

Strategic factors affecting student enrolment in private universities in Kenya: a case of private universities in Kisii County

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Abstract

Student enrollment is the core function of marketing academic programmes in Kenya. Generally all Universities are struggling to get desirable strategy to capture high numbers of student enrollment with the mandate to offer quality education. However, student enrollment has been poorly achieved in the last two years beyond control of strategic factors influencing marketing private universities. The provision of marketing communication was a factor to attract the students in the programme offered. The aim of the study was to examine the strategic factors affecting student enrolment in private universities operating in Kisii County Specifically objectives were; to identify factors affect student enrolment in private university education and how to attract student enrollment in private universities in Kisii County. The literature on student enrollment was reviewed. The study was conducted in Kisii County in private universities. The target population was 43 employees of private university which comprised of 4 directors, 4 marketers, 25 students and 10 lecturers. The sample size was achieved purposively. Data for analysis was collected by research questionnaires. Data collected was analyzed by descriptive statistics and correlations and regression analysis.

Key words: *Student Enrolment; Academic Programmes; Private Universities*

1.0 Introduction

The extents of the decline in global education sector students are broadly misunderstood and underestimated. Much of this stems from the prevalence of using enrolment data rather than offshore student visa applications in public is ongoing debate. The current Australian education international data indicated that there 3040 enrollment by full fee paying students in a scholarship on student Visa at year nowadays in 2015. Although this decline of 2.2% is similar in the year 2014, is itself concerning in contrast with annual growth rate over the previous periods of 5.8 actually “decreased by students previously onshore affecting more study, and cover the actual nature of this enrollment crisis.

Public universities are competing not only between their own but more so with private universities. Most of the public university does not require any promotion before they overwhelmed with student application for admission that they do not comprise. is becoming intense in competition are spread

globally with some states having multiple state universities like the US, the UK, Australia , India and some have a single state university for example, El-Salvador and a number of Latin American countries (Al-Hawary 2010. It is the need to understand the real drop in student applications, there is need to look at new students applying from external to study there) as the most reliable sign of the sector.

Private Universities are going out to adopt enrolment strategy tools of advertising personal selling and public relations as a marketing communication. The cost involved in promotional activities in the university employ the use of some promotional tools just because of the universities which seem too crowded in their improving student enrollment despite of the cost adopted. Each university remains committed to deploying requisite resources in making itself popular and therefore attractive to students so that it can realize its cardinal vision of being a university of international university

in academic excellence to improve knowledge and develop skills (Atara, 2013).

Decline in enrollment from China and in particular, India have still not well established. There are many factors which control students in choosing their private university apart from the future promotional tools are not supported in the enrollment (Kitchen 2003). Therefore universities indeed aim at fossilizing into national and continental centre of excellence in training, research and innovation, producing quality graduates and useful innovations, whose ultimate aim is to lead these institutions to greater heights of all spheres of development.

Therefore, all forms of promotional tools are adopted to sell out private universities and their programs of academic courses to the prospective students. Private universities education are growing in popularity between students enrolments in Africa, Ghana, Nigeria and the Republic of S. Africa dominating the vocational education and training for intensive courses while gaining market share in higher education. While private university figure overall fluctuations in enrollment, the demand for university education is increasing worldwide with completion for access rises each year a new set of students complete their graduation. Therefore demand for new student to enrollment is high (Mbirithi 2013).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In recent times student enrolment in Kenyan universities is undergoing inimitable contest which confronts many challenges in student enrolment. From 2015 onwards, the number of universities is decreasing in terms of enrolment, leading to misunderstanding of university selected for enrollment. These universities were endlessly admitting high numbers of students to sustain labor market, but not the case of the year 2016 and 2017, requiring the need to examine enrollment strategies using relevant academic programmes for offer, which include; facilities to meet the student demands, co-curriculum facilities, furthermore enrollment is extensive in adherence to the Commission of University Education but it is vital. This has noted in most private universities which was operating in Kisii County closed, because they have inadequate number of student to meet the programs upon enrollment. This creates a negative impact on

the student in the said institutions not enough to meet the student demands. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to establish the factors that affect student enrollment in private universities in Kisii County. Specifically with following objectives;

- i. To identify the factors that affect student enrolment in private universities in Kisii County.
- ii. To determine how attractive academic programmes are offered in aspiring student to enroll in private universities in Kisii County.

2.0 Roger's Theory

It was proposed by Rogers during organization competition. It currently applied in universities as well as in other organization as a strategy of targeting more customers. It is used in this study to relate enrollment of student in private universities in Kenya. These theories require every enrollment strategy to be reinvented in the private universities to continue progressing in numbers. The active dynamic to the university is to adopt change of endeavoring for excellence of performance with strong improvement of the university. Organization strategy is very important for every organization to overcome rival competitive in the present economic needs.

Higher learning institutions have become very competing in their nature of enrollment permanence. Rogers developed this theory as diffusion model of the enrollment strategies. He acknowledged that technology is changing and it can lead to five types of determinant of comprise of 1st type of the determinant is put on the center of attention to perceived quality of the private university's strategic enrollments, it focuses on the simplicity of the comparative advantage, the 2nd type of determinant is set on the effects of organization strategies adopted which clear the firm's attributes by university enrolment management techniques. 3rd type of the determinant is to aim at communication control which measure how the employee understands organizational strategies. The 4th type of the determinants is to encourage change of enrolment decisions using change promotional to measure the effort of organization innovation strategies. This determinant tries to vend strategy to the client's awareness. The 5th type of

determinants is to measure the nature of social organization by set of connections between organizations. It is the function of management strategies (Kwamboka e2014).

2.1 Factors affecting student enrolment standards in private universities

Effectiveness of organization standards involves setting and monitoring of academic standards in all universities. The standards are of which include the subject of organization standards like any other institution in increasing customers in China and India, Asia. It comprise of transmitting information about academic program the university used to offer. Various universities try to find the standard of needs of students satisfy that needs of students and find ways to satisfy the needs. Standard is the program of organization from the one management to target large number of customers. Whatever the information is dealing is to prospective students' relations. It is done between students and parents for their choice. Advertising organization standards involves passing message the buyer and seller. Well marketing communication in private university to capture high number of recipients. Private universities are extensive in marketing to indicate and persuade customers about programs. The relationship among enrolment transaction depends on the academic courses of university standards. It consists of organizations and customers who carried out are among students enrollment (Atara 2013).

Farhan, (2012) studied on factors affecting student on enrolment in higher education in Pakistan and found out the effects of organization standards set the winner on student enrolment and found out that in Private universities have to compete not only between them but also with their public rivals which comparatively more established and benefit from government financial support. More so public universities do not necessary need marketing to student application. Advertising facilitate student enrolment in because it is happen in paid form of non personal presentation. Most universities view advertising as its functional perspectives since it define the awareness of private university advantage. Because university is nonprofit institution it requires offering good service delivery. The opinion of advertising is

adopted to establish a basic awareness of the program offered in the mind of potential student to join and put more knowledge about the program duration. The main objective of the marketing advertising is to improve awareness of the available enrollment and idea of the target student. It offers influence of the awareness attitude and application student behavior. it involves student's attendance decision. Competition among universities creates the attention of student across in European countries.

In European higher education forum is noted by Al hawary, (2010) who did a study on the effects of enrolment strategy in Australian Higher Education Learning and found out that private universities are affected by organization standards of which make awareness of the prospective student and the their parents of the academic support courses they offer in the faculties, it persuade and remind student about the advantage provided in private universities over public universities have similar programs. The study revealed that advertising marketing strategy has proven to be specifically effective in assisting private universities make their image with visibility in their location. It also indicate that largely universities exploit multimedia advertising through news papers, emails, outdoor advertising by posters and billboards and online marketing to make awareness of their universities and other institution of higher education standards.

In Western Africa organization standards is observed by the study of Chung, (2010) who conducted a survey of the factors affecting organizational standards in higher education learning institutions and found out that, universities rely on print media of person to person and public relations in Ghana, but not limited to news papers and magazines in public relation to admit students. The study concluded that antecedents and results of market strategy are the core to universities which has been provided the enough attention. Many universities around the world continue to improve enrolment by means of the system of marketing development. These universities are heavily on marketing good quality of education in private university. It operates in the crowded and it cannot recruit more of the student desiring

in enrolment in most program me for instance bachelor of commerce and information science and education. The university infrastructure is difficult to measure due to unchanging number of students in every year.

Another observation is shown in Tanzania which was argued by Mahmoud (2008), who revealed that managing educational standards is a significant to student enrolment and it as a stimulant to the inability of public university to achieve student demand for education in the university. It also observed that the realization of government monopolization of higher education goes to the student attractiveness. Of recent Fred (2016) acknowledged that they are of private universities in Kenya which reflect to improvement trend in student education standards. Standardization strategies are explained by organizational strategies due to those paid for and mediated form of communication from an identifiable source, designed to persuade to take some action now and in the future. They focus on the persuasive role that is through advertising to the presentation and promotion of ideas, goods, or services by an identified sponsor. The emergence of private universities in Kenya has been long standing, but it was only recently that the National Government, through its education policies, began to appreciate their educational and social-economic significance. This has been proven by the number of private universities being approved in recent times. (Kottler, 2009).

2.1.2 Academic Programme Offered in Aspiring Student Enrolment

In Asia, academic programme act as advertising strategy in competing for the best to capture large market share. Similarly is enrollment competition is a worldwide increasing trend, the increasing number of universities in the recent cause competition in the results of over universities in India. Current statistics indicated that the number of private university is in the growth of infrastructure with the increasing enrolment in private than public universities in the centre of education research and development. In North Africa the same was observed in most universities the study of Ramzi in 2009.

The university establishment has been experiencing still competition which is like a

civil war between universities in several university assassinations with other political disturbances. Recently private universities are located in improvement location as compared to public university. The evaluations on factors affecting management of educational standards rely heavily on the institution of higher education standards (Ramzi 2009).

Fred, (2016) worked on the effects of the four competitive strategies to management of change and found out that they are four competitive strategies such as empirical -rational strategy, Currently these competitive strategies are used in university in managing enrolment change. In England, university standard is shown by employees rationally in their self interest to enroll their students. It is the change where employees are reasonable and the university management can compete with them. In Kenya student are social human beings with hold on with standards of cultural values and norms.

University employees do not want to fit with enrolment change and they are doing with judgments with the ministry. In PC, they compete to what they are changed to do or can be made their universities. There change depends on the authority in East Africa, Tanzania and Uganda student enrolment new circumstances. This change is based on building new university and gradually transferring from public to private university of their preference of the standards (Benne Kenneth, 2010). Therefore each university has the objectives to satisfy the requirement of its customers and it will not stand the test of time and under normal competitive strategies survive and prosper. Universities that fail to adapt to the students and do not have their customer's satisfaction such as their major concern.

Messah and Immaculate (2011) studied on the academic leaderships in student enrolment and observed that the student choice determine enrollment in the university. He noted that university established an actual quality which can be compared to less important in competitive strategy due to universities is perceived as quality with excellence to prospective students in their decision to enroll in the university. University are usually are concerned about the type of competitive image

before student adopt the application in the university. The most vital factor in the success of private universities are students. Student are impersonal in competition with rigid innovative to what university to choose the best.

While in Kenya, standards are of different marketing strategies upon private universities most institution showcase of their achievements and innovative curriculum, private university are in first class facilities embedded in the achievement of personality of their rivals. The aim of private university can infer students having academic training would be of the apex quality in close of all the field endeavors. Such students would have competence to outwit successful challenges posed by traditionally covered customs that are not good for the growth of academic professional and organizational performance.

Kotler, (2008) posited that standard time of admission determine what university organization need to succeed on enrolment of students to satisfy retain customers. The way students make choice when it comes to university in terms of consumer behavior. The study show on how individuals and organization select to buy and dispose of goods or service to satisfy their needs and desires and factors affect this behavior. The study found out that consumer buyer behavior what could provide satisfactory and same is applied in student enrolment. The need depends on the realization begin the student decision making proceeds to make a choice (Al-Fatal 2010). In university student are able to know the process of student choice of university enrolment. They are five steps in choosing university such as needs and motives, and post choice evaluation. In this concept a need is essential for students' enrolment. Private universities in Kisii County the student seeks in sequence about the university to join. The various ways are evaluated using different criteria of the best decision to enroll. The enrolment is an evaluation done to join to the private university for the best.

3.0 Material and Methodology

The study adopted descriptive design. The descriptive design is method of collecting information by interviewing or administering

questionnaire to the sample of individual (Orodho, 2003). The study was conducted in 4 private universities in Kisii County comprise of Mt. Kenya University (MKU) Africa International University and The Management University of Africa (MUA) and Kenya Methodist University (KeMU). The total population comprises of 4 private universities in Kisii County

The four private universities were managed by a sample of 43 employees from 4 private universities, 4 Directors, 4 markers, 25 students and 10 lectures. Stratified sampling design was used. The study settled a sample size shown in Table 3.2, because for descriptive studies in the accessible population census method was enough (Kasomo 2006). Sample size was shown in table sampling frame. Data for the study was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as, frequencies, percentage and mean, with standard deviation

4.0 Results and Discussions

Response rate is the responded questionnaires answered and returned out of total questionnaires issued to the respondents. Out of 43 questionnaires issued and administered to the respondents of private universities in Kisii County, only 37 were returned thus making a response rate of 86% of the response rate. The study revealed that 59.50% of the respondents were students, followed by marketers of 21.60%, lecturers at 10.89% with Directors at 8.7 %. This indicated high level of enrolment shown by 59.50% of student's responses in private universities.

4.1 Factors Affecting Student Enrolment

It is first objective of the study and it had three questions summarized as to establish as to whether enrolment strategy used to rise numbers of student enrolment were done by Publicity, Sponsorship Print media, Websites, the second question was on whether location of the university affect student enrolment strategy and third question was as to whether the timing of academic programmes offered affect student enrolment; Weekend, Regular, School based, Part time evening and Distance learning. All the question was founded by averages which were analyzed.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Statistics of Factors Affecting Student Enrolment Variables

	Descriptive Statistics						
	N Statistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error Std. Error	St. Deviation Statistic
enrolment strategy used	37	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.9730	.13133	.79884
Location of private university	37	3.00	1.00	4.00	1.9459	.12220	.74334
Timing of academic programmes	37	4.00	1.00	5.00	2.6486	.22333	1.35843
Valid N (listwise)	37						

Source: Field data

Descriptive statistics, correlation and regression analysis were employed in the study. Table 4.1 was given to show summary of the findings from descriptive statistics and found that the deviation of responses were on the extent of enrolment strategy used to rise numbers of student enrolment, whether location of the university affect student enrolment strategy, and timing of academic programmes offered affect student enrolment from their mean responses at 1.9730, 1.9459 and 2.6486 respectively. Since the threshold of the standard deviation was more than 0.5 it then implied that there were major deviations of the individual views from their mean responses between variables in their relationships.

Table 4.2 Skewness and Kurtosis of Factors Affecting Student Enrolment Variables

	Descriptive Statistics					
	Variance Statistic	Skewness Statistic	Std. Error Std. Error	Kurtosis Statistic	Std. Error Std. Error	
enrolment strategy used	.638	.741	.388	.625	.759	
Location of private university	.553	.517	.388	.303	.759	
Timing of academic programmes	1.845	.676	.388	-1.009	.759	
Valid N (listwise)						

Source: Field data

In Table 4.2 description statistics indicated how skewness was used to show the extent to which a distribution differs from a normal distribution. A normal distribution normally turns around zero. Positive skewness indicate that the mean is higher than the mode in distribution while a negative skew means that the mean is lower than the mode. The results indicated that the extent of enrolment strategy used, location of private university and timing of academic programmes

were all positively skewed while enrolment was also positively skewed.

These implied that all responses were normally distributed while negative Kurtosis at -1.009 for timing academic programmes indicated an increase of disparities by enrolment strategy were not normally distributed as it discrete away from zero. Factors affecting enrollment strategy were compared by location of private university and timing of academic programmes by 75.9%. The study established that they were factors affecting enrollment of students in private universities in Kisii County. The remaining percentage was 24.1% which was nowhere to affect enrolment strategy other than other factors under study.

In statistics, samples mean deviates from the actual mean from the total population which indicate deviation of standard error of the mean. Table 4.2 the standard error of skewness was at the lowest point at .388, indicated the degree of sample scattered from actual population mean by 38.8%.

4.2 Attractive Academic Programmes Offered

This objective had two questions; the first being was based on whether popularity of academic programmes had influence on student enrolment, on whether popularity acts as a change of student enrollment. Table 4.3 show the respondents level of agreement with high popularity to enrollment, it attribute to the effect of student increase in number to different teaching activity presented by the institute. From the findings, the respondents agreed that attractive academic programmes affect student enrollment for private universities in the ascertainment of enrolments periods the most critical as shown by a mean of 1.6216 and 1.6757 respectively.

Table 4.3 Attractive Academic Programmes Offered

	Descriptive Statistics of the study variables							
	N Statistic	Range Statistic	Minimum Statistic	Maximum Statistic	Mean Statistic	Std. Error Std. Error	Std. Deviation Statistic	
Popularity of programmes affect student enrolment	37	4.00	1.00	5.00	1.6216	.13618	.82836	
Popularity of changes in academic programme	37	3.00	.00	3.00	1.6757	.11660	.70923	
Valid N (listwise)	37							

Source: Field data

The standard error had variance of .686 and .503 indicated the level confidence in attractive academic programmes to student enrolment in private universities in Kisii County with skewness variance of .82836 and .70923 respectively. The study established that popularity of attractive programmes had positive impact on student enrollment in private universities in Kisii County.

5.0 Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

This objective of the study was based on the establishment of the factors affecting performance with three questions which were summarized as to establish as to whether enrolment strategy used to rise numbers of student enrolment were done by publicity, sponsorship print media, websites and study found out that enrollment has influence of student enrolment, the second question to find out whether location of the university affect student enrolment and combined together were influence of enrolment in university in the timing of academic programmes offered in terms of; weekend, regular, school based, part time evening and distance learning as was analyzed.

Descriptive statistics, correlation were employed in the study and found out that the deviation of responses were on the extent of enrolment strategy used to rise numbers of student enrolment, whether location of the university affect student enrolment strategy, and timing of academic programmes offered affect student enrolment from their mean responses at 1.9730, 1.9459 and 2.6486 correspondingly.

This objective was done in two ways whereby the first objective was examined by attractiveness of university program that had persuaded student enrolment, or as the popularity acts as altering of enrollment. Table 4.3 shows the respondents level of agreement with high popularity to enrollment, it attribute to the effect of increasing number of students to different training course given by the university. From the findings, the respondents agreed that attractive academic programmes affect student enrollment for private universities

This study was based on the effects of the factors affecting enrollment. it was concluded from the first objective that there were different

enrolment strategies which were done by publicity, sponsorship print media, websites and the study found out that enrollment has impact of student enrolment. The timing of academic programmes should be offered in both days as they could be agreed upon student; weekend, regular, school based, part time and evening classes. The study recommended that the university had established different programs but it was not clear on whether schools based, therefore recommend adequate academics staffs for motivations on students to enroll their friends.

Finally, the study recommended that there should be a purpose to attempt enrollment behavior of students established in a relationship of private university based on the factors that were external to the private university such as behavioral training issues of the new staffs, financial stress management, and information staff training of knows how. The study focused on the effect of enrollment in private universities, thus another study should be carried out on the effect of training on student enrollment in university.

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