

Access points are regulated entities where both cash-in and cash-out transactions can be performed, according to the Alliance of Financial Inclusion.

PIDS cited a study that showed that 37% of Filipino adults who transacted with access points in 2019 encountered issues, including long lines and queues, long service time, and personal data privacy issues.

"Although 84% of the issues encountered were resolved, a noticeable 16% were not addressed. Of those who encountered issues, only 10% contacted the regulators, as many of them either were not aware that regulators can be contacted (40%), did not know how to contact the regulators (35%), wanted to avoid the hassle (35%), or do not know the regulators' contact information (32%)," it said.

"About half of mobile phone and internet users were unaware that these could be used for financial transactions, while others distrusted using these technologies. Some experienced unreliable internet connection, and others preferred to transact at the branch or through ATM," it added.

PIDS also noted how there is no official definition of fintechs in the Philippines.

"Because of this lack of law or policy defining fintech, there is also difficulty in obtaining official indicators on the performance of the sector, it said.

On the other hand, it also cited bright spots, such as coherent government initiatives and plans, the implementation of the national identification system, and less stringent maintaining balance requirements.

To drive growth in the fintech sector, PIDS said that these firms must upskill and provide adequate training for its workers. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link <https://bit.ly/3oIoxP8>

SAMSUNG Electronics Philippines Corp. unveiled its 2023 flagship television (TV) lineup of Neo QLED 8K/4K and OLED TVs in a press preview event on Tuesday.

The new portfolio of TVs will feature the Neo QLED TVs featuring the latest Quantum Mini LED technology with 8K and 4K artificial intelligence (AI) enhanced image resolutions and the Samsung OLED TV with a 144Hz refresh rate and full control Game Bar 3.0, marketed for gamers.

The 2023 TVs feature new synergy with audio through Q-Symphony 3.0, where the Dolby Atmos Soundbar works with the multi-directional firing speakers of the new TVs to deliver an immersive sound experience.

Filipinos value two things for their TVs: lifelike picture quality and cinematic sound quality, said Allaine Victor E. Dela Paz, audio-visual product marketing manager at Samsung.

"We want to enhance the experience," Mr. Dela Paz said.

The Neo QLED 8K TV QN900C and QN800C models come in 65", 75", and 85" screen sizes, while the 4K variant in the QN85C model is available in 55", 65", 75", and 85".

Meanwhile, the Samsung OLED TV S95C and S90C comes in screen sizes of 55", 65", and 77".

The 2023 Samsung TVs are priced at P105,999 to P489,999 for the Neo QLED models and at P107,999 to P199,999 for the OLED models.

An upgrade from last year's flagship set, the new Neo QLED TVs harness the latest advancements in AI to upscale image resolution up to 8K. The neural analyzer will choose from 64 networks to improve quality and uses deep learning from Real Depth Enhancer Pro to produce more lifelike details.

Alongside Q-Symphony 3.0, the Neo QLED TV also makes use of 8K AI Remastering with Dolby Atmos technology to optimize sound based on the room condition and audio content.

Meanwhile, the new OLED TV, a foray into gaming-optimized displays, features 4K AI Upscaling with a smooth 144Hz refresh rate and special aspect ratio controls through the Game Bar 3.0.

Samsung released the OLED TV to cater to the active gaming market in the Philippines and deliver the best gaming experience in different sizes,

Mahir-Al Rubah, head of audio-video product marketing at Samsung, told reporters.

Samsung's OLED TV comes with FreeSync Premium Pro certification from Advanced Micro Devices.

AI also engineers the OLED TV with real-time analysis for perfect hue expressions validated by global color expert Pantone through a new technology called Perceptional Color-Mapping Technology.

"Consumers really prefer a bigger, better screen," Mr. Al-Rubah said. "We value personal and shared entertainment experience in our products."

The coronavirus pandemic allowed the experience of cinema and entertainment to transition into the home, he added.

"People will see the importance of home in their lives," Mr. Al-Rubah said.

The early order period for the new Samsung TVs runs from May 1-21 and can be done online or at any authorized Samsung dealer.

Early orders will include a Dolby Atmos Soundbar and one-year premium access to entertainment service Disney+. — **Miguel Hanz L. Antivola**

Review: realme C55

THE realme C55 is the newest device in the smartphone brand's C-Series line, which was released in the Philippines last week.

The phone features a 6.72-inch display, which realme said is the largest in its C-Series lineup. Its screen is also the first to have a 90Hz refresh rate among C-Series smartphones.

The new phone comes with a 64-megapixel (MP) main camera and a 2-MP depth lens, as well as an 8-MP selfie camera.

It is powered by a Mediatek Helio G88 chipset and has a 5,000mAh battery.

It comes in three colors: Sunshower, Rainy Night, and Rainforest and has two variants: a 6GB memory + 128GB storage model and an 8GB+256GB version.

PROS:

1. The realme C55's price point has to be its number one pro. This is a great phone at the cost of budget to mid-range devices in the market. The review unit furnished by realme to *BusinessWorld* is the C55's top-of-the-line version that has 256GB of internal storage and 8GB RAM and costs just P10,999. Meanwhile, the 6GB+128GB model is priced at only P8,999. The phone's storage is also expandable via microSD to up to 1 terabyte. Not bad at all.

2. The C55 has almost complete inclusions. Besides the usual charging cable, it also comes with a 33W SUPER-VOOC fast charging adapter, a silicone phone case, and even a preinstalled screen protector. Most new smartphones no longer come with adapters (for sustainability reasons), with companies assuming that customers already have these accessories and will simply reuse them for their upgraded gadgets. But for first-time smartphone owners or those unwilling to make extra purchases, not being able to use their gadgets out of the box could be cumbersome. As for its fast charger, it takes a little more than an hour to get the battery from zero to 100%. Its 5,000 mAh battery is enough to power about half a day of light to moderate use.

3. Display quality is excellent. The phone's 6.72-inch IPS LCD screen with Full HD+ resolution features a 90Hz refresh rate and a peak brightness of 680 nits at 180Hz touch sampling rate. The screen is big, bright, and colors are rendered nicely. The display is also very responsive, making usage smooth. The phone runs on realme UI 4.0 based on

Android 13 and its settings are easily customizable.

4. Cameras are great. In particular, its 64-MP main camera captures details well, especially in good lighting conditions. Colors are a bit saturated, though, which is likely because of realme's image processing. As expected, shutter speeds of both the main and the 8-MP selfie lens do lag a bit in the dark, but it isn't really a deal-breaker.

5. The squared off design makes it comfortable to grip. The realme C55 has a boxy design with flat edges, which I personally prefer. Despite being a relatively big phone, it's easy to hold, even with one hand. The mostly matte surface of its back panel also minimizes the accumulation of fingerprint marks. The phone is also light for a device its size but doesn't have that plastic feel.

CONS:

1. Speaker quality is so-so. The C55 has a speaker grill at just one side of its bottom frame, placed beside its USB-C charging port and the 3.5mm audio jack. When using the phone horizontally while watching videos or playing games, it feels a bit weird to hear the sound coming from just one side. Audio quality is just okay. But again, at this price range, it's acceptable. At least audiophiles will have the option to use their own earphones as the device comes with an audio jack.

2. The Mini Capsule has limited features for now. The Mini Capsule is the realme C55's unique selling proposition, as the device is the first globally mass-produced Android smartphone to have this capability. Right now, information displayed on the Mini Capsule is limited to battery-related notifications, data usage, and step tracking, but the brand has said it plans to expand its features.

3. The phone is not for heavy, graphics-intensive gaming. While it can run most games, the playing experience is not that smooth for bigger titles. For me, the C55 is best suited for casual games.

Overall, the realme C55 is a really good phone at its price point. The device carries some flagship-level features while costing just P8,999 or P10,999 — not even a fourth of the price of flagship phones from big brands in the market today. It has a great camera, an impressive display and a decent processor, making for a very capable "daily driver" smartphone. — **Bettina V. Roc**

REALME.COM