COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POSITIONING STRATEGIES USED BY PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES FOR COMPETITIVE Advantage IN KENYA

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UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2016
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BY

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A Research Project Report Submitted to the School of Business in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree Of Masters in Business Administration (MBA)

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SUMMER 2016
DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, institution or university other than United States International University.

Signed: ____________________  Date: ______________________________

Jane Asava (622192)

This research proposal has been presented for examination with our approval as the appointed supervisors.

Signed: ____________________  Date: ______________________________

Dr. Paul, Katuse

Signed: ____________________  Date: ______________________________

Dean Chandaria School of Business
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my dear parents Gilbert Asava and Rebecca Asava who laid the foundation of my career journey. Special dedication to my siblings’, thank you for your support. Not forgetting my friends and loved ones for their prayers, love and support that I received during the study, you taught me the value of life and faithful love.

God bless you always
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge the contribution from all those who participated either directly or indirectly towards making this research project a success. My sincere gratitude goes to the Almighty God who gave me the ability, strength and wisdom to undertake this project. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Dr. Paul Katuse for his professional guidance, advice and unlimited patience in reading through my drafts and suggesting workable alternatives, my profound appreciation to you. Finally my gratitude goes to my family and friends for encouragement, belief in me, understanding and moral support.

Thank you all. May the Almighty God bless you abundantly.
ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the comparative analysis of the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to establish what extent does top management team impact on the choice of growth strategies by private universities in Kenya? What are the branding mechanisms used? What factors contribute to increase in the enrollment rate? Within the literature review, the author has linked the thoughts of established writers in the discipline of strategic management and delved into developing a new definition of strategic management by linking it directly to competitive strategies. The total population will be 27 private universities. Target population was four selected universities which are Strathmore, Kenya College University, United States International University-Africa and St. Paul’s University which was used in the study to compare how the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage. Herein the target population will be 237 participants.

The study adopted a descriptive research design; sample size was 237 managers/supervisors from the various institutions mean and standard deviation were used. Proportional and stratified random sampling technique sampling was adopted to provide the analysis. The study further developed open and closed structured questionnaires so as to be able to collect the primary data. The methods used enabled comparative analysis using both the qualitative and quantitative methods. The questionnaires were pilot tested before they were fully disbursed to the respondents. ANOVA was used to test whether strategies used were statically different.

The study found that some private universities pursue the same strategies differently. Thus the end results of the strategies pursued is different. The strategies are differentiated by the extent to which they apply the strategies and also the target of their strategies. ANOVA results shows that strategies pursued by different private universities significantly differed (p>0.05).
On the relationship between top management team and the choice of growth strategies, the role of management in strategy formulation was found to be critical in the private universities; the study found that strategic decisions were formulated by the senior level managers in the universities thus axing the participation of the lower cadre staff.

The study concludes that private universities pursue branding as a way of creating competitive edge and also building the image of an institution and also as a way of increasing the market value of their institutions. The study notes that branding is viewed as a conduit upon which institutions move from their missions to visions

Study recommends that private universities work on creating efficiency of operations so as to lower the cost of running their operations so as to lower the fees and accommodate students from different financial backgrounds. Consequently, it recommended that strategic planning and implementation be highly inclusive and highly participatory to ensure that all parties take part in strategic planning and implementation. This would reduce resistance and create some sense of ownership while suppressing apathy in the institutions. Lastly the study suggested that universities invest in research and development to come up new ways of developing their brands and selling it out to the public so as to remain relevant and competitive in the higher education.

The nature and the way private universities run are different from public universities. Thus, to completely bring out deeper understanding on strategies pursued by different universities in Kenya. It is recommended that a similar study be done in public universities to have an understanding, views and approaches pursued by the public universities as well.
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CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

According to Grant (2012), strategic management process is actually a process of formulation and implementation of strategy. It consists of three basic phases: strategic analysis, strategy selection and strategy implementation. Strategic analysis includes: analysis of mission and goals; analysis of external factors (environment), analysis of internal factors (enterprise’s abilities and resources). Selection of strategy includes: generating of strategic options, evaluation and choosing the best strategic option.

"Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations (“Johnson & Scholes, 2013). It therefore implies that business-level strategies are determining factors in explaining an organizations profitability and long term sustainability in the face of competitive business environment.

Naturally, a business entity competes for every consumer it seeks to attract and as a result, the firm competes for consumers’ attention and involvement, for their effort and time in the buying process and/or their willingness to deal with the technical complexity found in many products and the corresponding need for services and the firm competes for the funds consumers are willing to spend in acquiring a product or service. In order for this transaction to be complete, the firm must compete for the consumers’ attention and secure a distinguishable comparative position in their minds in harmony with their cultural base (Nakata and Sivakumar, 1996).

Different industries face similar challenges however each firm must choose how to respond to the environment. Competition is rooted in underlying industry economics and goes well beyond the established competitors. Not all industries have equal potential. They differ fundamentally in their ultimate profit potential as the collective strength of the forces of competition differs (Woodward, 2008).
According to Paterman (2008), converting a strategy into results usually requires the coordination of people, operations as well as the strategy. But as the economic, political and business environments change, the ways in which they are carried out also changes. Leadership, and specifically strategic leadership, is widely described as one of the key drivers of effective strategy execution (Pearce & Robinson 2007). However, a lack of leadership, by the top management of the organization, has been identified as one of the major barriers to effective strategy execution (Hrebinia, 2005).

Hax & Majluf, (2006) Positioning plays a pivotal role, since it links market analysis, segment analysis and competitive analysis to internal corporate analysis. In the competitive higher education industry, positioning reflects how consumers perceive the product’s/service’s or organization’s performance on specific attributes relative to that of the competitors. Thus, private universities have must reinforce or modify customers’ perception or image. The private universities in Kenya have not been left behind, and they have also adopted various strategies in dealing with challenges brought about by competition from other universities, globalization and liberalization. Globally higher education is increasingly viewed as a major engine of economic development. Government tax revenues are not keeping pace with rapidly rising costs of higher education. The expansion of student numbers has presented a major challenge for systems where the tradition has been to provide access to free or highly subsidized tertiary education. In financial terms, this has become an unsustainable model, placing pressure on systems to fundamentally restructure the 'social contract' between higher education and society at large. Parents and/or students are increasingly responsible for tuition and other fees. Tuition fees are emerging even in Europe, long the bastion of free public higher education (PG Altbach, 2009).

According to Smarta (2004) the new wave of liberalization and competitive business environment has forced organizations to awaken from the slumber, overhaul their thinking and wear new caps to re-assess the external and internal environment. Organizations need to re-strategize and find new ways of managing the different segments of their products. Many institutions know their business needs and the struggles required for success. However, many institutions including private universities, struggle to translate theory into action.
Traditionally, postsecondary education has been seen as a public good, contributing to society through educating citizens, improving human capital, encouraging civil involvement and boosting economic development. In the past several decades, higher education has increasingly been seen as private good, largely benefiting individuals, with the implication that academic institutions, and their students, should pay a significant part of the cost of postsecondary education. Funding shortages due to massification have also meant that higher education systems and institutions are increasingly responsible for generating larger percentages of their own revenue. Therefore the debate has intensified due not only to the financial challenges of massification but also to a more widespread political inclination toward greater privatization of services once provided by the state. The growing emphasis on cost recovery, higher tuition and university-industry links distracts from the traditional social role and service function of higher education that are central to contemporary society. Some universities sponsor publishing houses, journals, house theater groups, noncommercial radio and television stations, and serve as key intellectual centers. These roles are particularly important in countries with weak social and cultural outlets and few institutions fostering free debate and dialogue (World Conference on Higher Education Unesco, 2009).

The worldwide surge in private higher education and the financing models for this sector have important implications for students and society. These trends have generally led to increasing austerity in universities and other postsecondary institutions (overcrowded lecture halls; outdated library holdings, less support for faculty research, deterioration of buildings, loss of secure faculty positions, and faculty brain drain as the most talented faculty move abroad). The austerity has been most crippling in Sub-Saharan Africa but it is serious throughout developing countries and in countries in transition. Thus, the subject of the establishment of private universities has become an international issue in the recent years (Akpotu & Akpochafo 2009).

The fact that enrolment statistics of private institutions are significantly lower than those of their public counterparts makes it possible for extensive interactions among students and lecturing as well as non-lecturing staff members. These institutions typically have programs specially designed to facilitate communication and dialogue thus enabling
students to build strong and personal relationships with their lecturers, instructors, mentors and administrators (Oketch, 2009).

It is very common for private institutions to organise dinners, cocktails and other events that facilitate interaction and correspondence between academic staff and students on a personal level. This motivates students and lays fertile ground for effective and individualized teaching and learning. Private institutions also offer extra-curricular activities and programs for students to participate in, thereby developing in them a sense of community (Galbraith, 2003).

One of the most key advantages of private institutions is in the area of graduate employability. Because the majority of private higher education institutions in Africa are self-financing, they tend to offer demand-driven and labour market-friendly programs (Varghese, 2006). Due to the fact that the demand for particular programs is usually determined by the job opportunities and the potential earnings associated to graduates Examples of such programs offered by private institutions include: business administration, computer sciences, accounting, marketing, economics and communication. These programs also tend to be more cost effective as they demand less financial, as well as teaching and learning resource inputs for example specialised equipment and infrastructure (Corominas, Saurina & Villar 2010).

Establishment of private universities in Kenya and Africa is relatively a new phenomenon. University education in Kenya can be traced to 1951 when the Royal Technical College of East Africa was established in Nairobi. The college opened its doors to the first students in April 1956. In 1961, the Royal Technical College was transformed into a university under the name University College of Nairobi giving University of London degrees. In 1970, the University of Nairobi was established through an Act of Parliament (University of Nairobi Act 1970). The high demand for university education in the 1980s and 1990s led to the increase in the number of universities (Commission for Higher Education, 2007).

Private higher education in Kenya can be traced to the colonial period when missionaries established schools and colleges for their converts. The first private institutions of higher learning were the St Paul’s United Theological college (1955) and Scott Theological
In 1970 the United States International University (USIU) established a campus in Nairobi. These early universities offered degrees in the name of parent universities abroad. For a long time the government did not give accreditation to these private colleges or universities. However, the increased demand for university education led the government to encourage the establishment and accreditation of private universities in the 1990s (Commission for Higher Education, 2007).

Private universities in Kenya fall into three categories; chartered University of Eastern Africa-Baraton [UEAB], Catholic University of Eastern Africa [CUEA], Daystar University, Scott Theological College, United States International University [USIU], and African Nazarene University [ANU], Kenya Methodist University [KEMU], St Paul’s University - Limuru; registered (East African School of Theology, Kenya Highlands Bible College, Nairobi International School of Theology, Nairobi Evangelical Graduate School of Theology, and Pan-African Christian (PAC), Aga Khan University, Strathmore University, Kabarak University, and Kiriri Women’s University of Science and Technology and those operating on letters of interim authority such as Kenya College of Accountancy University, Umma University, Jaramogi University among others (Commission for Higher Education, 2007).

Most private universities (17) are located in Nairobi (the capital city) and its peri-urban zones. The location of these universities tends to follow the pattern of Christian missionaries in establishing education institutions in Kenya during the colonial period. Their location implies that women and men who live far from Nairobi are not able to access the part-time (evening and weekend) programmes offered (Wesonga et al. 2003).

The global growth of enrolments in university education can be explained by the emergence of a private tertiary education sector. While public universities have continued to grow, the number of private universities has exploded. The World Bank notes that private higher education has become the ‘fastest growing segment of higher education worldwide’ (World Bank, 2009; McCowan, 2008).

The growth of private universities in Kenya has been facilitated by a number of policies instituted by the World Bank. Furthermore in advocating for greater private participation
in financing education, the World Bank in advancing credit assistance to Kenya in 1991 prevailed on government to accept a conditionality that put a ceiling on growth in public university enrolment to no more than 3 percent per annum up to 2017. As a result of this policy a large client base has been created for private universities, as public universities have been unable to absorb all the qualifying candidates. Available figures suggest that rather than increasing enrolment by the three percentage points permitted, the population of students in public universities has actually stagnated (Wandiga, 2001).

Thus increase in the number of qualified secondary school graduates has been triggered in part by the massive expansion of primary education. Despite the high demand for university education in Kenya, public universities admit about 10,000 students annually out of over 50,000 qualifying secondary school graduates (Joint Admissions Board 2003). The private universities have arisen due to the inability of the public universities to absorb all university-qualifying students.

Private universities in Kenya are established and run by mostly by religious organisations. In Kenya 27 out of the 29 private chartered universities are sponsored and managed by Christian organisations. All the twenty seven registered universities are sponsored and managed by Christian organisations. Most of the Christian-sponsored private universities started by offering courses mainly geared towards training church ministers. Nguru (1990) observes that the major aim of these church-affiliated private universities is the same as it was with the earlier missionary schools, namely, to promote the spread of the Christian gospel. However, these religious sponsored universities have expanded their programmes to include secular courses in the social and natural sciences (Onsongo Vol. 5, Nos. 2 & 3,(2007).

1.2 Statement of Problem

Previous research points out that there are numerous changes and pressures in the higher education landscape including competition, a decrease in government funding, as well as mergers that impact on a university’s endeavours to attract quality students (Espinoza et al. 2002).
In the above studies, it is apparent that the researchers have not clearly narrowed down to focus on the competitive strategies adopted by private universities despite their rapid growth in the recent years. The researcher concentrated on private universities and the competitive strategies they have adopted in order to survive in this era of great competition. This study was guided by the following question: Which kinds of positioning strategies have been adopted by private Universities in Kenya?

The pace of change has been fast due to policy shifts in higher education sector that began in the 1980s and 1990s in Kenya. Thus the emergence of new universities has created competition. Private universities have been challenged to position themselves strategically in the business environment in order to sustain and increase enrollment, retention and offer quality education. As competition intensifies in the education sector; actors in that field are forced to create greater strategies that will enable them gain a competitive advantage against their rivals. A competitive strategy aims at creating a lucrative and justifiable position against the forces that determine industry competition (Porter, 1996).

Strategic planning failure is most likely to occur within four circumstances: launching new ventures, promoting innovation and change, managing mergers and acquisitions and responding to new environmental pressures (Fairholm 2007). Kartz & Kahn (2010) found in his research that the victories and strengths of companies can often be the cause of their future strategic failure. Miller delineated four major causes of strategic failure: leadership traps, monolithic cultures and skills, power and politics, and structural memories. All of these causes emerge while an organization is experiencing success-especially in its strategic initiatives.

According to Kitoto (2005), earlier studies have emphasized on competitive strategies embraced by universities in Kenya. The scholars explored the competitive strategies by Kenyan Universities have adopted and the challenges they have experienced in the implementation of those strategies. Mutua (2004), concentrated on the responses to changing environment by the public universities. The findings on his study established that the public universities face many challenges among them, competition from other universities and middle level colleges.

Kagwira (2004) on the other hand looked at the extent to which Kenyan universities exercise education marketing and the study discovered that it is proficient to different
extent. The study explored the various strategies but it did not discourse how these strategies aid the universities to realize competitive advantage. This study therefore aims to close the gap by looking at how these competitive strategies aid the private universities.

In the higher education industry, the intensity of rivalry depends on the object of the competition which can be competition for students, staff members, and government funding and research grants. The rivalry can be defined further by examining structural factors, the profile of exiting players and the industry context (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009).

Kimando, Njogu and Sakwa (2012) assert that there has been a rapid growth of private universities over the last five years, which has been fuelled by several factors including limited opportunities available in public universities and the desire to complement public universities. The competition has made public universities to join the fray by opening new colleges in different parts of the country and introducing parallel degree programs in response to spiraling demand for higher education and for the purpose of dealing with competition brought about by private universities.

In the above studies, it is evident that the researchers have not really narrowed down to focus on the competitive strategies adopted by private universities despite their rapid growth in the past few years. In this study, the researcher concentrated on private universities and the competitive strategies they have adopted in order to survive in this era of great competition. This study will look at the types of growth strategies adopted by the Kenyan private universities and how these strategies have aided them in achieving a competitive edge over others. The study uses United States International University – Africa, Kenya College of Accountancy-University, Strathmore University and St. Paul’s University as the case study.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of this study is to undertake a comparative analysis of the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya
1.4 Research questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions formulated to aid in gathering the information regarding the research topic.

1.4.1. What are the strategies being used by private universities in Kenya?

1.4.2 To what extent does top management team impact on the choice of growth strategies by private universities in Kenya?

1.4.3. What branding mechanisms do the private universities use?

1.5 Significance of study

The study is of Significance to the following stakeholders;

1.5.1 Private universities

Kenyan government has allowed higher education to open up therefore creating a very competitive environment for the upcoming and existing stakeholders in the industry. Thus it has occasioned closure of some universities and caused others to lag behind. A finding of this study is significant value to private universities in the country.

1.5.2 Academicians and Researchers

The study will contribute to the body of knowledge of interest to both researchers and academicians who seek to explore or investigate the strategic factors in determining career choices in Kenyan universities and what the best practices for the industry are. Therefore increase studies in this particular field.

1.5.3 Government

This study is of significant value to the government of Kenya, most particularly to the ministry of education. The study will offer valuable guidance to the curriculum programs offered by the ministry of education in equipping the young students in their earlier career
selection and choices. This will create value addition and produce competent graduates suitable for the economy.

1.6 Scope of the Study

Although the scope of this study is enormous to conclude sensible assumptions the sample data for comparative analysis will be undertaken from Strathmore and USIU-A as the mature industry holders and St. Paul’s university and Kenya College of Accountancy University to compare their models within the period of 2010 up to 2016. No personal particulars like names, identity numbers and contacts will be required to maintain a high level of privacy and confidentiality

1.7 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Strategy

"Strategy is the direction and scope of an organization over the long-term: which achieves advantage for the organization through its configuration of resources within a challenging environment, to meet the needs of markets and to fulfill stakeholder expectations" (Scholes & Whittington, 2013)

1.6.2 Competitive advantage

Competitive advantage is what distinguishes one from the competition in the minds of your customers. Whether one is an employee, a business, or a country, you need to have a clear competitive advantage and communicate it to your customers (Porter 2010).

1.6.3 Enrollment Management

A process or an activity that influences the size, the shape, and the characteristics of a student body by directing institutional efforts in marketing, recruitment, and admissions as well as pricing and financial aid. In addition, the process exerts a significant influence on academic advising, the institutional research agenda, orientation, retention studies, and student services (Hossler 1986).
1.6.4 Positioning

A firm’s use of marketing tools to create a clear, distinctive and desirable image in the minds of target customers, relative to competing [providers] (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

1.6.5 Relationship marketing

Activities aimed at developing long-term, cost-effective links between an organization and its customers for the mutual benefit of both parties (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

1.7 Chapter Summary

The current study is an attempt to analyze the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. Therefore understand which methods and tools have been the most successful in raising enrollments and sustenance of their programs. Through the analysis the private universities will find out what the branding mechanisms are used as a measure of output. It is hoped that greater numbers of students will enroll in the programs and find satisfaction and fulfillment in the career of their choice.

The next chapter covers literature review in relation to comparative analysis of the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. Chapter three will cover the research methodology used in conducting this study, while chapter four will present the results and findings of this study, and finally chapter five will give the discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter surveyed and reviewed the literature related to the topic: comparative analysis of the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. It focused on the various strategies that are available to an institution to gain a competitive edge over its competitors. This chapter presents a review of the literature on the topic of comparative analysis of the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya.

The chapter seeks to give information in line with the research questions: To what extent does top management team impact on the choice of growth strategies by private universities in Kenya? What are the strategies being used by private universities in Kenya? What branding mechanisms do the private universities use?

2.2. Strategies used by private universities

2.2.1 Differentiation and Competitive Advantage

Differentiation strategies are marketing techniques used by a firm to establish strong identity in a specific market; also called segmentation strategy. Using this strategy, a firm will introduce different varieties of the same basic product under the same name into a particular product category and thus cover the range of products available in that category. Differentiation strategy can also be defined as positioning a brand in such a way as to differentiate it from the competition and establish an image that is unique, (Davidow and Uttal, 2006).

Differentiation strategy is an approach under which a firm aims to develop and market unique products for different customer segments. Usually employed where a firm has clear competitive advantages, and can sustain an expensive advertising campaign. It is one of three generic marketing strategies that can be adopted by any firm. To maintain this strategy the firm should have: strong research and development skills, strong product engineering skills, strong creativity skills, good cooperation with distribution channels,
strong marketing skills, and incentives based largely on subjective measures, be able to communicate the importance of the differentiating product characteristics, stress continuous improvement and innovation and attract highly skilled, creative people, (Baum, 2007).

The value added by the uniqueness of the product may allow the firm to charge a premium price for it. The firm hopes that the higher price will more than cover the extra costs incurred in offering the unique product. Because of the product’s unique attributes, if suppliers increase their prices the firm may be able to pass along the costs to its customers who cannot find substitute products easily, (Porter, 1985).

Firms that succeed in a differentiation strategy often have access to leading scientific research, highly skilled and creative product development team, strong sales team with the ability to successfully communicate the perceived strengths of the product and corporate reputation for quality and innovation, (Baum, 2007).

Successful differentiation is based on a study of buyers” needs and behaviour in order to learn what they consider important and valuable. The desired features are then incorporated into the product to encourage buyer preference for the product. The basis for competitive advantage is a product whose attributes differ significantly from rivals” products. Efforts to differentiate often result in higher costs. Profitable differentiation is achieved by either keeping the cost of differentiation below the price premium that the differentiating features command, or by offsetting the lower profit margins through more sales volumes, (Grant, 2012).

Differentiation strategy has also been used to counter competition by employing unique and different products from competitors like, different admission criteria, different requirements for credit transfers, academic staff mobility and application of market-driven strategies (Kimando, Njogu & Sakwa 2012).

Hua (2011) asserts that the differentiation strategy is deemed appropriate for the education industry in a competitive environment. Differentiation by adding value to the products and services can provide sustainable competitive advantage compared to cost leadership strategy since the competitive advantage cannot be easily copied and
customers attach more weight to products attributes other than price. The key methods for achieving differentiation is through utilizing strong brand names, innovative features, strong marketing skills and corporate reputation for quality, strong coordination of business activities, full range of courses offered, wide distribution coverage and ability to attract creative people.

Firms may obtain a competitive advantage by creating a higher value for its customers than the cost of creating it, either by adopting a differentiation strategy or an efficiency strategy. Firms pursuing a differentiation strategy attempt to differentiate themselves from their rivals using a variety of sales, marketing and other related activities or product and technology innovations. Differentiation relates to the degree to which a product and its enhancements are perceived as unique. A firm adopting a differentiation strategy command above-market prices made possible by the customers’ perception of the product being special in some way (Berman et al., 2009).

Miller (2006) noted that there are at least two different types of differentiation strategy: those based on product innovation and those based on intensive marketing and image management. The key success factors which contribute to the profitability of a differentiator include creative flair, strong basic research and product engineering (Kotha and Vadlamani, 2005).

Kimando, Njogu & Sakwa (2012) did a study on competitive strategies employed by private universities in Kenya. The study revealed that universities have embraced different strategies to counter competition. Some have embraced technology, web marketing strategy where many universities now offer online classes, use e-learning modules, distant learning and selling courses electronically, which has made learning easier and efficient thus increasing their enrollment.
2.2.3 Product Development Strategy

Product development involves the substantial modification of existing products or the creation of new but related products that can be marketed to current customers through established channels (Pearce and Robinson, 2000).

Product Development begins with an understanding of market needs, within a sound business model, a well-defined financial strategy, and well-thought-out strategic goals. The author an industry-expert, facilitates the professional engineer, manager, marketer, and all others who must come together as a working team, to better understand their respective roles and responsibilities in that process. Currently, speeding the right value proposition to the market can make all the difference between success and failure. With case examples, organizational analysis and project planning tools, the author looks at that longer, organizational view of product development, and how that view can improve product development cycle times and better take advantage of new market opportunities. It will help the product development team better adapt to change and a dynamic market in today’s global economy through product platform management, and do so rationally and reliably. And it will help product development professionals to look for hidden value in existing product lines as they plan for that change and growth ahead (Annacchino, 2011).

A product development strategy may be appropriate if the firm's strengths are related to its specific customers rather than to the specific product .Hence, it can leverage its strengths by developing a new product targeted to its existing customers. Similar to the case of new market development, new product development carries more risk than simply attempting to increase market share (Bourgeo, 1980).

The product development strategy often is adopted either to prolong the life cycle of current products or to take advantage of a favorite reputation or brand name. Strathmore and USIU-Africa have utilized the strategy well by enhancing their programs and making them competitive. Both universities offer Global executive Masters in Business Administration. The programs targets mostly higher level managers and offer a curriculum that is market driven. The idea is to attract satisfied customers to new products as a result of their positive experience with the firm’s initial offering. The product
development strategy is based on the penetration of existing markets by incorporating product modifications to the existing product line (Darlymple & Parsons 1995).

2.2.4 Market Focus Strategy

Focus strategy identifies the market segments where the company can compete effectively. The strategy matches market characteristics with the company's competitive advantages to select markets where a focus of the company's resources is likely to lead to desired sales volumes, revenues and profit. A focus strategy based on low cost depends on there being a buyer segment whose needs are less costly to satisfy than the rest of the market. On the other hand, a focus strategy based on differentiation depends on there being a buyer segment that demands unique product attributes. In the focus strategy, a firm targets a specific segment of the market (Porter, 1996).

Ansoff's matrix provides four different growth strategies: Market Penetration - the firm seeks to achieve growth with existing products in their current market segments, aiming to increase its market share, market development the firms develops new products targeted to its existing market segments and diversification - the firm grows by diversifying into new businesses by developing new products for new markets (Porter, 1996).

For example, some service firms focus solely on the service customers (Stone, 1995). Focus also is based on adopting a narrow competitive scope within an industry. In order for the private universities to increase student retention KCA-University and St. Paul’s University offer certificate and diploma courses focusing on the lower end income bracket (Commission for University Education 2016)

Therefore a successful focus strategy depends upon an industry segment large enough to have good growth potential but not of key importance to other major competitors. Market penetration or market development can be an important focus strategy (Porter, 1980).

Midsize and large firms use focus-based strategies but only in conjunction with differentiation or cost leadership generic strategies. But, focus strategies are most
effective when consumers have distinct preferences and when the niche has not been pursued by rival firms (David, 2003).

Continuing improvement in operational efficiency at a pace faster than competitors is necessary to sustain superior profitability over time. The rapid diffusion of best practices, though, allows competitors to quickly imitate management techniques and practices. Most generic solutions that can be used in multiple settings diffuse the fastest (Porter, 1996).

2.3 Top management team on growth strategic choice

Top level management play a crucial role in the success of the organization, this section looks at the role played by top level management in the crafting of growth strategies of an organization.

2.3.1 Leadership and Strategic choices

Each perspective on strategy presupposes certain assumptions about the task of leadership especially in terms of the emphasis given to controlling, guiding, or shaping the organizational environment. Whatever the view of strategic planning/thinking, such activities have long been assumed to be functions and responsibilities of leadership. One way then to grapple with the differences (and similarities) between strategic thinking and leadership is to uncover what certain perspectives of leadership emphasize in the “strategic” process.

Fairholm (2007) offers a classification of five leadership perspectives culled from researching the practice of local government managers. The first leadership perspective is Leadership as (Scientific) Management. The underlying strategic assumption is that organizations and their leaders need to control chaos so that predictable, verifiable, and routinizable processes and outputs are the norm. Basically, this perspective focuses on strategic planning for efficiency.

Secondly Leadership as Excellence Management assumes, like the one above, that leaders should control chaos. Its difference lies in the focus given to process improvement and employee participation to assist in developing strategic plans to control the organizational chaos and disorder.
Thirdly, Leadership Values Displacement Activity assumes the strategic thinking involves prioritizing other people's values so they support and implement organizational goals. In this way it assumes strategic thinking is about influencing chaos (thus shaping how organizational actors participate) rather than trying to control it.

Fourthly, Leadership in a Trust Culture, where the leader’s goal (and related activity) is to encourage and maintain mutual trust so people act wisely and independently to achieve mutual goals. This perspective assumes a systems approach and focuses on embracing chaos using it to create the environment to achieve desired ends. Private higher education institutions have been lauded for possessing the following attributes: learner-friendliness, cultural diversity, less prone to political interference or activism, secular (Levy, 2007), improving access, more responsive to national economic priorities and accommodative to societal higher education needs.

Lastly, Whole Soul (Spiritual) Leadership is squarely in the non-control camp, emphasizes strategic thinking at the grandest levels to develop the best in others so they lead themselves (and others) in appropriate directions to achieve appropriate ends. It is perhaps the ultimate manifestation of embracing the inherent order in apparent chaos in the strategic thinking approach (Fairholm, 2007).

2.3.2 Creativity and Strategic management

Creativity may simply be defined as using the imagination in designing and actualizing organizational production. The institutionalization of creativity, or creativity management, is becoming ever more possible as the nature of innovativeness is better understood. Institutionalizing creativity involves deliberate modification of organizational culture in orientation toward the future, consistent with organizational vision as well as mission, as well as leadership and entrepreneurship. Vision and creativity are concepts that are often used interchangeably in today’s business world. A vision for the future is vitally important for contemporary business firms, establishing a strategic horizon against which short- and long-term organizational goals and objectives can be measured (Karaman et al 2008).
Creativity and strategy are no longer optional in today’s rapidly changing business environment.

Now considered essential to maintaining a competitive edge, many organizations are seeking methods to unleash new perspectives and fresh thinking about their products, markets, challenges and competitors. Understanding the thinking styles involved in the different phases of the creative and strategic thinking processes (not to mention the quality process) allow individuals and organizations to more effectively take advantage and apply the brain power available to them (Ann Herrmann-Nehdi, 1998).

According to Einsteine and Hwang (2008), the relationship between organizational creativity and innovative behavior is both direct and complex, if only because of the blurred boundaries between creativity and innovation (or innovativeness). The quality of implementation of creative ideas is critical. As organizations are pressed to “continuously improve, innovate and adapt”, creativity has “become an increasingly critical component of both individual and organizational performance.

Akat, & Budak, (1999) posited based on a meta-analytical treatment of the available literature, that “when it is clearly communicated in an organization that creativity and innovation are valued goals, there is a greater likelihood that individuals will engage in more creative and innovative behavior. Organizational culture characteristics are positively and significantly associated with organizational creativity, particularly open communication, while individual experimentation is closely related to autonomy and self-direction.

Strategic options represent alternative responses of a company to the situation in the environment, which are harmonized with its abilities and resources. In the last phase of strategic management, the implementation of strategy is conducted. In order for the selected strategy to be realized, it is necessary to operationalize it through a plan of action and allocate the resources to the chosen course of actions. Then, it is necessary to adjust the organization to the requirements of the new strategy. Finally, since application of a new strategy usually implicates making certain changes in and organization, the strategic change management is a part and prerequisite for application of the strategy (Helms, Clay & Peter, 1997).
2.3.3 Cost Leadership

Malburg, (2000) states that Porter’s generic strategies known as cost leadership focuses on gaining competitive advantage by having the lowest cost in the industry. In order to achieve a low-cost advantage, an organization must have a low-cost leadership strategy, low-cost manufacturing, and a workforce committed to the low-cost strategy. The organization must be willing to discontinue any activities in which they do not have a cost advantage and should consider outsourcing activities to other organizations with a cost advantage. There are many areas to achieve cost leadership such as mass production, mass distribution, economies of scale, technology, product design, input cost, capacity utilization of resources, and access to raw materials.

For an effective cost leadership strategy, a firm must have a large market share. Lower costs and cost advantages result from process innovations, learning curve benefits, and economies of scale, product designs reducing manufacturing time and costs, and reengineering activities. A low-cost or cost leadership strategy is effectively implemented when the business designs, produces, and markets a comparable product more efficiently than its competitors. The firm may have access to raw materials or superior proprietary technology which helps to lower costs. Cost leadership strategy seeks to achieve above-average returns over competitors through low prices by driving all components of activities towards reducing costs. To attain such a relative cost advantage, firms will put considerable effort in controlling and production costs, increasing their capacity utilization, controlling materials supply or product distribution, and minimizing other costs, including R&D and advertising (Hyatt, 2001). Hence, firms do not have to sacrifice revenue to be the cost leader since high revenue is achieved through obtaining a large market share (Porter, 1987).

This generic strategy calls for being the low cost producer in an industry for a given level of quality. The firm sells its products either at average industry prices to earn a profit higher than that of rivals, or below the average industry prices to gain market share. In the event of a price war, the firm can maintain some profitability while the competition suffers losses. Even without a price war, as the industry matures and prices decline, the firms that can produce more cheaply will remain profitable for a longer period of time. The cost leadership strategy usually targets a broad market (Davidson, 2001).
Firms that achieve low cost leadership generally make low cost relative to competitors the theme of their business strategy. The firm opens up a sustainable cost advantage over competitors and uses that lower cost as a basis for either underpricing the competitors and gaining a larger market share at their expense or earning a higher profit margin by selling at the going price. A low cost leader’s basis for competitive advantage is lower overall costs than competitors. This requires the firm to: be better than rivals on efficiency and cost control and continuously seek creative and innovative ways of cutting costs. Successful low cost producers achieve cost advantages by exhaustively pursuing cost savings throughout the activity cost chain. A cost leadership strategy is designed to produce goods or services more cheaply than competitors by stressing efficient scale of operation. When a firm designs, produces, and sells a comparable product more efficiently than its competitors as well as its market scope is industry-wide, it means that the firm is carrying out the cost leadership strategy successfully (Brooks, 1993).

Hambrick (1983) argues that the main dimension of the cost leadership strategy is efficiency, the degree to which inputs per unit of output are low. Efficiency can be subdivided into two categories: cost efficiency which measures the degree to which costs per unit of output are low, and asset parsimony which measures the degree to which assets per unit of output are low. Such firms pay great attention to asset use, employee productivity and discretionary overhead. Their customers buy their products primarily because they are priced below their competitors’ equivalent products, an advantage achieved through minimizing costs and assets per unit of output.

Together, cost efficiency and asset parsimony, capture a firm’s cost leadership orientation. To the extent that firms following an efficiency strategy succeed in deploying the minimum amount of operating costs and assets needed to achieve the desired sales, they would be able to improve their financial performance (Miller, 1987).

To the extent that a cost leadership strategy is built on such generic solutions related to operational efficiency, we expect that such a strategy would be more susceptible to imitation by competitors and peers, implying that the comparative cost advantages would dissipate over time (Abarbanell and Bushee, 1998).
2.4 Branding mechanisms

Branding is the process involved in creating a unique name and image for a product in the consumers’ mind, mainly through advertising campaigns with a consistent theme. Branding aims to establish a significant and differentiated presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers.

2.4.1 Corporate Branding

Corporate branding refers to the practice of promoting the brand name of a corporate entity, as opposed to specific products or services. The activities and thinking that go into corporate branding are different from product and service branding because the scope of a corporate brand is typically much broader.

Hatch and Schultz (2000) differentiate between corporate identity and organizational identity. Therefore corporate identity is the idea of the organization and how it is represented to different audiences, in this case primarily external stakeholders. Hence identity is defined by top managers and their advisers and communication channels are mediated, i.e., are delivered, in most cases by the mass media, or non-personal channels such as newsletters, annual reports, etc. In contrast, organizational identity is how an organization’s members perceive and understand it: “who we are” and “what we stand for.” The organization’s identity is seen from the perspective of all members of the organization, who are also the recipients of messages. Interpersonal communication is the dominant communication channel.

Roll, M (2009) states that Corporations around the world are increasingly becoming aware of the enhanced value which corporate branding strategies can provide for an organization. Branding in the classic sense is all about creating unique identities and positions for products and services hence distinguishing the offerings from competitors. Corporate branding employs the same methodology and toolbox used in product branding, but it also elevates the approach a step further into the board room, where additional issues around stakeholder relations (shareholders, media, competitors, governments and many others) can help the corporation benefit from a strong and well-
managed corporate branding strategy. Not surprisingly, a strong and comprehensive corporate branding strategy requires a high level of personal attention and commitment from the CEO and the senior management to become fully effective and meet the objectives.

Changes in stakeholder expectations are causing an increasing number of corporations to integrate marketing, communications and corporate social responsibility into corporate branding. Such trends are evident in campaigns such as IBM Smarter Planet, G.E.Ecomagination, The Coca-Cola Company Live Positively, and DOW Human Element. As never before, people care about the corporation behind the product. They do not separate their opinions about the company from their opinions of that company's products or services. Therefore, blending of corporate and product/service opinions is due to increasing corporate transparency, which gives stakeholders a deeper, clearer view into a corporation's actual behavior and actual performance. Transparency is, in part, a byproduct of the digital revolution, which has enabled stakeholders’ employees, retirees, customers, business partners, supply chain partners, investors, and neighbors with the ability to share opinion about corporations via social media (Fetscherin M, & Usunier J, 2012).

Kunde, J (2000) argues that organizations with a corporate religion have a better chance of getting into what he refers to as “brand heaven.” Brand heaven is a place where the product itself has somehow lost its importance and the firm and its values have become the focus. At some point arguably Harley was the worst motorcycle on the road (at one point there were more Harleys in the repair shop than on the road); and the loyal customers were instrumental in saving the firm from collapse. Therefore Kunde stipulates that it is not the product itself, but the belief in the company. Thus the product’s characteristics become subordinate to the organization. People ride Harleys because of their belief in the values of the company, not only because they believe it is a superior product. It is the concept of the organization as embodied in the Harley-Davidson motorcycle that dominates the purchase decision. Kunde suggests that to reach brand heaven, organizations need a concept that binds them and their brand together into a single consistent unit. As product characteristics become less important, the concept becomes more important. The concept of Harley-Davidson is constantly cultivating non-material values (Kunde 2000).
Kay (1993) believes that there are four distinctive capabilities that give organizations competitive advantage. Corporate reputation is one of them. It provides competitive advantage because it is valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable (VRIN). Family members are back in the organization and top level management is highly visible at events sometimes with 100,000 loyal fans in attendance.

Strong corporate branding strategy adds significant value in terms of helping the entire corporation and the management team to implement the long-term vision, create unique positions in the market place of the company and its brands, and not the least to unlock the leadership potential within the organization. Hence a corporate branding strategy can enable the corporation to further leverage on its tangible and non-tangible assets leading to Branding Excellence throughout the corporation (Roll, M, 2009).

2.4.2 Public Relations

Public relations are a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics.” Public relations can also be defined as the practice of managing communication between an organization and its publics.

Before any formal marketing takes place, objectives must be set for what the institution wishes to communicate and who their target audience should be (Hiam 1997). For example, the institution will wish to increase awareness and stimulate the interest of high school students, students who would like to transfer, nontraditional learners, or people already within the industry who wish to gain formal education (Lovelock and Wright 1999). Or an institution’s goal may be to emphasize the special strengths and benefits of their institution to stimulate demand in low-demand periods (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

Mutali&Messah (2011) did a study on effects of selected marketing communication tools on student enrolment in Private universities in Kenya. The study revealed that public relations, advertising, direct marketing and personal selling influenced student enrollment. Public relations tools employed by the universities include written materials like annual reports, catalogues, student handbook, posters, brochures, and institutional identity media through branding, event speeches, customer care and personal contacts.
Public relations may perform several tasks, such as informing and educating prospective students about what a particular college has to offer, persuading target markets that the institution offers the best solution for their needs, or reminding students of the school and motivating them to act. It may also help the university to maintain contact with current students or provide them with information on how to obtain the best results from what the college offers (Lovelock and Wright 1999).

In spite of the many private universities that are now facing in terms of reduced numbers of students who are entering college, universities are finding newer and better ways to promote their programs. The key to success in this area seems to be a strategic long-term game plan which includes taking into consideration both internal and external means of recruiting and retention. The current study is an attempt to help these universities understand which methods and tools have been the most successful in retention of students.

2.4.3 Advertising

Till and Baack (2005) describe advertisements as essential mechanisms for transferring images from organizations into the minds of consumers and audience. Advertising is a communication whose purpose is to inform potential customers and audience about services and products and how to obtain and use them.

According to Kocabiyikoglu, (2004) advertising plays a crucial role in the effective functioning of an organization. For an advertisement to be effective it should be able to differentiate one service or product from others to produce a desired persuasive effect. The author stresses on how time series and simultaneous equation models are used to determine the relationship between advertising and sales. The market response method of assessing advertising effectiveness uses other marketing variables such as economic conditions and level of competition in the market to influence advertising – sales relationship.
However the inability of an advertisement to generate the required impact means it is ineffective, however if it produces a positive or favorable impact it multiplies the effectiveness of advertising expenditures. Thus, enumerates two mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of advertisements. These are the psychological and behavioral aspects of advertising effects, and the sales and market response effects. Market response is the method of advertising effectiveness assesses the impact of advertising in terms of the relationship between advertising expenditures and sales in respect of an advertising brand for a period (Jeong, 2004).

Neslin (2002) emphasizes that other variables including economic factors, market factors, sales promotion, among others influence advertising and sales relationship and the effectiveness of advertisement. The author elaborates that the psychological and behavioral impact of advertising focus on psychological factors such as recall and attitude to the advertisement or brand and purchase interest for the advertised brand. Recall is the critical measure of a particular interest or attention which an advertisement has to command before it can persuade

According to Wells et al (2003) attitude which is closely related to consumers’ or audiences’ evaluation of advertised products and services is another key measure of advertising effectiveness. Indicate that a positive attitude towards a product or service shows that consumers may buy or use the brand in future. Hence behavioral perspective of advertising effectiveness is concerned with how people perceive, process, respond to and use advertising information to make decisions about particular products or services.

Due to the complex nature of human psychology, various mechanisms such as association among recall, recognition and attractiveness of advertisement effects of attention on memory (likeability and attitude toward the brand and advertisement are also used to evaluate advertising effectiveness. From the discussions above, this study identifies persuasion as a major factor in the definitions and functions of advertising. The study proposes that the content of advertising should be understandable and interesting with persuasive features that can easily stick into the memory of audiences (Ang & Low, 2000).
Ang et al. (2006) postulates the need for an advertisement to build positive and meaningful connection with audience. Advertisements that are meaningful can quickly influence and enhance the promotional values of institutions. These opinions are also emphasises that recall of advertising information on the part of listeners or viewers indicates that the advertisement has captured a place in consumers’ or audiences’ mind which increases the possibility of choosing the advertised brand.

Therefore, for higher private education institutions to achieve the ultimate goals or objectives of their advertising campaigns, institutions need to package the contents especially language, messages and symbols, among others of such campaigns in ways that can easily attract attention, be understood and remembered by audiences and constituents in order to persuade them (Rajaram, Srinivast & Travers, 2001).

2.4.4 Technology and Marketing

Marketing strategy refers to a set of objectives, policies and rules that guide the organization’s marketing efforts over time. This involves responses to changing environment and competitive conditions, employing all the resources of an organization towards attaining the desired goals in terms of sales, pricing and distribution (Olujide and Aremu, 2004).

Due to the ever-increasing and diverse student base universities find the need to appeal to the specific audience therefore successful branding and marketing have become increasingly important activities for institutions. Universities must now go to greater lengths to differentiate themselves from competitor institutions. Successful branding can help with increasing enrollment, expanding fundraising capabilities, and other outcomes. Strategy is a link between an organization and its environment and it must be consistent with the goals, values, the external environment, resources, organizational structure and system (Ansoff and Mcdonell 1990).

M-Branding is the delivery of electronic brand media, support materials and messages to mobile devices perceived as pertinent to Stakeholder/student segments, this raises some issues. For example, targeting remains one of the ubiquitous problems of electronic media personalisation developments through which to deliver appropriate adjustments in brand content provision (Perugini & Ramakrishnan, 2003).
Technological innovations, such as updated computer equipment or labs, distance learning equipment and facilities, or multimedia in the classroom, are seen by many universities as extremely valuable to replenishing the numbers of enrolled students, but the actual effectiveness of these tools is in question. While the amount of money invested in such a strategy may be great, the returns on the investment may not be as abundant as hoped (Bush 1998).

One method that is becoming more and more popular is the electronic brochure or home page on the World Wide Web. Students have access to information chat rooms, interactive campus tours via Web sites, and online application (Roach 2006). “Where previous generation of college hopefuls labored on the family typewriter in an often counterproductive attempt to produce neat applications, today’s Web-savvy students are finding they can zoom through the ‘paperwork’ with [the] point-and-click ease of the Internet.” This method will also save the admissions office time and money and will make evaluating applications much easier. According to one survey, Web applications are preferred by 24% of students (Terrell 1999).

Canadian institutions have employed these types of branding and marketing strategies, but the country as a whole has also prioritized “increasing its market share of international students. This is likely the most significant trend of note in Canada over recent years, and its impact on enrollment in Canada is discussed in greater detail in the next section. In terms of branding and marketing, Canada has attempted to redefine its national education system as wholly different from others in the global marketplace (Morrison, 2013).

One of the most significant ways branding and marketing of higher education has changed in recent years has been in the online space, using a variety of new platforms for external engagement and communication. The terms “social” and “digital” refer to the use of both social media and digital marketing more generally, and include the role of effective and intuitive websites. Institutions are making greater use of social media and digital platforms like Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and podcasts to market their programs, while website design and interface is proving a crucial component in how colleges and universities present themselves to prospective students (Morrison, 2013).
Social media survey of 2011 posited that more than 950 institutions showed that a full 96 percent of respondents were actively using social media, but that many are struggling to manage their social media initiatives. As one of the researchers noted, “There’s a lot of chaos. If the evolution of social media is like raising a child, we’re at the end of the toddler years.

2.5 Chapter Summary

The chapter reviewed a range of literature to establish the positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. Covered in this section was the impact and use of technology’s influence on positioning strategies used by private universities in Kenya for competitive advantage. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology, research design, the population, sample size, data collection instruments and methods of data analysis will be covered in the next that chapter.
CHAPTER THREE

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology of the study, research design used, target population and the sample selection, research instruments data analysis and lastly the chapter summary. The study was conducted in an objective systematic manner so as to attain the intended objectives. The process used to modify the research instrument and techniques used was discussed in detail.

3.2 Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey aimed at investigating the positioning strategies used by private universities in Kenya. Kothari (2007) demonstrates that descriptive design is concerned with finding out who, what, when, where, which and how of a phenomenon occurs. Generally things are describes by providing measures of an event. Descriptive research designs are usually structured and specifically designed to measure characteristics described in a research question. A survey is deemed best research design as the study seeks to find out what strategic factors contribute to the success of the private universities. Thus a survey is most appropriate as it enabled a general picture of the situation to be highlighted. The independent variables are strategic thinking, strategy formulation and strategic choices, while the dependent variable is performance.

3.3 The Population and Sampling Design.

3.3.1. Population

A population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having common observable characteristics (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Target population is defined as a computed set of individuals, cases or objects with some common observable characteristics of a particular nature distinct from other population.
According to Ngechu (2004), a population is a well-defined or set of people, services, elements, and events, group of things or households that are being investigated. This definition ensures that population of interest is homogeneous. The population of study consisted of 27 Private Universities in Kenya. The target population for this study was four private universities within Nairobi County. They include, St. Paul’s University (SPU), Strathmore University, United states international University (USIU), and KCA University.

The sample size was the management team (237) of the universities line managers and head of sections of the four universities mentioned. The reason the four universities were selected was to enable comparison between the strong brands in the market and the upcoming brands that have been awarded their charters recently. Hence, the questions of how have United States International University-Africa and Strathmore managed to stay relevant, while Kenya College of Accountancy University and St. Paul’s University have recently emerged and what strategies are they utilizing in order to retain their market share.

3.3.2 Sampling Design

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study, (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). A sample is a small group obtained from accessible population. It is the process of selecting a number of individuals or objects from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of characteristics found in the entire group, (Orotho and Kombo, 2002)

According to Kotler (2001), large samples give more reliable results than small samples however it is not necessary to conduct a census of the entire target market and that if well chosen; samples of less than one percent of a population can often give reliable data.

Proportionate stratification was undertaken as it allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information with respect to the objectives. The study obtained a sample of managers of at least four private universities of full population coverage is not possible from all the private universities in Kenya (Kothari, 2007).
3.3.2.1 Sampling Frame

A sampling frame is a list or other devices used to define a researcher's population of interest. The sampling frame defines a set of elements from which a researcher can select a sample of the target population (Douglas, 2013).

In this context the list of the four selected universities stratified. The response from each was required. Analysis was conducted of the positioning strategies used in the industry. Proportionate stratification random sampling using questionnaires was used to collect information from the managers in the selected universities. Information was collected using questionnaires to provide the answers.

3.3.2.2 Sample Size

Owing to the many private universities that have grown, the four universities have been selected because of their tenure in the industry and the strategy was compared. The study compared the four universities based on those that have been in the industry for a larger duration such as USIU-Africa and Strathmore and compared to the emerging universities Kenya College of Accountancy-University and St. Paul’s University. This study used purposive sampling technique. The population targeted is specific managers or supervisors from the four selected universities. Probability random sampling techniques will be used in the various universities. The purpose of using the above statistics served the purpose of providing data necessary for analysis of the population.

Table 3.1: List of managers of the four Universities representing total population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University</th>
<th>Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States International University</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya College of Accountancy</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul’s University</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>237</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The researcher used scientific method whereby the information was stratified and simple random sampling technique used to calculate a sample size of target group from the total number of universities. After that, the researcher used the Yamane formula (1973) to
identify appropriate total population of the target group (managers) from the four different universities. This formula is reliable to 92% and less than 8% deviation factor.

\[ n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne} \]

\( e \) = Deviation of sampling  
\( N \) = Size of population  
\( n \) = Size of sampling

### 3.3.2.3 Sample Technique

Proportionate stratification is a type of stratified sampling. With proportionate stratification, the sample size of each stratum is proportionate to the population size of the stratum. This means that each stratum has the same fraction. Proportionate strata sampling technique is the selected technique. The total study population is four private universities in Kenya. The reason the four universities have been selected was to enable comparisons that enhanced the study's questions on how different segments of the same market are using the positioning strategies to remain relevant in the higher education industry. How have the four selected universities managed to retain students and increase their population.

### 3.4 Data Collection Methods

Primary data collection method was be used to collect data using a semi-structured questionnaire in order to measure the extent to which various strategic planning practices are utilized in the various private universities.

The questionnaire was structured with open ended and closed ended questions. The open ended questions used to collect qualitative data whereas the closed ended question was used to collect quantitative data. These are easy to analyze using statistical techniques and facilitate comparisons to be made across groups. The semi-structured questionnaire was self-completion and was dropped and picked at later date.

Data was collected from different managers of the respective private universities. Cognizance of the structure of the specific private university was considered. The researcher was personally administered the research instrument in a vast majority of the situations.
Secondary data was collected by reviewing educational journals, online blogs, and social media platforms and course texts. Therefore, it enabled comparisons of the strategies utilized by the private universities in the recent years. The data enabled the researcher acquire stakeholders views on the management of the private universities. Also provide comparisons between the different views of key stakeholders in the industry.

3.5 Research Procedures
The research instrument was developed based on the research objectives. A pilot questionnaire was issued to gauge respondents’ ability and willingness to answer various questions. The feedback of the pilot survey questionnaires enabled further development of the questionnaire that was used eventually in data collection. The questionnaire was the main source of primary data.

The research seeks to draw the link between the various strategic planning issues and performance. The independent variable in this case is the factors associated with strategic planning while the dependent variable is performance. Respondents answered questions relating to the various strategic planning factors and the researcher established a relationship between the two through the stated research procedures.

3.6 Data Analysis Methods
Data analysis involved reducing accumulated data to a controllable size, developing summaries, looking for patterns, and applying statistical techniques (Cooper and Schindler 2000).

The study was modeled on a descriptive design and thus descriptive statistics used analyze the data. Data was analyzed using frequency distribution and percentages with a view of revealing information on various aspects of strategic planning, of the four private universities undertaking strategic planning among other measures of interest. The questionnaire was structured to address the research questions stated in chapter one. It enabled the researcher to draw a relationship between the various aspects of strategic planning and the performance of these private universities in the industry.
The questions were structured in a manner as to elicit the most genuine response from the respondents. The main aim of the data analysis is to determine the extent to which strategic planning practices influence the performance of private universities in Kenya.

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter described how the study was conducted. In the research designs, it described a descriptive design and why it was appropriate. It explained the various aspects of a study population and the aspects of a sampling design, which included the definition of a sampling frame and a sample size. The chapter also examined the data collection methods, explaining how primary and secondary data was collected. Further examined was the research procedure and data analysis method that was used to generate data towards the intended objectives.

The next chapter analyzed the data collected using the questionnaires. It contained diagrammatic representations of the data analyzed, clearly outlined as per how the research instrument is structured.
CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study data. The results are presented in bar graphs and tables to easily convey the meaning. In addition, the results are accompanied by a brief interpretation for easier understanding. The chapter covers findings on the general information, the differentiation used by private universities, the role of management in the formulation of the strategies and lastly branding mechanism pursued by different universities.

4.1.1 Response rate

The sample size of the study was 237. Thus 237 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents in the four private universities. From the field, a total of 147 questionnaires were collected translating into a 62% response rate. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) a response rate of 60% was good for a study. Thus a response rate of 62% was considered good for the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questionnaires</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uncollected</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filled and collected</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>237</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2 General information

This section presents the information and the results on the demographic information of the respondents who took part in the study.

4.2.1 Gender

Gender parity has assumed a lot of relevance in the world today. In Kenya, the constitution stipulates that no more than two thirds of the members in any leadership position should be of the same sex. This was legislated as a way of increasing the representation of women in leadership position. In this study, 56.9% were females and
43.1% were males. This shows some great strides made in having more female persons in leadership position of the universities in Kenya.

![Gender](image1.png)

**Figure 4.1 Gender**

### 4.2.2 Age bracket

The distribution of age among a population helps the policy makers and the government to exercise their duties smoothly and effectively by having helpful data and information. In this study, majority 73.7% were aged between 25-35 years, 21.1% were aged 36-45 years and those who were aged more than 45 years were only 5.3%.

![Age bracket](image2.png)

**Figure 4.2 Age bracket**

### 4.2.3 Highest level of education

Education is a very important and critical aspect of human life. Highly educated people have specialized skills which guarantee quality services and professionalism. The targeted
persons in this study were management and head of sections in the universities. The study found that majority of the respondents had post graduate qualifications (56.9%) and 43.1% had reached undergraduate level. This shows that in the universities sampled, the management teams and the holders of the departmental head offices were highly educated. This could be attributed to the fact that the respondents were from institutions of higher learning and most probably prefer educated and professionals to head sections and departments. The results are shown in figure 4.3

![Figure 4.3 Highest level of education](image)

4.2.4 Duration of employment in the university

The duration a person works in a place determines his knowledge and experience about that place. A long duration is a sign that a person has much experience about a place while a short duration signifies less experience about that particular work or place. In this study, majority of the respondents (64.9%) had worked in their respective job positions for a period between 2 and 5 years. This category of respondents was followed by those who had worked in the same position for more than 10 years. This shows that some had more experience in their institutions than others. However, those who had less than 1 years’ experience in were very few accounting for only 5.3% of the respondents sampled.
4.3 Strategies being used by private universities

This section presents the results on the different strategies being pursued by different private universities. The results have been segregated into the respective universities to enable comparative analysis.

The data was collected on a 5-point likert scale. According to the scale a mean value between 4.5 and 5.0 represents strongly agree, 3.5-4.4 agree, 2.5-3.4 neutral, 1.5-2.4 disagree and a mean value of less than 1.5 strongly disagree. Standard deviation was used to indicate the extent of consensus of the respondents on a particular variable.
Table 4.2 Different strategies being used by private universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>USIU- Africa</th>
<th>KCA</th>
<th>St. Paul's</th>
<th>Strathmore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technology plays a crucial role in the choice and development of strategies</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training and motivation is highly encouraged</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer relationship management has been effected</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous revision of the curriculum as per the policies and government regulations</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enrollment in the university is motivated by the cost of study in the university</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution seeks to create more programs which address market needs in the corporate world</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The university has identified and majored in providing its core competencies and the areas of its expertise which has greatly motivated enrollment of students</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students products are based upon solving of real and relevant problems</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows the different strategies used by private universities in Kenya today to attract more students to join their universities. The findings are provided in terms of mean and standard deviation.

From the results, the private have embraced technology as playing a critical role in the development of strategies. The use of technology seem too have been more embraced and accepted in USIU-Africa than the rest of the private universities. This shows that technology is widely and commonly used by the private universities as a competitive tool.

Staff training is a good strategy of ensuring that the existing workforce is highly trained and ably equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform daily activities well. This brings about quality and professionalism. From the results, the training of staff members was highest in Strathmore universities compared to the rest. In USIU-Africa and St. Paul’s, the value of standard deviation was 1.0 showing that there existed much variability in the responses given. This implies that there was no consensus of the responses. Thus the issues of staff training were done unevenly in the universities.
All respondents from the private universities sampled agreed that their universities had effected customer management except in St. Paul’s whose respondents were not sure about that (M=3.3). However, the strategy was highly adopted in Strathmore than the rest of the universities.

The results show that the universities had adopted the strategy of continuously revising the curriculum as per the policies and regulations of the government. This would make the universities compliant which would attract create some image of brand credibility. Thus the university is viewed as compliant and legal and legitimate.

The respondents were neutral when asked whether students’ enrolment was motivated by the cost of study. This status of neutrality signifies either lack of knowledge or some partial agreement with the statement. This could be explained by the fact that most of the private universities were more expensive than the public universities. Thus they could not be competitive based on the price.

Respondents from all the private universities sampled agreed that their universities were seeking to create more programs which were market driven and addressed the needs of the corporate world. Also the universities had identified and majored on providing quality and services relating to their core competencies and areas of expertise which had in turn motivated more students to enroll.

Also the respondents agreed that their products they offered to the students were based upon solving real and relevant life problems. The results show that most of the strategies being pursued by the private universities were differentiated by the degree of acceptance and practice. All the universities had almost similar strategies but were differentiated by the degree to which they were being implemented. However, some universities have unique strategies such as USIU-Africa whose programs have unique features such as grading systems, class sizes, and teacher-student ratio among others.

To determine whether the strategies were statistically different among the four private universities, an ANOVA test was run.
Table 4.3 ANOVA-Strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategies</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>2.861</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.954</td>
<td>5.793</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>23.383</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26.244</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to table 4.3, the F distribution of the data was given as F (3,142)=5.793, p=0.001. This shows that at least 2 private universities had statistically significant different strategies. This agrees with the descriptive statistics where some private universities had concentrated on some of the strategies more than the rest. Thus the strategies pursued by the private universities are not very similar across all of them. To fully determine the differences in the private universities, a post hoc test was run. The results are shown in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Post hoc test on strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable: strategies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tukey HSD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(I) University</th>
<th>(J) University</th>
<th>Mean Difference (I-J)</th>
<th>Std. Error</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USIU- Africa</td>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>-.16449</td>
<td>.11364</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>-.4599 -.1310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Paul's</td>
<td>.26189</td>
<td>.08833</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.0322 .4915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>-.04521</td>
<td>.08455</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>-.2650 .1746</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>USIU- Africa</td>
<td>.16449</td>
<td>.11364</td>
<td>.472</td>
<td>-.1310 .4599</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Paul's</td>
<td>.42638</td>
<td>.11942</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.1159 .7368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>.11928</td>
<td>.11665</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>-.1840 .4225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul's</td>
<td>USIU- Africa</td>
<td>-.26189</td>
<td>.08833</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>-.4915 -.0322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>-.42638</td>
<td>.11942</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>-.7368 -.1159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>-.30710</td>
<td>.09217</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>-.5467 -.0675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strathmore</td>
<td>USIU- Africa</td>
<td>.04521</td>
<td>.08455</td>
<td>.950</td>
<td>-.1746 .2650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>KCA</td>
<td>-.11928</td>
<td>.11665</td>
<td>.737</td>
<td>-.4225 .1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>St. Paul's</td>
<td>.30710</td>
<td>.09217</td>
<td>.006</td>
<td>.0675 .5467</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

From the results shown in table 4.4, the strategies pursued by USIU-Africa and those pursued by the St. Paul’s University have significant differences (p<0.05). The strategies used by KCA also statistically differ from those pursued by St. Paul’s University.
(p<0.05). Also the strategies pursued by St. Paul’s differ statistically from those pursued by Strathmore University (p<0.05). This shows that St. Paul’s pursues slightly different strategies or pursues the strategies to a higher or lower extent compared to the rest. This is because some universities have majored on their core competencies and thus although all strategies seem to be similar, the differences exist on the implementation of such strategies.

4.4 Extent of the top management on the choice of positioning strategies

This section has results on the role the management plays in formulation of positioning strategies. The data was collected on a 5-point likert scale. The scale is similar to the one used in section 4.3. The results are shown in table 4.5.

Table 4.5: The role of the top management on the choice of positioning strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USIU- Africa</th>
<th>KCA</th>
<th>St. Paul’s</th>
<th>Strathmore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity of the top management determines the quality of strategies formulated</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top level management strategic thinking involves prioritizing other people’s values</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper management and training of staff on the current technology lowers the cost of managing the workforce thus producing much results with little resources</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution has greatly differentiated itself by pricing its programs according to the quality of service offered by the institution and not determined by competition in the market</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy formulation is based on the organizational culture</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University leadership makes high quality decisions that are accepted and executed in a timely manner</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The institution seeks to innovate more programs which cover a wider scope in the society and corporate world</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic decisions are formulated by senior level managers of the universities</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Success in implementation of strategic decisions is as a result of involvement of the institution as a whole in the formulation stage</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal environment is conducive for managerial functions to be performed efficiently</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management ensures that adequate resources are available to pursue organization strategies</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are social task forces, project teams and standing committees formulated to spearhead the strategy implementation in the organization</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.5 shows the results on the role the management played in determining the positioning strategies to formulate and emulate. From the results, the all the respondents from all the universities agreed that creativity of the management determined the quality of the strategies formulated. However, the respondents from USIU-Africa, KCA and Strathmore strongly agreed to the statement more than St. Paul’s which may reflect some differences on the same.

The level of agreement was lower on the whether the strategic thinking of the management teams in different universities involved prioritizing other people’s values. This shows that most of the strategic choices adopted were thought by and formulated by the management. At Strathmore, the mean was lower showing that the respondents were neutral on that point. This signified the inability of the respondents to approve or disapprove the statement.

The respondents agreed that proper management and training of staff on current technologies lowered the cost of human resource management which in turn enabled the workforce to produce much using little resources (all mean values were close to 4.0). Also the respondents agreed that their institutions had greatly differentiated their strategies according to quality of service offered by the institution and not based on the competition from the market. This was agreed by all the respondents across the universities although those from St. Paul’s university had no consensus on this (SD=1.0).

The respondents across the universities were formulated based on the organizational culture of the universities (mean values were all close to 4.0). However, in all the universities the respondents had diverse opinions except St. Paul’s who had consensus on that aspect of strategy formulation (SD<1.0). The leadership in most of the private universities made quality decisions that were adopted in a timely manner except in St. Paul’s whose respondents were neutral on this aspect. Also, the respondents agreed that most of the strategic decision were made by the senior level managers of the universities. Probably because strategic planning involved the senior top management officials and thus strategy formulation was supervised by the senior officials. More importantly to note was the fact that in all the universities, there were efforts to innovate programs which covered a wider scope of the society and corporate world.
Lastly, the respondents agreed that success in the implementation of the strategies was highly determined by the level of inclusion of the entire university members in strategic planning. Also the management played a critical role in providing adequate resources to enable the institutions to pursue their organizational strategies effectively and efficiently.

The respondents agreed that their universities had social task forces, project teams and standing committees formulated to spearhead strategy implementation except at St. Paul’s where there was no consensus on that. Showing either there were less of such teams or they existed but were not very pronounced or elaborated.

To statistically check whether the role of management in strategy formulation was different across the private universities sampled, an ANOVA test was run. The results are displayed in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 ANOVA - Role of management in formulation of strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role of top management</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>1.222</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.407</td>
<td>1.154</td>
<td>.330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>50.135</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>.353</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>51.358</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results shown in table 4.6 shows a F distribution given by $F (3, 142)=1.154$, $p>0.05$. This shows that there were no significant statistical differences on the role of management in formulation of strategies across the private universities. This shows that management role and influence on strategy formulation was very critical of almost equal importance across the private universities.

4.5 The branding mechanisms used by private universities

This section discusses the results on the branding mechanisms used by private universities as a way of positioning themselves in the current competition of higher education in Kenya. The information was collected on a 5-point linkert scale and analysed through mean and standard deviation. The scale used is the one shown in section 4.3 above.
Table 4.7 The branding mechanisms used by private universities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>USIU-Africa</th>
<th>KCA</th>
<th>St. Paul’s</th>
<th>Strathmore</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corporate branding increases market value of an institution</strong></td>
<td>4.5 0.6</td>
<td>4.2 0.4</td>
<td>3.9 1.1</td>
<td>4.0 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased competition is the motivating factor behind branding</strong></td>
<td>4.3 0.6</td>
<td>3.5 0.7</td>
<td>4.2 0.4</td>
<td>3.6 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>M-branding (mobile) has been embraced by the university</strong></td>
<td>3.6 1.1</td>
<td>3.5 0.9</td>
<td>3.4 1.0</td>
<td>3.4 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Institutional branding is meant to help propel the institution from its mission to its vision creativity</strong></td>
<td>4.3 0.6</td>
<td>4.0 0.5</td>
<td>4.3 0.5</td>
<td>4.0 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Managerial views on technology and continuing brand development in private universities in Kenya is acknowledged</strong></td>
<td>3.7 0.7</td>
<td>4.1 0.4</td>
<td>3.9 0.7</td>
<td>3.9 0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Customer relationship management enhances branding</strong></td>
<td>4.5 0.5</td>
<td>4.9 0.3</td>
<td>4.3 0.5</td>
<td>4.7 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University is combining existing brands with new brand</strong></td>
<td>4.1 0.7</td>
<td>3.9 0.3</td>
<td>4.0 0.7</td>
<td>4.0 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contemporary branding strategy developments in Kenya private higher education is recognized by the university management</strong></td>
<td>3.8 0.7</td>
<td>3.6 0.9</td>
<td>3.9 0.6</td>
<td>3.3 0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The university has embarked on serious marketing of its programs in order to create awareness in the target markets</strong></td>
<td>4.1 0.9</td>
<td>4.8 0.7</td>
<td>4.6 0.7</td>
<td>4.3 0.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Occasionally the university undertakes promotion activities within target market which has raised the awareness of the university programs in the market</strong></td>
<td>4.4 0.7</td>
<td>4.9 0.3</td>
<td>4.4 0.5</td>
<td>4.6 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>University has a specific target market which enables it to give specialized focus especially when doing marketing and while undertaking promotion activities like advertising</strong></td>
<td>4.1 0.8</td>
<td>5.0 0.0</td>
<td>4.1 0.7</td>
<td>4.0 0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Success branding and marketing is crucial to the growth of the organization</strong></td>
<td>4.6 0.5</td>
<td>4.8 0.7</td>
<td>4.2 0.4</td>
<td>4.9 0.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows the results on branding in some private universities sampled in this study. From the results, all the respondents across the private universities agreed (mean close to 4.0) that corporate branding increased market value of their institution although St. Paul had a mixed expression about that. Also the respondents agreed that branding in private institutions was as a result of increased competition.

The study results shows that institutional branding was meant to help the institutions propel the universities from their mission to vision and that managerial views on technology and continuing brand development in private universities was acknowledged. The study found out that USIU-Africa and KCA had embraced M-Branding but those from St. Paul’s and Strathmore were not sure about that.
There was a general agreement across the universities that customer relationship management enhanced branding and that the universities were incorporating new brands to the existing ones. The university management teams recognized contemporary branding strategy developments in Kenya except Strathmore University whose respondents were not sure about such in their institutions. The universities were on serious marketing of their programs to the public to create awareness of their existence and hit their target markets.

The respondents agreed that their universities had specific target markets which their programs targeted and thus organized occasional promotional activities within their target markets to raise awareness of the university programs. The respondents from across the universities agreed that successful branding and marketing was crucial to the growth of their learning institutions.

An ANOVA test was run to determine whether the branding views, perceptions and branding mechanism was different among the private universities. The results are shown in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 ANOVA-Branding mechanism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branding</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>.441</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.147</td>
<td>1.375</td>
<td>.253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>15.194</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>.107</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15.635</td>
<td>145</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA test found a F distribution (F (3,142) =1.375, p>0.05) showed that there was no significant statistical differences on perception, views and branding among the private universities sampled.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings of this study. The chapter has section on the summary of the findings, discussion of the findings which has been linked with previous studies, conclusions and lastly a section on the recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary of the findings

This study was a comparative study on the positioning strategies being adopted by various private universities in Kenya. The study specifically studies the different strategies pursued by private universities, the role of management on the design of such strategies and lastly on the branding approaches used by the private universities in Kenya as a way of creating competitive edge under the wake of the increasingly influx of universities in Kenya.

The study found that most of the private universities have not been able to compete effectively on pricing of their products. This is probably due to the fact that in public universities, the students enjoy subsidized fees from the government and HELB financing which eases their fee burden. However, some universities such as KCA-University and St. Paul’s University offer certificate and diploma courses focusing on the lower end income bracket (Commission for University Education, 2016).

The ANOVA results shows that strategies being pursued by different private universities significantly differed in some of the universities (P<0.05). However, the differences were mostly common on the extent each university pursued a particular strategy based on the universities core competencies and expertise. According to Davidow and Uttal(2006) companies differentiate their products from their competitors to establish an image that is unique and attractive to the existing and new customers. s, the study found that some private universities pursue the same strategies differently. Thus the end results of the strategies pursued is different. The strategies are differentiated by the extent to which they apply the strategies and also the target of their strategies. This is influenced mainly by the core competencies of the universities and the expertise. Some strategies pursued by the
private universities collectively include: technological advancement, customer management, training and capacity building, continuous improvement of the curriculum among others. The ANOVA results shows that strategies being pursued by different private universities significantly differed in some of the universities (P<0.05). However, the differences were mostly common on the extent each university pursued a particular strategy based on the universities core competencies and expertise. According to Davidow and Uttal(2006) companies differentiate their products from their competitors to establish an image that is unique and attractive to the existing and new customers.

The role of top management in strategy formulation was found to critical. The top management makes a lot of decisions, oversees strategic planning and implementation, improves the staff capacity, provides resources for the smooth implementation of strategies and manages the organizational culture upon which strategic implementation takes place. However, the study found that strategic decisions were formulated by the senior level managers in the universities thus axing the participation of the lower cadre staff. This is probably due to the fact that strategic planning in most cases has been assumed as the work of the top management and thus the lower staff members have no interest to participate under the false view that it was management’s duty. According to the ANOVA results, the role of management was almost similar in all the private universities sampled and no significant difference was noted across the universities.

Lastly, branding is viewed as a way of building the image of the universities as well as sustaining success. Private universities have different ways of branding such as customer managing, customizing programs and target marketing among others. The study notes that branding is viewed as a conduit upon which institutions move from their missions to visions

5.3 Discussion of the findings

5.3.1 Strategies pursued by private universities

The first objective of the study was to find out the strategies being pursued by different private universities in Kenya. The study found out that technology was a critical aspect in strategy formulation and choice among the private universities. It was a strategy which was being used across the universities as a way of standing out among the rest especially during this time when there is an influx of institutions offering higher learning in Kenya.
This concurs with the findings of Kimando, Njogu and Sakwa (2012) who found that different universities have differentiated their product offering through technology such as web marketing strategy where many universities now offer online classes, use e-learning modules, distant learning and selling courses electronically, which has made learning easier and efficient thus increasing their enrollment.

The universities have also adopted customer relationship management as a strategy apart from some which seem not to have fully synchronized the idea with the systems and people. Staff training and motivation was being pursued as a strategy in the universities although not all embraced it probably due to the cost nature of the approach.

The universities have pursued a strategy of continuously revising their curriculum as per the policies and regulations of the government. The idea was also echoed by Darlymple and Parsons (1995) who viewed product development strategy as being based on the penetration of existing markets by incorporating product modifications to the existing product line. This is pursued to ensure that the universities remain complaint to the government authorities and regulatory bodies which in turn increases the legitimacy of the university programs and builds confidence of the university. The study showed that private universities also work on their programs to ensure they address market needs in the corporate world. This is a strategy which ensures that the programs retain their relevance over the changing times and worldly dynamics. This builds loyalty and guarantees students based on the quality and applicability of the programs outside school.

The study found that most of the private universities have not been able to compete effectively on pricing of their products. This is probably due to the fact that in public universities, the students enjoy subsidized fees from the government and HELB financing which eases their fee burden. However, some universities such as KCA-University and St. Paul’s University offer certificate and diploma courses focusing on the lower end income bracket (Commission for University Education, 2016).

The ANOVA results shows that strategies being pursued by different private universities significantly differed in some of the universities (P<0.05). However, the differences were mostly common on the extent each university pursued a particular strategy based on the universities core competencies and expertise. According to Davidow and Uttal(2006)
companies differentiate their products from their competitors to establish an image that is unique and attractive to the existing and new customers.

5.3.2 Top management role in strategy formulation

The second objective of the study was to establish the role of top management on strategy formulation. This sought to determine how much of influence the management had on the formulation and choice of positioning strategies among the private universities and also whether the role of management differed across the private universities.

From the results, creativity of the top management was key in determining the quality of strategies formulated. In addition some universities management could not prioritize other people’s values and views while making the strategies which would adversely affect the implementation of such strategies since it lacked social and people’s good will. According to Einsteine and Hwang (2008), the relationship between organizational creativity and innovative behavior is both direct and complex. Thus the creativity and innovative abilities of the management are key in coming out with the right strategic choices.

A proper training and management of the staff members on the new technologies lowered the cost of human resource which increases efficiency. Thus managing and training of the staff members is a critical role of the management which would determine the efficiency in which strategies are being implemented.

The study found that strategy formulation was based on the organizational culture of an institution. Thus the management had a role to play in changing the culture to a good enabling organizational culture which would permit formulation and implementation of effective strategies. According to the results, university leadership makes high quality decisions that are accepted and executed in a timely manner and thus their ability to influence changes in the institutions was high.

The study further found that management teams in private universities sought to develop programs which cover wider scope in the society and corporate world. This is in line with Varghese (2006) views that private higher education institutions in Africa are self-financing, and tend to offer demand-driven and labour market-friendly programs. The management teams strive to create a good internal environment which is conducive for managerial functions to be performed efficiently. Also the management ensures that
adequate resources are available to pursue organizational strategies. Thus the role of the management teams and committees is big and indispensable.

The respondents agreed that success in implementation of strategic decisions could be attributed to collective and wide inclusion of all stakeholders in decision making and strategy formulation. However, the study found that strategic decisions were formulated by the senior level managers in the universities thus axing the participation of the lower cadre staff. This is probably due to the fact that strategic planning in most cases has been assumed as the work of the top management and thus the lower staff members have no interest to participate under the false view that it was management’s duty.

The role of management in strategy formulation was found to be critical in the private universities. According to the ANOVA results, the role of management was almost similar in all the private universities sampled and no significant difference was noted across the universities.

5.3.3 Branding mechanisms by the private universities

The third objective for this study was to determine the branding mechanisms used by different private universities in Kenya. Branding is a critical aspect for building the image of an institution. Thus the way a university does its branding determines a lot in terms of the image of the institution.

From the findings, all the staff members in private universities sampled agreed that branding increased the market value of an institution. Also, competition was identified as the main factor behind branding since the universities wanted to create an appeal to the potential students to join the university. This agrees with Roll (2009) who argued that corporations around the world were increasingly becoming aware of the enhanced value which corporate branding strategies could provide for an organization.

More importantly, corporate branding was meant to help the institutions from the mission to achieve its vision. Thus branding was viewed as a way of strategic implementation in the universities as well as a way of creating a competitive edge. The staff from the private universities agreed that success in branding and marketing of the brand name was crucial to the growth of the universities. Thus the act of branding was a critical activity which required adequate attention to deliver results.
The universities were using various ways of branding. Firstly, customer relationship management was seen as a way of enhancing branding of the universities. Secondly, some university management teams have embraced M-Branding as a way of branding their institution. The approach of continually developing and improving the brand of the institutions was widely accepted by the universities sampled. This way of branding incorporated new brands to the existing brand as a way of creating an appeal to the students was also highly cherished by several staff members. Roll (2009) argued that branding strategy could enable the corporation to further leverage on its tangible and non-tangible assets leading to Branding Excellence throughout the corporation.

Branding covered a broad spectrum of activities: creating the brand name was not the end of branding but more in terms of promotions and marketing the brand was done. From the results, the private universities embarked on serious promotional activities within the target market to raise awareness about the university programs in the market. A study by Mutali and Messah (2011) found that public relations, advertising, direct marketing and personal selling influenced student enrollment. Others pursued a specific target market using specialized focus for that particular target market only such as the GEMBA programs at USIU-Africa which targets the chief executive officers (CEOs) of different companies and organizations. The results agree with those.

5.4 Conclusions

5.4.1 Strategies pursued by private universities

The study concludes that private universities are pursuing a variety of strategies to remain relevant in the higher education sector. Notably, the application of strategies was significantly different among the universities. The strategies were differentiated by the extent of use of a particular strategy since some universities applied one strategy more than others and vice versa or using different strategies altogether.

The study notes that several strategies have been adopted by the private universities: such as technological advancement, customer relationship management, staff experience and training, continual revision of the curriculum and continually developing and improving existing programs to match the market needs so as to remain relevant outside school.
5.4.2 Top management role in strategy formulation

The study concludes that role of management in strategy formulation and implementation is critical and indispensable. The top management in private universities determines the quality of strategies formulated. Management of the private universities serve several roles such as ensuring strategic plan is in place, the staff are well trained, create conducive internal climate for strategy implementation, manage organizational culture and ensure resources are available for the success of implementation of strategies.

5.4.3 Branding mechanisms by the private universities

The study concludes that private universities pursue branding as a way of creating competitive edge and also building the image of an institution and also as a way of increasing the market value of their institutions. The study notes that branding is viewed as a conduit upon which institutions move from their missions to visions.

Several approaches have been adopted by private universities while doing their branding. This include customer relationship management, M-branding, continuously developing and improving the brand names of the institutions, promotional activities, marketing and advertising of their brands.

5.5 Recommendations of the findings

5.5.1 Recommendations on practice

5.5.1.1 Strategies pursued by private universities

The study found that most of the private universities did not pursue cost leadership and pricing strategies. Thus they appeared to be targeting the rich in the society since not all the students can afford to enroll in such expensive institutions unlike the public where the fees are reasonably cheap. This affects the student enrolment since some students may opt for public universities whose school fees are affordable. It is recommended that private universities work on creating efficiency of operations so as to lower the cost of running their operations so as to lower the fees and accommodate students from different financial backgrounds.
5.5.1.2 Top management role in strategy formulation

The study found that most of the strategic activities such as strategic planning, formulation and implementation is done mainly by the top management with little inclusion of the staff members from the lower cadres. This creates lack of ownership and good will to implement the developed strategies by all parties involved. It is recommended that strategic planning and implementation be highly inclusive and highly participatory to ensure that all parties take part in strategic planning and implementation. This would reduce resistance and create some sense of ownership while suppressing apathy in the institutions.

5.5.1.3 Branding mechanisms by the private universities

The study found the branding approaches in the private universities to be almost the same with no significant differences among the branding approaches. Although each private university has worked on its brand and has a unique brand name and image, the approaches seemed almost the same. To remain unique and differentiated, it is suggested that universities invest in research and development to come up new ways of developing their brands and selling it out to the public so as to remain relevant and competitive in the higher education.

5.5.2 Recommendations for further areas of research

The data for this study was collected from only private universities operating in Kenya. Private universities are run by private personnel whose workforce is paid the institutions unlike the public universities whose staff are paid by the government. The nature and the way private universities run are different from public universities. Thus, to completely bring out deeper understanding on strategies pursued by different universities in Kenya. It is recommended that a similar study be done in public universities to have an understanding, views and approaches pursued by the public universities as well.
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APPENDICIES

Appendix I: letter of consent

Cover Letter

Jane Asava

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA (USIU-A)
P.O. BOX 14634, 00800.
NAIROBI.

Dear Respondent,

I am a USIU student carrying out research on the; partial fulfillment for the degree of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) program COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF POSITIONING STRATEGIES USED BY PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE IN KENYA at the United States International University-Africa.

The researcher uses questionnaires which you are requested to complete and return. The findings of this study will provide valuable information to the management and provide comparisons of different positioning strategies that are used by the private universities in Kenya.

Other private universities will also benefit from the results and findings of this study. This study uses the four different have been selected as among the respondents. The data obtained in this study will be analyzed and results and findings of the study will be made available on request.

This is an academic research and confidentiality is highly emphasized. To achieve this, your name will not appear anywhere in the questionnaire and data collected will be collectively analyzed. Kindly spare some time to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire will take you approximately eight minutes to complete.

Thank you in advance,

Yours sincerely,

Jane Asava
Appendix II: Questionnaire

This study is a requirement for the partial fulfillment of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) program at the United States International University. The purpose of this study is for the comparative analysis of positioning strategies used by private universities for competitive advantage in Kenya. The findings of the study will provide the management and employees of private universities with information that can be used in the formulation and implementing growth strategies in the academic industry. This is an academic exercise and all information collected from the respondents will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Kindly take few minutes to complete the questionnaire as guided.

Your responses will be handled confidentially and ethically.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this academic study.

SECTION A
GENERAL /DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Kindly indicate your gender
   a) Male
   b) Female

2. Please indicate the highest level of education you have ever attained
   a) Secondary level
   b) College level
   c) University level
   d) Post graduate level
3. Age Bracket:
   25 –35 years
   36 –45 years
   Above 45years

4. How long have been employed by the USIU-A University?

   a) less than 1 year
   b) 2 to 5 years
   c) 6 to 10 years
   d) Over 10 years
SECTION B: TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM AND THE CHOICE OF GROWTH STRATEGIES

Kindly tick the appropriate numeric value corresponding to personal opinion for each statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity of the top level management determines the quality of strategies formulated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Top level management’s strategic thinking involves prioritizing other people’s values</td>
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<td>Proper management and training of staff on use of the current technology in managing the university affairs lowers the cost on managing the workforce thus being able to produce much results with little resources</td>
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<td>The institution has greatly been able to differentiate itself by pricing its programs according to the quality of service offered by the institution and not determined by the completion in the market.</td>
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<td>Strategy formulation is based on the organizational culture</td>
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<td>The institution seek to create more programs through innovations of new programmes which seek to address a wider scope of in the society and the corporate world</td>
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</table>

Any other factors influencing implementation of corporate governance within the higher education industry.

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
If yes what led you to shift from that institution to the current one?

.................................................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................
.................................................................................................................................

If no, do you think that the current institution has unique attributes which are not common with other private universities? Give examples if any

.................................................................................................................................

SECTION C: STRATEGIES USED BY UNIVERSITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Technology play a crucial role in the choice and development of strategies</td>
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<td>Staff training and motivation is highly encouraged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customer relationship management</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuous revising of the curriculum programs as per policy and government regulations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are curriculum programs revised as per policy and government regulations?</td>
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<td>The students “enrollment in the university is motivated by the cost of study in the university.</td>
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<tr>
<td>The institution seeks to create more programs through innovations of new programs which seek to address a wider scope of issues in the society and in the corporate world</td>
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<tr>
<td>The university has identified and majored on providing its core competencies and the areas of its specialized expertise which has greatly motivated enrollment of Students.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University has identified and majored in providing its core competencies and the areas of its specializes expertise which has greatly motivated enrollment of Student</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Any other factors that contribute to increase of students in private universities?

Any other factors that enable retention of students in the private universities.
SECTION D: WHAT BRANDING MECHANISMS DO PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES USE?

| Corporate branding increases market value of an institution |  |
| Increased competition is the motivating factor behind |  |
| M-Branding(Mobile) has been embraced by universities |  |
| Institutional branding is meant to help propel an institution from its mission to its vision creatively. |  |
| What are the implications of managerial views on technology and continuing brand development in private universities in Kenya |  |
| Does customer relationship management enhance branding |  |
| Universities are combing existing brands with new brands. |  |
| Does the university management recognize contemporary branding strategy developments in Kenya private higher education? |  |
| The university has embarked on serious marketing of its programs in order to create awareness in the target markets |  |
| Occasionally the university undertakes promotion activities within their target market which has raised the awareness of the university programs to the market. |  |
| The university has a specific target in the market which enables it to give it a specialized focus especially when doing marketing and while undertaking promotion activities like advertising |  |
| Success branding and marketing is also crucial to the growth organization |  |

**USE?**

Any other effects of branding on the organization’s image?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!!!