THE ROLE OF BRANDING IN ATTRACTING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING: A CASE STUDY OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has never been submitted to any local or foreign institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the role of branding in attracting prospective students to institutions of higher learning. Higher education has been affected by globalization such that universities are now competing with their services at the international levels. In order to build sustainable competitive advantage, universities have to know their competitors, identify the programmes and products to compete in and assess their performance in relation to the competition in the market place. The objectives of the study were to investigate the role of branding in the university sector in Kenya, to find out what prospective students are interested in when choosing institutions of higher learning and to assess whether branding provides financial returns for universities. A descriptive case study research design was used. The researcher collected data from 2 key informants and 210 respondents who were chosen through simple random sampling. Data was collected through interviews from key informants and through questionnaires and focus group discussions from the respondents. Data collected was further analyzed through descriptive narrative analysis and Statistical Package for Social Statistics. The findings of this study revealed that branding is essential for institutions of higher learning, reputation and affordability stood out as important factors prospective student consider when choosing a university and when branding is well coordinated, it fosters university recognition within the community and provide returns. This study further recommends that universities need to work on market differentiation in order to know the need of their target audience and differentiate themselves in the competitive marketplace. For future research, this study suggests focus on other aspects like onlinemarketing which can be used by universities in the crowded marketplace.

DEDICATION

I wish to dedicate this research to my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Gakinya for their financial

and emotionally support and constantly encouraging me all through.

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This project was made successful by support from different people. I wish to acknowledge my supervisor Dr. Joy Mueni for her patience with me and guidance till the end.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACK   - Anglican Churches of Kenya

CBBE   - Consumer Based Brand Equity

FDG   - Focus Group Discussions

IHL   - Institutions of Higher Learning

MCK   - Methodist Churches of Kenya

NCCK   - National Council of Churches in Kenya

PCEA   - Presbyterian Church of East Africa

PRMO   - Public Relations and Marketing Officer

PR   - Public Relations

RCEA   - Reformed Churches of East Africa

SPU   - St. Paul's University

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Brand

According to American Market Association (2010) a brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers or competitors.

Branding

According to Rosenthal (2003), branding is part of the promotional aspect of marketing and is extremely important to the image, reputation and success of a product or company

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to introduce the study by giving the research background, the problem statement and the objectives of the study. It also discusses Institutions of Higher Learning, with special interest to St. Paul's University as a case study.

1.1 Introduction

Brands and branding have existed for as long as it has been possible to trace artifacts of human existence. According to American Market Association (2010) a brand is a name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers or competitors. Branding emerged in the nineteenth century when smart entrepreneurs realized that they could charge more for an otherwise standard commodity if they could guarantee quality and consistency; they usually claimed that their branded product had some outstanding characteristics that justified the extra cost (Doyle, 2001).

In today's business world companies have to market their product as well as themselves. This enables them to gain an edge over their rivals and to differentiate themselves. Coca- Cola for example is globally known not only for the cold drinks but for providing a lifestyle. Drinking Coca-Cola means much more to some customers than just having a cold drink or choosing to take Pepsi despite of both having about the same price. Coca-Cola has a competitive advantage over Pepsi because of the Coca-Cola

brand. Through branding Coca-Cola has been able to create a long-term relationship with its customers and established a connection with them and therefore their customers are loyal. Coca-Cola is known as one of the world's most recognized brands (Melin, 2001).

The first marketing efforts in Coca-Cola history were executed through coupons promoting free samples of the beverage. Considered an innovative tactic back in 1887, couponing was followed by newspaper advertising and the distribution of promotional items bearing the Coca-Cola script to participating pharmacies as seen in (Coca-Cola, 2007).

Before branding or even management emerged as a disciple, Coca-Cola was already spending over $ 11,000 on mass advertising campaign as early as 1892. Its trademark was officially filed in the United States in the same year and has consistently been displayed with the same script to this day. Over time, it also associated its brand with the bright red color, the hourglass shaped bottle (1915) and the ribbon logo (1970). Together these aspects contribute to differentiating Coke from rivals such as Pepsi-Cola which has been its competitive rival since 1898 as stated in (BrandChannel, 2015).

In 2015 Super Bowl championship, Super bowl broadcaster NBC charged Kshs 4.0 billion to Kshs 4.5 billion per 30 second spot commercial. Coca-Cola did a 60 second commercial during the game's 2nd quarter. In 2014 Coca-Cola ran two 60-second commercial with Fox, which was then the broadcaster for Kshs 3.6 billion per 30-second spot as stated by (Business Insider, 2015)

In a research study done by IpsosSynovate in 2012, Coca cola had to up its marketing budget in Kenya following the return of PepsiCo its global rival. It therefore

increased its marketing budget from Kshs 899 million from 395.6 million reported in 2011, a 127.2% increase (Synovate, 2012).

In a study done by a media monitoring firm Reelforge, Safaricom a telecommunication company topped the list of the biggest spenders in Kenya with Sh 8.5 billion advertising budget in 2014. The figures were based on card rate for radio, television and print publications. Safaricom has thus positioned itself as a home grown Kenyan brand with long television adverts and full page adverts that capture attractive scenes of the national flag as described by (Business Daily,2015).

Companies therefore have set funds aside to project the right kind of image and capture their customers' loyalty. While working on its image a company has to incorporate its communication plan which aims at building its reputation among it different stakeholders. The idea behind it is to create a coordinated image that runs through all facets of the company's appearance – Advetiser 1991, February Issue. A communication plan dictates a company's vision and mission. To make the idea of a communication plan successful, most universities if not all have a Public Relations and Marketing department that ensures it keeps, builds and maintains a good reputation. This department is also trusted with the university branding.

1.2 Background

Today globalization is inevitable. According to Tsui (2007) evidence abounds that globalization has been one of the most significant and rapid changes in recent decades. Globalization has affected higher education such that universities are now competing with their services at the international arena (Melewar&Akel, 2005). Education has

become a service, and universities are marketing worldwide looking for customers. Long gone are the times universities used to live in a protective world, in the United Kingdom for example the education system used to work in a cartel, in that there was no competition, but rather a few big universities (Anode & Ivy, 1999). Back then the demand was higher than the supply because there were few placements in the universities. Marketing was considered as unnecessary cost as long as students demand exceeded the available places in the universities (ibid).

Competition among the "traditional" universities in United Kingdom has risen because of three changes in the traditional universities environment. These changes are students have to survive with decreasing grants due to changes in government funding. Many colleges and education institutions started offering accredited and franchised university degrees. The former polytechnics were also given university status. Due to technology, one was able to cut the cost of joining a university by doing online courses and services. These changes led to a decrease in the number of students due to increased number of institutions (Anode & Ivy, 1999).

Greater competition among schools exist today (Bunzel, 2007). This points out that universities are no longer recognized as institutions of higher learning, instead are viewed as businesses (ibid). Universities have to continually and consistently communicate the message in order to ensure both internal and external customers understand what they stand for and its values. In the UK, due to less student application, universities started marketing aggressively in order to increase their numbers (Naude& Ivy, 1999). Due to internalization, there have been increased competition and the need to stand out has become increasingly important among universities globally.

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Higher education in Kenya, can be traced as early as 1922 when the then Makerere College in Uganda was established as a small technical college which was then expanded to meet the needs of the three East African countries i.e. Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika and Zanzibar, as well as Zambia and Malawi. In the 1940s and early 50s it was the only college that provided university education in East Africa. This lasted until 1956 when the Royal Technical College was established in Nairobi. In 1963, the Royal Technical College became the University College, Nairobi, following the establishment of the University of East Africa with three constituent colleges in Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Kampala (Makerere). The University of East Africa offered programmes and degrees of the University of London till 1966. In 1970, the University of East Africa was dissolved to create three autonomous universities of Nairobi, Dar es Salaam and Makerere. The University of Nairobi was thus established as the first university in Kenya (Jowi 2003).

From the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology 2012, Kenya has fifty two public, private and constituent university college institutions. All these institutions compete for students, therefore universities need to be aggressive. Universities in Kenya are taking both electronic and print media to advertise programmes and display their achievement. Some universities are buying expensive airtime on television and in print media, showcasing prominent alumni they consider as role models – who are mostly successful media and corporate personnel. This is done in hope that such display will attract more students to their institutions (Waruru, 2013).

University branding may vary in regards to the size of the university. Older universities often believe that they can survive on the reputation and that this gives them

sufficient attention (Bulotaite, 2003). A good example is the University of Nairobi. It was the first established university in Kenya and everyone believes it's the best university which they can recommend to anyone. This university has already established itself. The name stands out among the rest. On the other hand smaller universities consider the concept of branding more. For example Riara University may be expected to do more branding compared to other private universities since it was just recently opened. With it doing more branding other smaller universities will be required to join the bandwagon to remind their clients that they are the best too. Bunzel (2007) urges that branding need not be necessary for the top universities, but rather suggest the smaller universities should market themselves more to improve on their reputation (ibid).

Universities are also changing their marketing strategies in advertising their programmes. According to Nganga (2010), Kenya's universities are targeting specific audiences by introducing courses that have market demand. For example the Master in Business Administration is such a course. Over the past few months Kenya's universities (public and private have spent tens of thousands of dollars to boost their capacity to enroll a soaring number of students seeking the additional qualifications.

With the demand of MBA degree rising, universities are spending heavily on advertising their courses. No day goes by without a university advert on both print and broadcast media. Universities are spending money to make money – public universities are been forced to supplement their income through high-fee courses such as MBA, as their subsidies have declined (Nganga, 2010).

St. Paul's University has not been left behind in offering an MBA. In the year 2012, the management lowered the price of MBA from Kshs 85, 000 per semester to

Kshs 75,000 per semester. This enabled the university to attract an increase in customers due to decreased charges.

1.2.1 St. Paul's University

St. Paul's University is a private University which was chartered in September 14, 2007 and allowed to offer its own degree programmes. The university was initially started off as a college and over the years it was known for training theologians and pastors for service in the Christian Churches. When it was chartered in 2007 the university had only one campus in Limuru, and which today is the main campus. Back then, it offered three degree courses with great interest in Theology. In 2012, the University had a student population of 3,000 in various undergraduate and post graduate courses and around 150 staff members. There are currently over ten undergraduate programs, five post graduate programs, several diploma programs and one bridging course, and many more market oriented programs are being developed. The university is growing rapidly. From the Registry Department the university population had increased by upto 5,500 students by May 2014. This growth has been brought about by a lot of branding, rebranding and enhancing the communication strategies.

1.2.1.1 Vision

St. Paul's is a university of academic excellence guided by Christian principles producing graduates in various fields for global service. (A Christian university for global service)

1.2.1.2 Mission

To develop servant leaders by impacting knowledge, skills and values through creative methods of education, research and spiritual formation.

1.2.1.3 SPU Core Values

Professionalism – the university upholds high quality academic status, ethical and quality standards in terms of recruitment, admission and services provided to enhance professional competence by providing the highest level of education to all.

Ecumenism – The University honors and respects the diverse denominational backgrounds of both its staff and students.

Integrity – the university strives for transparency and accountable in all its areas of operation.

Partnership- the university creates an environment where shareholders in the university share in decision making.

Equity – the university promotes good citizenship, for all are made in God's image.

In recruiting students, the PR and Marketing team comes up with strategies of attracting customers into the institutions. A lot of time and money is invested in marketing the university programmes in churches and education expos. Advertising is also done on both print and broadcast media, pitching marketing teams in strategic towns, doing roadshow, using paraphernalia like branded t-shirts, pens, umbrellas and caps and enhancing the university's corporate colours in all this activities. This kind of branding is enhanced in order to win clients over and from the competitors.

Being a Christian University has had a boost to the growth of the University. St. Paul's University is based upon the partnership of four participating churches and the National Council of Churches Kenya as corporate body. They have a representation in the governing council which are Anglican Churches of Kenya (ACK) 50%, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) 20%, Methodist Churches of Kenya (MCK) 10%, Reformed Churches of East Africa (RCEA) 10% and the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) 10%. The university being owned by different churches has had an advantage over individual owned institutions. Parents and sponsors prefer it when their children join the institution since they will be guided wholistically (academic and spiritual). This factor has become an added advantage to the university branding; this alone is enough to convince a parent that it's the University of Choice. St. Paul's University over the past years and presently ensures it installs Christian principles among its graduates. This has led to the growth of the institution.

1.3 Problem Statement

Branding efforts in academia are easily observed for example through the use of vision statements, visual designs and core values. There is a striking scarcity of research on branding in higher education. Existing studies either discuss branding policies in general or in specific institutions (Belanger et al., 2002; Chapleo 2004; Judason et al., 2006) or focus on external aspects of branding (Bulotaite, 2003; Gray et al., 2003).

Herr (2001) explains that in today's higher education landscape, college and university leaders may well consider the principles of brand management to assure their positions vis-à-vis their competitors. This is evident through the use of trademarks to

market and promote an institution to the public. Moore (2004) states that institutions have to differentiate themselves depending on the core attributes of the category in which they operate, and makes them different from others in the same category. Differentiation helps an institution get a niche in the market place. For a college or university, the name and all the symbolism attached to it represent the brand.

According to figures from the Commission of University Education in Kenya, the private higher education sector in Kenya is thriving and now enrolls 20% of all students, that is 60,000 out of the 300,000 student currently enrolled in Kenya's Private and Public universities. This has intensified competition of student enrollments among private universities. As they compete for prospective students' institution of higher learning (IHL) have to come up with a brand name that the customer can easily recall. St. Paul's University goes with the 'tag name' "Your University of Choice". This tag name is evident in all marketing materials and it's also used in the television adverts. This creates remembrance in the customers mind, and while seeking for studies the University of Choice will come in mind. The researcher will do a case study of St. Paul's University, which in a Christian university and see how it embraces branding in attracting customers.

Branding is about creating perception (Rier&Ries, 1998). Perception is reality, therefore whatever people are thinking and saying about your brand, is your brand. The challenge then is to motivate a significant majority of the audience being targeted to perceive a brand in a positive and desired manner. Therefore the purpose of this study is to find out whether branding attracts customers in institutions of higher learning.

1.4 Objectives

1. To investigate the role of branding in the university sector in Kenya.

2. To find out what prospective students are interested in when choosing institutions of higher learning.

3. To assess whether branding provides financial returns for universities.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What is the role of branding in the university sector in Kenya?

2. What are prospective students interested in when choosing an institution of higher learning?

3. Does branding provide financial returns for universities?

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

The results of this study will be recommended to St. Paul's University and will be used to give guidelines on the importance of branding, and how it can be used to increase the number of customers.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will make a review of literature by other scholars that has been done on branding, discuss the research objectives and also look at theories that support branding in relation to this study.

2.1 Branding

Branding institutions of higher learning (IHL) provides the community and most importantly, the prospective students an easier way to identify and distinguish them from other schools. In order for an IHL's to attract prospective students it is essential that they stand out against the competition. This is achieved through branding; a process which highlights the institutions distinguishing features (Bennett & Ali-Choudhury, 2009).

Branding is a management concept that has gained popularity in higher education institutions over the last few years. In the face of increased national and international competition, universities and colleges in all parts of the world have begun a search of unique definition of what they are in order to differentiate themselves and attract students and academic staff (Chapleo, 2004; Hemsley-Brown & Goonawardana, 2007). Concepts of branding, corporate communication, identity and reputation have emerged in academia, making higher education organizations more aware of the link between what they "stand for" in terms of values and characteristics and how they are perceived. Competition has also resulted to employment of standard marketing practices in higher education institutions. University managers are increasingly focused on marketing

techniques such as targeting and communicating with the market segments (Rindfleish, 2003).

Wolport (1999) described the importance of branding as reducing the level of effort a consumer must put in assuring a specific desired level of quality, reducing the perceived risk of making a costly mistake and providing a certain psychological reward to the customer such as prestige or status. While searching for schools, students draw to those where they want to become a member of the community and alumni base that is affiliated with the institution. People look for the physical elements such as location or school colors, and or prestige of the institution. For example, the Harvard brand has long communicated preeminence in higher education. The brand has a staying power and impact that is inarguable (Moore, 2004). Across the globe Harvard is known for its academic excellence in higher education. The Harvard Business School for example is a strong brand in education, however, it is strong because customers know exactly what it stands for and has a clear position in the consumer's minds (Chapleo, 2006). A branded institution therefore can decrease the time a prospective student may spend in researching the school they want to attend.

A company can license its own name, or corporate logo, or the mane of one of its brands in an effort to capitalize on their reputation to an intended audience (Revoyr, 1995). Likewise many college institutions such St. Paul's University, University of Nairobi and Harvard University have branded their identity through the use of trademarks: "any word, name, symbol or device (or combination thereof) that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods of one party from those of another" (United States Patent & Trademark Office, 2004).

Due to increased competition in the IHE's, branding has become relevant in promoting an institution's reputation and also of generating additional revenue for the institution through the sale of trademarked goods. The trademarked goods could be items like branded pens, umbrella, t-shirts and mugs with the university's logo. St. Paul's University Marketing department for example, uses the trademarked goods when doing marketing activities. For a college or university, the name and all the symbolism attached to it, either through longevity, reputation, quality or some other factor, represent the brand (Rosenthal, 2003). Branding in higher education can be used in the following ways; packaging, advertising, corporate colours and public relations.

Packaging for example is applicable through the use of brochures. Choosing a university entails a lot of information gathering and information processing (Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999). Most universities use brochures to communicate with prospective students before they are admitted. The words, images and symbols in the brochures constitute the basis on which institutions choose to begin forming relationship with their students. For example, a picture of a smiling student is an image found in almost all brochures. The meaning that can be inferred from it is that universities are fun or good to be in. Most brochures are usually full colour, glossy with flashy pictures representing college life. They also have financial aid option for example St. Paul's University brochures are indicated that fee is affordable and scholarships are available. They have pictures of well-manicured grounds that students may enjoy while having their group discussions. Some brochures come in form of booklets and other in leaflets. Booklets brochures are well detailed while-else leaflet brochures are brief and may not give the prospective student satisfactory information.

Public relations is a planned and sustained management functions that evaluate public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an institution with the public interest, and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance (Malan et al, 1991). Universities have both internal and external publics. Internal publics (employees and students) can be good ambassadors of institutions of higher learning. They represent the brand to the external public especially the prospective students and recommend the institution to them. In most universities, a public relations office is engaged in monitoring the institutions public image, media relations and advises the management on areas of image strength and weaknesses. They also prepare adverts for television, radio and newspapers especially on admissions. The PR department also prepares for events that foster corporate social responsibility for example cleaning the surrounding community; they prepare for university exhibitions, and sponsor sporting activities. These activities are done to show goodwill and build trust by presenting the university in a positive way to the surrounding community.

Advertising is a favourable promotion of goods and services to the public with the intension to draw the attention of people and increase the amount of sales for these goods and services (Petley, 2003). Advertising serves as a tool for competition, companies use creative and appealing advertisements to patronize their brands against their competition and universities have not been left behind. Adverts can be done through print and broadcast media. Technological advancements have pushed institutions to do vital marketing through social networking sites like My Space, Twitter and Facebook (Kashorda, 2002). Advertising is an activity that is normally paid for in the media used. Universities use advertising to market activities like admissions or intakes by buying

airtime in radio or television and buying a page or more in the daily newspapers. For example, during graduation ceremonies, most universities in Kenya buy airtime on local television to air the ceremony. This airtime helps the universities increase brand knowledge within the audience watching.

Corporate colours are used by organizations to distinguish themselves from other organizations in the same line of goods and services. Use of corporate colours by universities is very predominant in the university buildings; promotional materials for example mugs, umbrellas diaries, note books and calendar; universities vehicles; billboards, marketing tents and brochures. In St. Paul's University for example, all building are painted the corporate colours cream and maroon, the university has three buses and two vans which are branded with the corporate colours, all promotional material have the colours and university logo embedded in them. Advertisements done on newspaper and aired on television have the colours too.

2.1.1 Brand Identity / Brand Knowledge

Selecting a university to attend is a complex consumer decision, and looking at the brand simplifies the selection process. Thus, universities have increasingly recognized the importance of developing a brand identity for the university. According to Lawlar (1998) brand identity is "the essence of how you would like alumni, prospective students, legislators and the public to perceive your institution". The basic purpose of brand identity is; to make it easier for consumers to identify and remember a particular product and to strengthen the association of a product with one or more attributes of quality (Wolpert, 1999).

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For example, a black T-shirt with a brand name on it is more than just clothing. A person wearing a black T-shirt without any brand name is simply wearing that. But when to T-shirt has a brand name, the wearer gets noticed and perception about him changes. In addition, a T-shirt with the brand name Gucci or Nike on it makes the wearer feel special in same way, even if others may not see it that way (Dvorak, 2010).

Brand identity as a unique set of brand associations implies a promise to customers and includes a core and extended identity which marketers are aiming to create and obtain (Gylline&Lindherg, 2006). Brand identity can be influenced by different identity notions (Balmer & Thompson, 2009) identity represents the firm's reality while image represents the consumer. Aaker states that brand identity "provides direction, purpose and meaning for a brand", which includes personality traits the brand should project (ibid). According to Ghodeswar (2008) the brand image implies a promise to the customer. Ghodeswar further states that a strong brand identity that is well understood and experienced by the customer helps to developing trust which in turn results in differentiating the brand from competition. To be effective a brand identity needs to resonate with customers, differentiate the brand from competitors, and represent what the organization can and will do over time (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

2.1.2 Brand Identity Model

Bjerre et al. (2009) created a model on how to deal with brand identity. This model consists of external and internal elements that a company need to identify to solve the important question: who we are? According to Bjerre et al. (2009) brand identity

consists of four components. The internal components are organizational identity and corporate identity while the external components are image and reputation.

2.1.2.1 Internal Components

Corporate identity can be divided into visual and strategic perspective of the brand and brand identity. The visual perspective focuses on how the company expresses itself visually, and how it should express its inward commitment of the organization through signs and symbols. It focuses on the logo, the name, color, sound, touch and smell. These attributes reflect the brand identity. The strategic perspective focuses on the central idea of organization that is the mission and vision statements. It tries to link the corporate strategy to the brand identity, how the corporate strategy can be expressed and be reflected in the company's image and reputation.

Corporate identity boosts brand identity in two ways; first it implements the strategic direction of an organization (vision and mission statement) and second, it tries to convey the brand identity visually in form of logos and signs (Bjerre et al., 2009). In 2007, for example, after St. Paul's University was chartered and a lot of rebranding was done. The most remarkable was the change of name from St. Paul's United Theological College to St. Paul's University. The name became much shorter and easier to remember. People stopped associating the university much with theological courses but were more open to learn of other degree courses being offered up to date.

Organizational identity refers to the cultural and behavioral aspects of an organization, how the members of an organization identify who they are and what they stand for. It's the employee's capability to deliver what is promised of the brand that will

affect brand image and reputation. The brand comes alive through the interaction between the employees and the customers. Schiffenbauer (2001) maintains that the brand message will lose its credibility if it is not supported by the employees within the organization. As important internal promise deliverers, employees within the organization must align their performance with the external brand promise (Schultz & Schultz 2000) in order to maximize the strength of the brand (Arruda, 2002). Internal branding is essential in the service industry especially in universities. If employees are not able to understand and take ownership in the brand then consumer loyalty is challenged by service quality which is more valuable and difficult to control than product quality (Schultz, 2002).

In an institution where employees are demotivated and unhappy with the employee, productivity is likely to be very low, therefore the services given to the customers will not be at per with the brand. In universities for example, while recruiting students the marketing team works closely with its customers. This been the case, they need to represent the brand as it is, so as to convenience their clients. In St. Paul's University, after a staff is recruited to work in the institution, he or she is expected to conduct him/herself in an ethical manner that represents Christian principles. By conducting themselves this way, they encourage students and other customers to follow by examples and this enhances the university's reputation.

2.1.2.2 External Components

Corporate image is not the image that the company believes it to be, but rather it's the image the audience have in their minds. Corporate image refers to all signals,

informal and formal, that the company sends out to its audience. Therefore, it's necessary for a company to regularly check the corporate image to recognize how the customers and stakeholders perceive the brand identity (Bjerre et al., 2009).

Reputation is different from image. Reputation is how a company has behaved and acted over time and it's therefore more long-term. Corporate reputation is often used externally to measure the customers' evaluation of the brand identity. Enhancing reputation through communication is most effective when it comes from an independent third party. This is why companies invest in public relations (PR) and good relationship with the media (Bjerre et al., 2009).

Brand Identity Model

Internal Elements
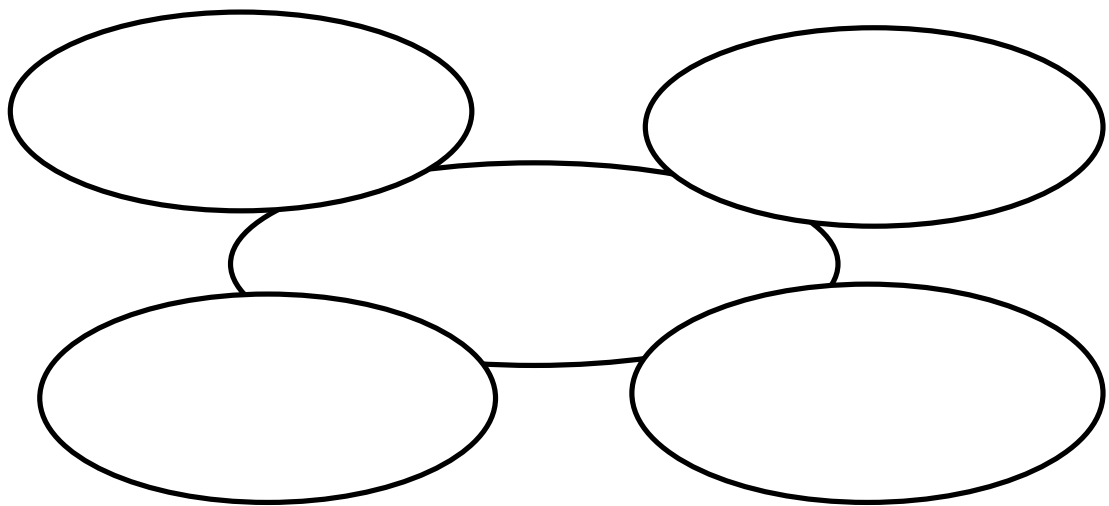
External Elements

Figure 1: Brand Identity Model

Source: (Bjerre, Heding&Knudtzen, 2009)

According to Servier (1994), university students' generally give four reasons for their school choice, which are; image or reputation, location, cost and the availability of a particular major. When asked to choose among the four factors, students invariably choose image. Berger and Wallingford (1996) applied the hierarchy of communication goals, to the field of higher education to investigate the university selection process undertaken by prospective students. They concluded that "reputation" and "academics" were the two most important factors while selecting a school followed by "cost" and "location".

2.2 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is a position of the brand in the memory of a consumer in comparison with its competitors. Brand awareness determines whether a consumer will purchase or not purchase a particular product or service. Being able to make a positive association on the minds of a target group and making the brand to come first to the mind of the consumer during the time of need is the level of awareness which organization or companies wish to achieve. Consumers' brand awareness levels vary between the lowest level of being unknown brand and the highest level of being the first brand that comes to mind within the product or service category. In order to have brand awareness as a strength of a brand existence on the mind of a consumer, brand recognition and remembrance is needed.

A brand which acquires the level of recognition and remembrance will possess the first choice of the consumer purchases and will have a huge competitive advantage among other competitors. Recognition of the brand can be achieved by creating consumer

awareness in the minds of the customers. Brand awareness is the sum of good or bad information about a particular brand that a person owns (ValkenburgueBuijen, 2005). According to Aaker (1991) brand awareness is the customers' ability to identify the brand under different conditions. For marketers to create brand awareness they have to give their product an identity. There are two types of brand awareness; brand recognition and brand recall.

2.2.1 Brand Recognition

Aaker (1991) explains that brand recognition is the customers' ability to verify prior contact to the brand when given the brand as a reminder. Their ability to recognize it as one they have been exposed to before. Customers unconsciously choose brands that they earlier have been in contact with rather than completely new ones. Brand recognition results into positive feelings, for example when choosing between a familiar and unfamiliar brand. This could be because people do not believe that a company would not spend a lot of money on a product that is not of good quality. Consumers take the recognition as a sign that the brand is good (Aaker, 1996). For example St. Paul's University has been branded as a Christian university and those wishing to attend an institution of higher learning and only confine themselves to a Christian one for the morals then this particular institution would be among the listed one for consideration.

2.2.2 Brand Recall

Brand recall is the customer's ability to recall and retrieve the product when the customer thinks of the product category (Keller, 1997). What marketers try to achieve is

that their brand is 'top of mind' or dominant (Aaker, 1996). A brand that is easily recalled has deeper brand awareness than a brand that only can be recognized (Keller, 1997).

According to Keller (1997) it is important that the customer is considering your product when making a purchase where the need can be fulfilled by you brand. Usually customers have a few brands in mind when making a purchase. The customers has different considerations set of brands, and if there is higher level of awareness of a particular brand then there is higher consideration of that brand even though the consumers has no association with that brand. Therefore connecting your brand to a positive association is a way of enhancing brand awareness.

Brand recall and brand recognition can be reached by an organization which is consistently involved in advertising its products and services. Advertising helps a consumer know that a certain product or service exists and they are able to choose one over its competitors. Therefore it's an organizations duty to ensure that when a consumer is choosing a certain brand, its product comes into the mind of the consumer

2.3 Branding and Revenue Generation

If the identity of an institution is not recognized, enrollment of students is likely to be low, this can create a negative or challenging effect on the incoming revenue. In many countries worldwide, universities get revenue from students' tuition fee, thus making them customers of the university. The fee paid in higher education can vary from very high to very low, for example in Kenya, private universities tend to be expensive compared to public universities.

In public universities in Kenya, there are two types of students; students admitted through Joint Admission Board (JAB) and parallel or private students. Even though these students are in the same institution, the fee they pay is totally different. Students that join through JAB are advantaged as their fee is more affordable and they receive government funding through Higher Education Loans Board (HELB). The parallel students and those in private universities know the cost of education as it is very high. School fees as seen among private institutions brings about competition. Since there are many private universities competing for customers, university management boards have come up with ideas on how to survive the competitive markets. This is done through ensuring that school fee is at a standard level with other institutions or either slightly low or high above the standard level. For universities whose fee is slightly high, they have deviated the attention to their stronghold, "what people know them for" – reputation). For example DayStar University is well known for its Bachelor of Arts in Communication and Masters in Communication degree, the fee for these two programs is very high compared to other universities that offer the same degree. As the university does its advertisements, it showcases prominent television and radio anchors and corporate personnel that have studied there. This being the case, then a lot of students enroll into the institution regardless of the fee payments. Therefore we see that the money the institution spends on advertising is returned through increased students enrollment (Author, 2015).

Higher institutions of higher learning generate revenue from different areas which include the following: "students and their families, the federal government, state governments, local government, local government, current donors, past donors (through endowment funds) and consumers from multiple contexts (patents, sporting events and

numerous other activities)" (Cheslock, 2006). In order for higher learning institutions to maintain incoming revenue, it's important to entice the community to attend a particular school. This can be accomplished by the development and sustainability of a strong brand. Incorporating strong brand awareness is a vital aspect in communicating what organization have to offer in a manner that persuades individuals to want to attend and be a part of. Branding essentially drives the sales and services of an organization (Cheslock, 2006).

2.4 Factors that Influence Student's Choice of University

A person's preferred tertiary course represents a complex portion or aggregate of his or her personal field of study interest, the perceived characteristics of the relevant course in the intended university, and also the qualities of that institution (James et al., 1991). Choosing an institution or a course is difficult, made more so by the amount of available information (Briggs, 2006) and the fact that education providers sell services which cannot be tested or sampled before purchase and which students may be committed to for several years, thus has an element of high risk to customers (Moogan et al., 1999).

When purchasing services, alternatives are often evaluated without the benefit of any direct experience of the "product" (Moogan et al., 1999). It's therefore assumed that consumers gather as much information as they can about the product and supplier before purchasing, and this also applies to a prospective education purchaser. When students make poor choices, this adds to the need to attract more students, therefore its rewarding to ensure that there is 'a "quality fit" between students and institution or course' (Briggs,

2006). For students, the greatest motivator to choosing an institution of higher learning is the availability of a particular course of study which a student is interested in or wishes to pursue in readiness for a particular employment outcome. Other factors are institutional and course reputation, ease of access, both physically and in terms of entry scores.

According to Soutar& Turner (2002) a number of attributes attract students to a particular institution such as attractiveness of the campus, recommendation of family, closeness of home, campus atmosphere and academic reputation, students appear to be more prepared to accept almost any level of the other attributes, as long as they enroll in their preferred course. Prospective students learn and research on courses offered by different universities through print and online media. Universities websites and brochures play an important role in informing students. College and university websites are a primary means by which prospective students learn about institutions of higher learning and are essential to these organizations marketing practices (Carnevale, 2005).

The text and messages that appear on university sites provide many prospective students with the first and only institutional impressions. Prospective students use websites to differentiate among the crowded university market place, websites vary from one university to another and they communicate qualities that are distinctive and mission-specific (Anctil, 2008; Hossler, 1999; Poock&Lefond, 2001). As prospective students choose universities or course to pursue, it's important for universities to do market differentiation.

2.4.1 Market Differentiation

Market differentiation is simply standing out in a crowd – making your product stand apart from others in a meaningful way. The goal of market differentiation is not just to look different but to look appealing so that a consumer is more likely to take action on your product instead of others that are equally available. Successful market differentiation requires articulating your product's differentiating qualities or characteristics when compared with those of your competition (Johnson and Salle, 1994; Jugenheimer, 1995; Kotler 1999; Martin, 1989).

Market differentiation requires persuasion. The goal is to persuade the audience that you have a product that is both different and better that your competitor's similarly designed and marketed product. Persuasion is about understanding how people process information as part of their cognitive and how to ensure your message is part of the choice set. Market differentiation works when a message is clearly articulated, carefully and purposefully delivered, and when the points of distinction are made clear to the audience between two similar products. Even though market differentiation is challenging in IHL admissions professionals have the ability to define for prospective students the slight difference between their institution and those with which they are compared with (Johnson & Salle, 1994). They do this by highlighting the class size, housing advantages, social life distinctions or quality of faculty. But then the challenge come when all universities are highlighting the same thing, then they suddenly become similar to prospects. The solution to breaking the similarities is highlighting and advertising the minor differences that do exist but are probably not obvious to the target market audiences.

For example, St. Paul's University (SPU) does offer work study programmes to assist the needy students and scholarships for students pursing programmes likes Masters in Islamic Muslim and Christian Relations. Colleges and universities are not like most companies that make and sell products or services. The challenge for IHLs administrators is to identify how their institutions should be differentiating itself and to communicate those key differences to all members of the campus community. Market differentiation in higher education occurs in three general areas that enable an institution to make tangible the numerous intangible characteristics of an educational experience and provide research for myriad disciplines which are; perceived academic quality, perceived social life and campus amenities and a successful and visible athletic program. The goal of marketing higher education is not to highlight everything good about the institution. It's about making the intangible both tangible and desirable.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework will look into two theories that support branding; the consumer based brand equity (CBBE) theory and Cognitive Psychology theory.

2.5.1 Consumer Based Brand Equity (CBBE) Theory

Brand equity is identified as consumer's perceptions of branded and unbranded products or services, and these varying perceptions of brand can influence the long-term relationship between customers and the brand (Yoo&Donthu, 2001). Powerful brand strategy and marketing leads to consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) which yields a different effect on consumer's perceptions of the brand (Keller, 1993). The CBBE

perspective suggests that consumer's brand knowledge is not just the facts about a brand; brand knowledge includes all of the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, images and experiences about a brand that become linked to the brand in the consumer's mind (Keller, 2009).

CBBE occurs when the consumer has a high level of awareness and familiarity with the brand and holds some strong, favorable and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 2008). Brand building is an on-going process. This process starts when consumers first identify a brand and associate it with a particular need; after exposure to marketing content, the association continues to the point where consumers have an active (product or service-purchasing) relationship with the brand (Keller, 2009). Aaker (1991) proposed five dimensions of brand equity; brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality of brand, brand associations and other proprietary brand assets. Brand loyalty refers to customer's willingness to buy or use local brand as a primary choice (Yoo&Donthu, 2001). Brand awareness addresses how customers recognize and recall are used to measure brand awareness. Perceived quality is defined as the customer's judgment of the quality or superiority of the brand; this construct depends on the consumer's subjective evaluation of product or service quality (Aaker, 1991). Brand associations is anything in a customer's memory that is linked with a brand, brand image is one of the brand associations that help strengthen the relationship between customers and brand (Aaker& Keller, 1990). Other brand assets include logos, trademarks, and channel distribution (Aaker, 1999). These brands assets also have an influence on customer's use or choice of a specific brand.

CBBE theory is a tool that provides users with direction in building a brand. It is built on the premise that the power of a brand is based on what customers experienced, heard and learnt about a brand over time (Keller, N.D). Keller believed that people make a decision to use a brand depending on the reputation associated with that brand or company or organization. If a brand is a popular product or service, CBBE is presented in a positive light.

CBBE is presented in a pyramid model containing four steps which include; creating the identity of the brand, having an understanding about the brand, creating consumer response and creating a strong relationship between the brand and the customer. Keller (1993) explained that customer-based brand equity occurs when the consumer is familiar with the brand and holds some favourable, strong and unique brand associations in memory. According to Keller, the two incentives of customer-based brand equity are financial and marketing productivity.

The financial aspect deals with the value of the brand whereas marketing productivity focuses on the efficiency of the product or company. In regard to this study, the financial aspect focuses on the benefits of branding to the organization (the revenue acquired). When branding is well done, the number of students enrollment increases. This brings back revenue to the institution through the school fees paid by students. With increase in the number of students, the university increases in infrastructure, number of programmes offered, increases of campuses in different region where there is a target market and also in employments of new staff. This brings grown into the institution.

The marketing perspective deals with the issue of competition. By conducting branding, St. Paul's University is able to compete with other public universities. The

prospective students are able to distinguish it from other institutions and therefore making a cognitive decision in choosing the right institution.

2.5.2 Cognitive Psychology Theory

In addition to CBBE theory, Herr (2001) believed cognitive psychology is at core of brand management strategy. Cognitive – psychology theory addresses the areas of human memory, and processes by which information is internalized and used by individuals to make sense of their surrounding (Herr, 2001). This information whether good or bad is stored in their memory in a form that can be retrieved, manipulated and otherwise used and that is organized in meaningful patterns (Herr, 2001). For example, when individuals think about SPU they associate it as being the best in theological courses; if its Kenyatta University, they associate it with good education programmes. There is a clear relationship between the organization and the image that surfaces at the thought of the company. If people are able to link specific attributes to a brand, based on cognitive psychology theory, they are ultimately able to differentiate it from others.

Cognitive psychology theory's relevancy to this study is to identify how best SPU can do its branding in attracting prospective students. If SPU does its branding in a bad way or gets into a crisis which goes into the public domain then the public will change their perspectives from viewing it as a Christian institution and looking at it from the portrayed image. Therefore the way an institution brands determines how best or worst its perceived and the assumptions that people make about it. In contrast to CBBE, cognitive psychology theory addresses the area of human memory along with the methods by which information is stored. The use of these two theories assists the prospective student

to develop brand identity and helps the university know how to do its branding well in order to attract more customers.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the research design of the study. It also discusses the target population to be investigated, the methods of data collection and data analysis that are used in the study.

3.1 Research Design

A research design is a detailed plan or method for obtaining data scientifically. Mugenda (2008) cites that there are three resign designs which are descriptive, correlational or analytical and experimental. The researcher used descriptive case study research design for this study. Yin (1994) defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.

A descriptive case study is ideal for this study because it determines and reports the way things are. It is restricted to fact finding and may result to the formulation of important principles (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003).

3.2 Research Population

According to Mugenda (2008) population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with common attributes or characteristics. Since the researcher cannot study the whole population, he or she needs a target population;

which comprises of all individuals, objects or things that the researcher can reasonably generalize his or her findings to.

This research targeted students who joined St. Paul's University within academic year 2014/2015. Three intakes were put into consideration; September 2014 intake, January 2015 intake and May 2015 intake. A sample was obtained from these three intakes since the whole population could not be used. Also, key informants for example the Public Relations and Marketing Officer was interviewed to get information on St. Paul's University involvement in branding. Another key informant was a consultant in the field of marketing to discuss issues of branding especially in the university sector.

3:3 Sampling and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a finite part of a statistical population where properties are studied to gain information about a whole (Webster, 1985). Sampling therefore, is the method of selecting a sample from the entire population.

The respondents for this study were picked using simple random sampling. St. Paul's University, Nairobi Campus admits 700-800 students per intake in one academic year. One academic year has three intakes. 10% of the minimum range per intake was used thus resulting to 210 respondents. The researcher targeted students in lecturer theatres before classes began or immediately after classes, before the students dispersed. In a class of 20-50 students, the researcher gave numbers to the students for example number 1 to 5 and every 5th person was appointed to fill in the questionnaire. This process wasrepeated in different classes with different levels of study which included certificate, diploma, degree and masters' level. By reaching out to different levels, the

researcher got diverse responses which were good for the study. Therefore, simple random sampling was suitable for this study because the population was well defined and a good representation of the entire population (Mugenda, 2008).

3.4 Data Collection Methods

Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Questionnaires were used to collect data from students enrolled in St. Paul's University for the three intakes. A questionnaire is a set of questions for gathering information from individuals. They can be administered through mail, telephone, use of face to face interviews, as handouts or electronically. Questionnaireswere used in this study because they were more objective and the responses were gathered in a standardized way. They are also quick in administering and collecting data from a large group of people within a short period. For this study, the researcher administered the questionnaires manually through lecture classes with the assist of lecturers teaching the first year students.

Interviews were used while interviewing the Public Relations and Marketing Officer (PRMO) of St Paul's University who is involved directly with branding the university. An interview was also conducted with a Marketing Consultant to get more insight on branding. The researcher also did two Focus Group Discussions with the 1st year students. The FGDs were important for this study because they helped the researcher obtain detailed information from the respondents, know their perceptions and opinions concerning SPU branding.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

According to DeVellis, (1991) reliability is the proportion or variance attributable to the true measurement of a variable and estimates the consistency of such measurement over time. Mugenda (2008) interprets this as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument would yield the same results or data after repeated trials, validity on the other hand estimates how accurately the data obtained in the study represents a given variable or construct in the study. To determine the validity and reliability of this study, a pilot study was conducted before the actual data collection.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data collected through use of questionnaires was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data collected from interviews and Focus Group Discussionswas analyzed through descriptive narrative analysis.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The researcher conducted all stages of the research in an ethical manner. The data collected from the participant was kept private and confidential and was only be used for the purpose of the study. The researcher was also ethical in data collection and presentation and wasnot biased in supporting a specific variable. The researcher also obtained a letter from the University allowing her to collect data.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter encompasses the data analysis and interpretation of the findings in relation to the research objectives. The research objectives were to assess the role of branding in the university sector, to find out what prospective students are interested in when choosing institutions of higher learning and to assess whether branding provides returns for universities.

4.1 General Information

A sample of 210 students was selected for the study. 63% were female while 37% were male. 57.5% of the respondents were predominantly between 18 to 30 years. The education levels varied from certificate to masters but the highest attained level of education was degree level with 66.2%. Unemployed was uncommon with 3.7% while 19.7% of the respondents were self-employed. Table 1 below represents the general information in details.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

DEMOGRAPHICS	FREQUENCY (N=219)	PERCENTAGE
Gender		
Male	81	37.0
Female	138	63.0
Age		
18-30	126	57.5
30-40	85	38.8
40-50	6	2.7
50 years and above	2	.9
Education level		
Certificate	13	5.9
Diploma	52	23.7
Degree	145	66.2
Masters	9	4.1
Social status		
Unemployed	67	30.7
Employed	77	35.3
Self employed	43	19.7
Others	31	14.2

4.2 The Role of Branding in the University Sector

81 % of the respondents indicated that universities use branding to attract prospective students. The results are shown in the figure below:

Does branding attract students?
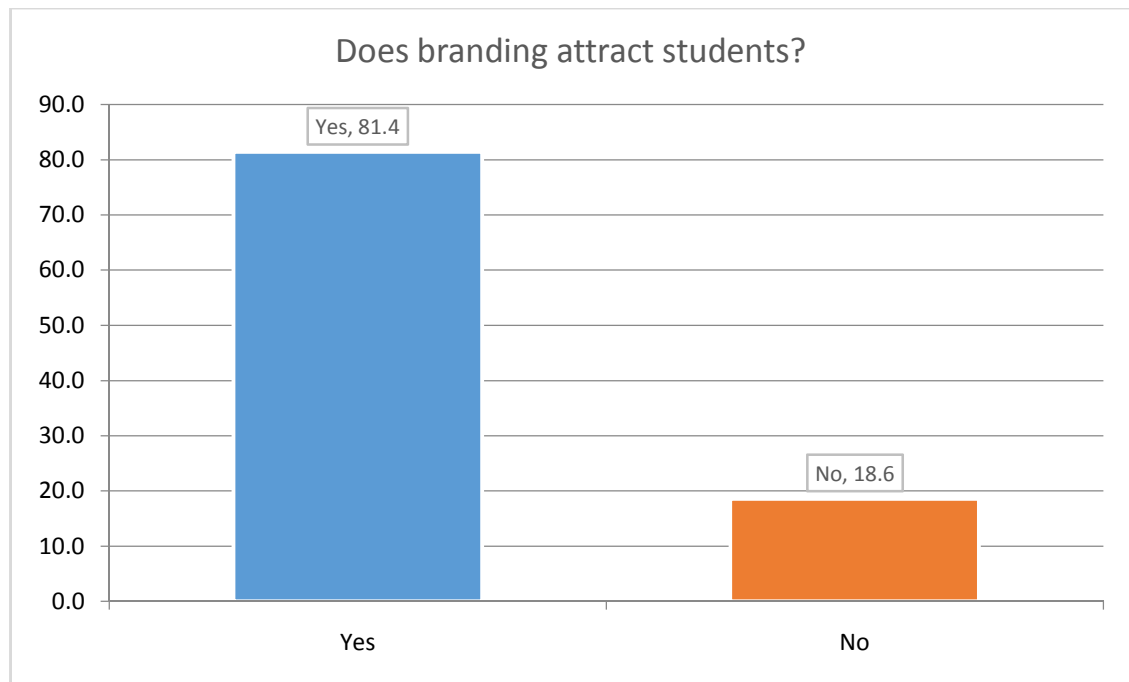
Figure 2: Does branding attract students

The Public Relations and Marketing Officer said that SPU branding is significant in its corporate colours which are cream and maroon. The use of these colours is seen in the university painting of its building in all campuses, used in billboards and banners, marketing tents and university vehicles. The colors are also used in promotional materials like mugs, t-shirts, umbrellas, pens, wall clocks, flash disks, brochures, business cards, notebooks and diaries.

The promotional materials are produced annually in August when the university starts a new academic year. T-shirts, brochures, pens, flash disks and business cards are given to prospective students while mugs, umbrellas, wall clocks, note books and diaries are given to both continuing students and university staff. The promotional materials are also sold. For example a total of two thousand magazines are produced annually and each copy is sold at Kshs. 200.

From the marketing consultant, brand management is a central factor in economic success and offers several advantages for companies, universities included. Companies therefore, have to connect the brand with the company's overall strategy and organization. This is also true for institutions of higher learning. This is supported by Moore (2004) who states that across the globe, the Harvard brand has long communicated pre-eminence in higher education. "…the brand has a staying power and impact that are inarguable" (Moore, p.58). Harvard has penetrated its brand for people across the world to recognize its academic excellence in higher education. Chapleo (2006) further explained, that Harvard Business School is "an example of a strong brand in education, however, arguing that it is strong because customers know exactly what it stands for and has a clear position in consumer's minds" (p.26). A branded institution can decrease the time a prospective student may spend in researching the school they want to attend.

The role of branding in the university sector is of importance as Herr (2001) explained, "in today's higher education landscape, college and university leaders may well consider principles of brand management to assure their positions vis-à-vis their competitors" (p.23). This is also evident through the widespread use of trademarks to market and promote an institution to the public. Moore (2004) stated "differentiating an

institution depends on recognizing the core attributes of the category in which you operate, plus what makes you different from others in the category" (p.59) and, "differentiation is the key to an institution's carving out its own niche in the marketplace" (p.60).

For a college or university, the name and all the symbolism attached to it, either through longevity, reputation, quality, or some other factor, represents its brand. Branding "makes the consumer's choice process more effective" and this alone could be argued to offer a rationale for brandings' applicability to higher education. This is supported by (Doyle, 1989, as cited in Gathungu&Karoki, 2010, p.7) who states that "…ideally consumers choose to have a relationship with a brand if they trust it will deliver specific promises".

4.2: What interests' prospective students when choosing institutions of higher learning

Television and radio emerged as the most common avenue through which prospective students get to know about St. Paul's University. Marketing activities stood as the least used avenue in reaching out to prospective students with 21.1%. The chart below presents the sources of information and their strength.
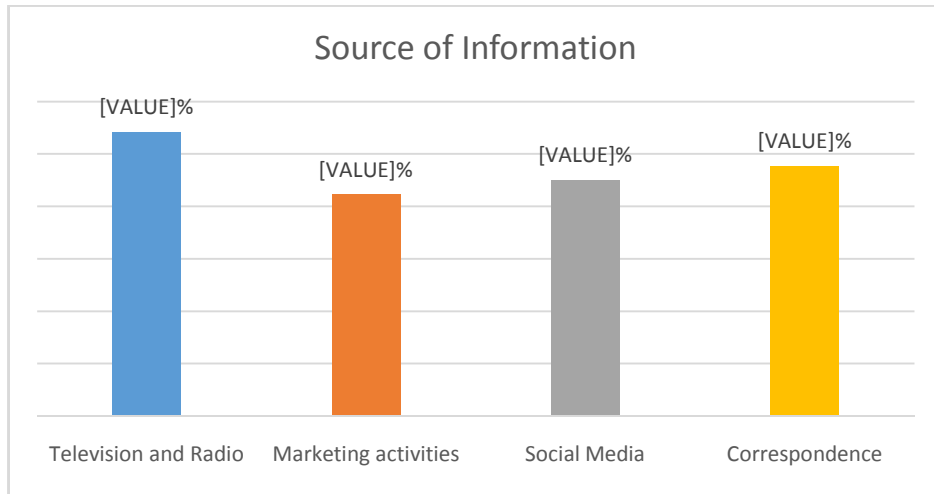
Figure 3: Sources of Information about SPU

In a study done by the Public Relation and Marketing department in January 2015 after the intake on how prospective students learnt about St. Paul's University. The department found out that correspondents and media played a major role with a percentage of 37.87% and 38.67 % respectively. Self-identification and the social media followed suit.

Table 2: How prospective students learnt about St. Paul's University

SOURCE	NO. OF PEOPLE	PERCENTAGE %
Correspondence	1140	37.87
Media	1164	38.67
Billboards and signpost	64	2.13
Church	80	2.65
Internet – Social Media	225	7.48
Affiliate Colleges	24	0.80
Marketing Tents	56	1.86
Self-identification	257	8.54
	3010	100%

The results of this study agree with a research done by the PRMO's office which also showed that the media is highest source of information prospective students use to know about SPU. In an academic year the SPU PR and Marketing Department is allocated a budget of Kshs 23 million. Out of this Kshs 12 million is spent for advertising on radio, television and newspapers. The remaining 11 million is distributed in the following areas: promotional materials for example producing the annual magazine,

diaries and booklets, brochures, mugs, umbrellas, calendars, and t-shirts; direct marketing; producing and putting up billboards.

Even though the PR and Marketing department placed advertising as their best medium of communication, the Focus Group Discussion respondents insisted that even though the advertising was done it lacked consistency. They could not remember when they last saw an advert on television or heard anything on radio as compared to other private universities advertising. The respondents informed the researcher that people still associated SPU with theological courses only; therefore the PRMO's office should target advertising particular courses in different intakes. On the same, the FGD insisted that SPU in not well involved in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and sponsorships which are good avenues for marketing the university. CSR is important because it promotes goodwill with the surrounding community.
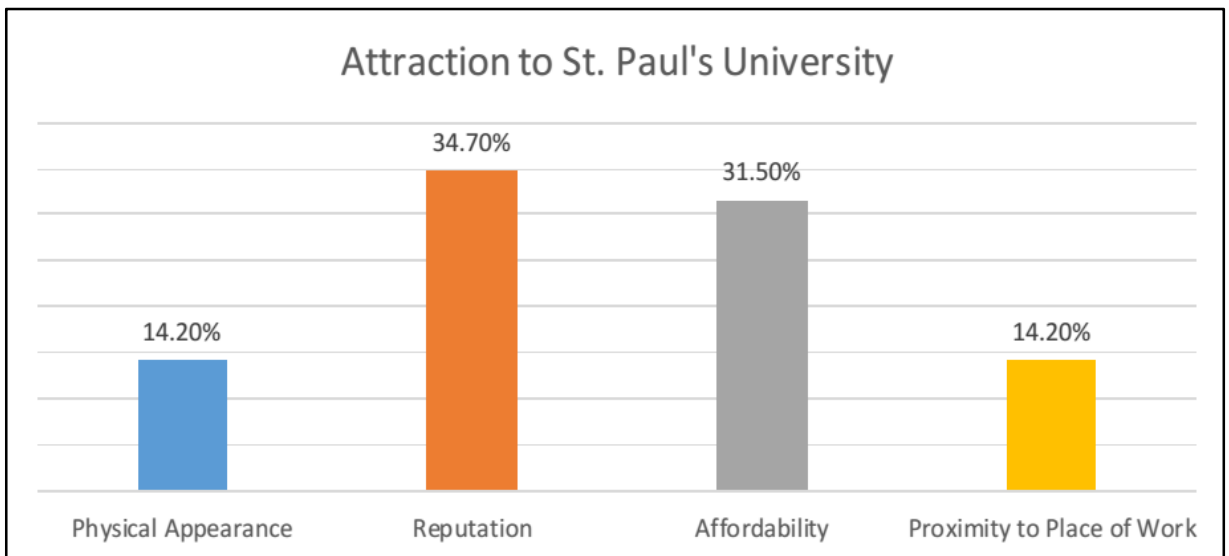
Figure 4: Attraction to St. Paul's University

Further, reputation (34.7%) and affordability (31.5%) stood as the two most common reasons that attracted respondents to St. Paul's University. The findings of this study confirm with Berger and Wallingford 1996 study to investigate the university selection process undertaken by prospective students. Their study concluded the reputation and academics were the two most important factors that prospective students considered when selecting a school.

The unique attributes an institution presents to the outside community can ultimately have an influence on how one feels about the institution. Students may not remember everything they learned at an institution, but they will remember the atmosphere and impression the school had on them. This is supported by Wagner (2004) who expressed that, many educators have come to the realization of the importance of having and maintaining a good school culture to avoid limiting a school's innovation (p.11). This is a clear indication that institutions should look at their school identity as a priority and be conscious of how persona/identity/character may affect the community involved with the institution.

4.3 Description of Roles and Use of Branding

Among the respondents, there was a general satisfaction by the level of involvement of branding within the University as most of them (30%) reported the level of involvement as satisfactory. Furthermore, 39% agreed to the supposition that branding has made the University competitive while 13% strongly agreed that it made St. Paul's University be at a competitive level with other universities. The responses that depicted acceptance to the position that branding can make or break a university also showed that

most of the respondents (28.9%) agreed that branding bears that role. The table below

presents the details regarding the roles and uses of branding in detail. Inferential analysis

using chi-square tests further revealed that education level of the respondents correlates

with the perception that branding can make or break a university. The two variables

correlated at the Pearson correlation level of 0.05 ($P = 0.003$). More degree holders

(73%) perceived branding as a method that can lead to the making or breaking of a

university than those who had certificate, diploma, or certificate level of education. The

comparison is provided in the chart below.

Table 3: Roles of Branding

Level of Involvement	
Extremely Dissatisfied	8.7
Dissatisfied	18.7
Neutral	26.0
Satisfied	30.6
Extremely Satisfied	16.0

Branding has Made St. Paul's Competitive	
Strongly Disagree	7.3
Disagree	22.0
Neutral	18.3
Agree	39.0
Strongly Agree	13.3

Branding Can Make or Break a University	
Strongly Disagree	8.7
Disagree	21.6
Neutral	19.7
Agree	28.9
Strongly Agree	21.1
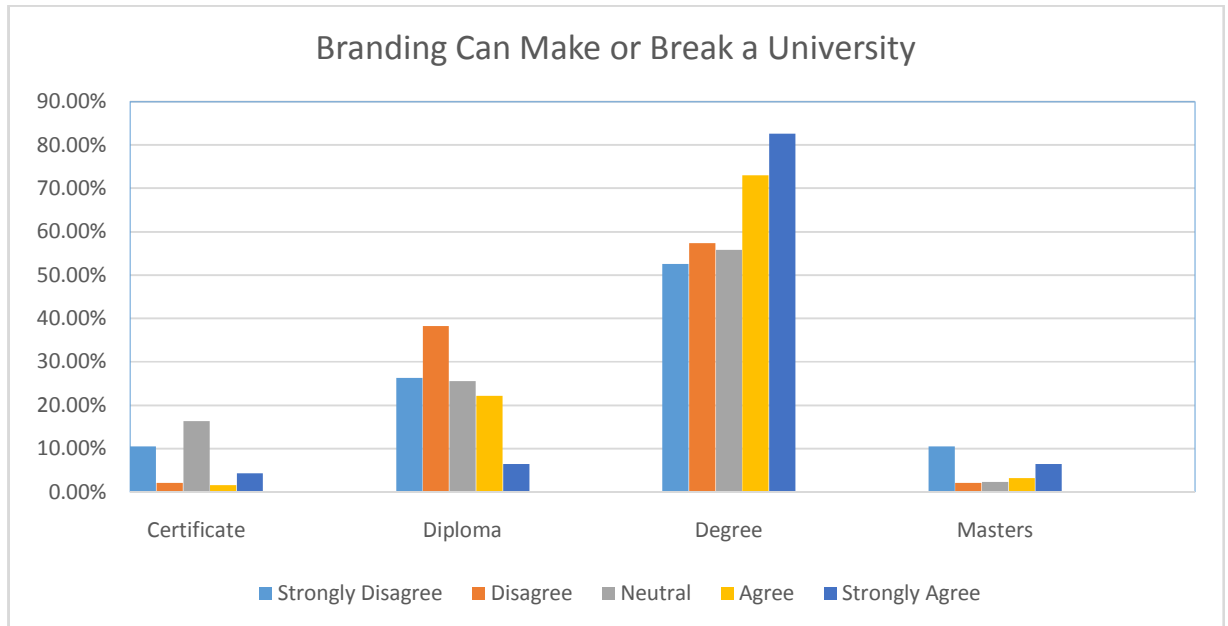
Figure 5: *Perceptions of Branding as a Tool That Can Make or Break a University per Education Level*

4.5 Branding and Financial Returns

The study also involved an assessment of the returns a university gets from branding. On the variable regarding whether branding leads to an increase of students, the findings show that there were more (Agree – 33%, Strongly Agree – 47%) respondents who agreed that branding led to an increase in number of students as opposed to those who didn't (Strongly disagree – 5.9%, Disagree – 6.4%). Although it generates a small margin of income, there were more respondents who indicated that branding assists in generating revenue (Agree 27.5%, Strongly Agree 15.6%) than those who felt that branding did not lead to the generation of revenue (Disagree – 15.6%, Strongly Disagree 16.5%). Table 3 below presents the results in full.

Table 4: Branding and Revenue Generation

Increases Students

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	13	5.9
Disagree	14	6.4
Neutral	16	7.3
Agree	73	33.3
Strongly Agree	103	47.0

Helps Generate Revenue

	Number	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	36	16.5
Disagree	34	15.6
Neutral	54	24.8
Agree	60	27.5
Strongly Agree	34	15.6
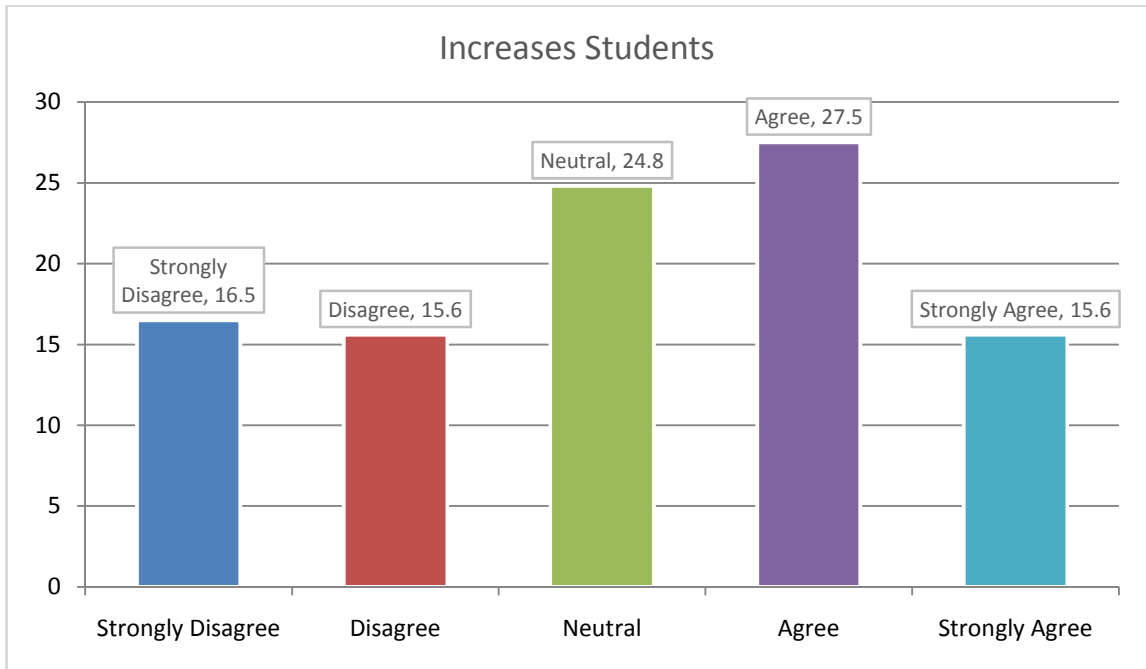
Figure 6: Branding increases Students
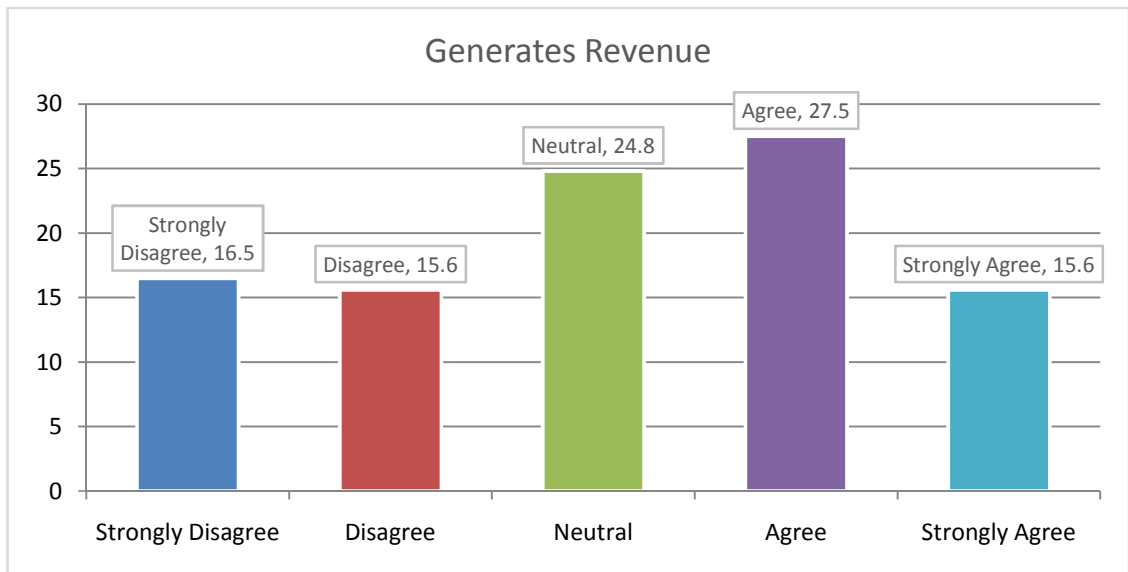
Figure 7: Branding Generates Revenue

SPU generates revenue from branding through the enrollment of students into the institution. The revenue also helps the institution to improve on its infrastructure. From the PRMO, the marketing department is tasked to ensure that they admit 3000 and above students for each academic year, inorder for the university to run on a surplus budget. The university is able to get money through sale of promotional/branded material such as mugs, T-shirts, umbrellas and through the sale of the University Voice Magazine which is produced annually. For example in the academic year 2014/2015, the university produced 2000 copies of the Voice Magazine and each was sold at Kshs 200. The advertisers who have their adverts in our magazine bring in an amount of Kshs500,000. Of which Kshs400,000 is spent in production of the magazine. Therefore, the university gets an income of Kshs500,000 through the sale of magazines.

From the marketing consultant, personnel and the development of higher education institutions' strategic plans are accountable for the overall success of an institution, including the development of successful marketing strategies in order for the school to be recognized by potential students and the community. In the Gallup Management Journal, Lockwood and Hadd (2008) depicted the importance of students feeling a sense of belonging to the known community, which has an effect on a student's preference on whether to continue being associated with the institution. For instance, students who feel as if they are part of the institution they are attending might be further inclined to remain and graduate from the school and become more involved with school activities.

Once students graduate, they may continue to be involved and become donors as alumni. A student feeling they belong at an institution is the center point of the interactions and the relationships they build and pass on to the greater community. Consequently, students play a significant role in conveying an institutions brand promise. If the identity of an institution is not recognized, the probability of a limited enrollment is more likely, and can have a negative or challenging effect on the incoming revenue for the university. Institutions of higher learning generate revenue from a number of areas, including the following: "students and their families, the county government, central governments, local governments, current donors, past donors (through endowment funds), and consumers from multiple contexts (patents, sporting events, and numerous other activities).

According to Cheslock (2006, p.31), branding essentially drives the sales and services of an organization. It is important for institutions of higher learning to emphasize their matchless elements to the greater community. Branding essentially holds corporations and institutions, such as universities accountable for the worth of the product or service they offer. Branding is the intangible feature an organization or institution upholds and delivers. This is supported by Moogan (2010, p.574–575) who postulated that, "marketers should make sure that they provide accurate information in the first instance and that student expectations are not inflated as a consequence. Providing relevant information sources so that students can make the best possible decision for them is crucial".

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study findings as guided by the research objectives. The objectives of the study were to investigate the role of branding in the university sector, to find out what prospective students are interested in when choosing and institution of higher learning and to assess whether branding provides returns for universities.

5.2 Summary

The introduction chapter for this study provided a background of the study and formulated the research objectives and the research problem. The second chapter literature review gave a discussion of the study in relations to the variables and the theoretical framework. The methodology in chapter three outlined the research design and the sample population to be investigated. It also provided data collection and analysis technique. The fourth chapter presented the outcome of the data analysis and interpretation in relation to the research objective. The five chapter presented the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

The first objective of the study was to investigate the role of branding in the university sector in Kenya. The study established that branding is used by universities to attract prospective students. The second objective was to find out what customers

(prospective students) are interested in when choosing an institution of higher learning. The study established that customers are interested in reputation and affordability of the university as compared to image and proximity to place of work. The third objective was to assess whether branding provides returns for universities. The study established that universities are able to get financial returns through enrollment and sale of promotional materials.

5.3 Conclusion

In conclusion, the purpose of this research was to show the relationship between university branding and attraction of prospective students to these institutions. The first objective of the study was to investigate the role of branding in the university sector in Kenya. The study concluded that branding is a public relations technique that organizations use to differentiate themselves from the competition and universities have not been left behind. To avoid being displaced by similar institutions, universities enhance their branding by consistently reminding prospective students of what they have that their competition lacks. In Kenya this is significant through the television adverts we see with universities. The universities emphasize on their achievements, unique courses, duration to complete courses and their facilities for example libraries with well furnishes books, laboratories for scientific or medical courses. All this is done with the aim of attracting a prospective student who is looking for a university to enroll in.

The second objective was to find out what customers (prospective students) are interested in when choosing an institution of higher learning The study concluded that customers do not entirely depend on branding to enroll in a university rather they put into

consideration important factors like reputation and affordability of the university they choose. Berger and Wallington (1996) investigation of university selection process undertaken by prospective student concluded that reputation and academics were the most important factors, followed by cost and location when selecting a school. From this study reputation and affordability were very important, while image and location were less put into consideration by prospective students when choosing an institution of higher learning.

The third objective was to assess whether branding provides returns for universities. The study concluded that universities get returns from branding directly and indirectly. Since branding is meant to attract prospective students, universities have to invest in the kind of image that creates remembrance in the customers mind. This means that resources have to be spent doing good adverts and producing promotional materials. Through this, universities get returns through students enrollment, this then leads to improvement of infrastructure and thus grown of the universities. Also through the sale of the promotional materials universities are able to get more finances that are further used in the university.

5.3 Recommendations of the study

This study recommends that universities should do market segmentation and know the needs of their clients before embarking on branding strategies. By knowing the needs of their prospective students, they are able to give what is needed which then leads to enrollment of students thus resulting to financial returns. Universities current marketing strategies are generally strong on rhetoric and week on tangible details

(Baldwin & James 2000). This is a danger because students get overwhelmed by information; rather a framework of issues should be used by students before they make a choice. According to Baldwin and James (Ibid), prospective students' knowledge of academic reputations are largely based on very flimsy hearsay evidence. Therefore there is a need for much stronger market differentiation between institutions of higher learning.

5.4 Areas of Further Research

This section explores opportunities for future research. From the study, we find out that public and older universities depend on their reputation to attract prospective students. It is thus necessary for newer and private institutions to focus on other areas of influence like market differentiation and relationship marketing. Studies could be conducted to assess how market differentiation and relationship marketing can be used by universities to attract prospective students.

Another area of future research would be on the use of the web as a marketing tool for universities. Websites can be used to gather information on both students and prospective students and help to recruit students from all corners of the globe, but universities are currently failing to use them effectively to meet consumer requests and respond to consumer complaints (Klassen, 2002). Universities should aim to make their websites welcoming and interesting to encourage prospective students to look further and apply for enrolment. The websites should be able to allow students to complete an online application and check on its progress online. This area is not well ventured by universities in Kenya. According to Briggs 2006, the website is the most influential source of information for applicants followed by campus visits.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview guide for the Public Relations Officer of St. Paul's University

1.   How many intakes do you have in a year?

2.   What is the general university intake per semester?

3.   Being the University's Public Relations Officer, how does St. Paul's University conduct its branding?

4.   What kind of branding activities has the University been involved in?

5.   In comparison with other private universities, has branding placed SPU in a competitive position?

6.   Is there any one major branding activity that St. Paul's University has even gone through? Did it have any effect?

7.   Has branding brought about increase of customers in your institution?

8.   How does St. Paul's University generate income from branding?

Appendix II: Interview Guide for the Marketing consultant

1.   What is the role of branding in the university sector?

2.   Does branding attract prospective students to universities?

3.   What factors do prospective students consider while choosing a university?

4.   What kind of returns do universities get through branding?

5.   Rather than branding which other ways can universities use to attract customers?

Appendix III: Interview Guide forthe Focus Group Discussion

1.   How did you know about St. Paul's University?

2.   What attracted you to the university and would you recommend it to a prospective

         student?

3.   Which of the following branding aspect is well utilized by SPU in attracting

         prospective students; advertising, use of social media, direct marketing, good

         public relations and customer service?

4.   In comparison to other universities, which areas as mentioned in (Q3) above

         should St. Paul's University improve on?

Appendix IV: Questionnaire

The Role of Branding In Attracting Prospective Students to Institution Of Higher Learning. A Case Study of St. Paul's Univesity.

My name is Patricia Gakinya. I am a student at the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a research on the role of branding in attracting prospective students to institutions of higher learning with special interest in St. Paul's University, for the award of Masters of Arts in Communication. I need your assistance to enable me complete this study by filling in this questionnaire.

The role of this questionnaire is to gather information on the above mentioned topic of study. The information collected shall not be used for any other purpose rather than compiling my project. Your feedback will be most useful for successful completion of my study.

SECTION I: GENERAL INFORMATION

☑

 Instructions: Please put a tick (   ) in the box indicating your response

1.   Identify your sex.

☐ Male   ☐ Female

2.   Identify your age.

☐ 18 – 30 years

☐ 30 – 40 years

☐ 40 – 50 years

☐ 50 years and above

3. What is your education level?

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma

☐ Degree

☐ Masters

4. Currently what is your social status?

☐ Unemployed

☐ Employed

☐ Self-employed

☐ Others

SECTION A: KNOWLEDGE ON ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

1. How did you get to know about St. Paul's University?

☐ Television & Radio adverts

☐ Marketing activities

☐ Social Media

☐ Correspondence

2. What attracted you to St. Paul's University?

☐ Physical Appearance

☐ Reputation/ Image

☐ Affordability

☐ Proximity to place of work

3.   Do you think St. Paul's University uses branding to attract customers?

☐ Yes   ☐ No

SECTION B: ROLE OF BRANDING IN THE UNIVERSITY SECTOR

Instructions: Please circle the number that best describes the following;

4.   How is St. Paul's University involvement in branding like?

1 = Extremely dissatisfied

2 = Dissatisfied

3 = Neutral

4 = Satisfied

5 = Extremely satisfied

5.   Branding has put St. Paul's University in the same competitive level with other private universities in Kenya.

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

6.   Branding or lack of branding can make or break a university after a crisis?

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

SECTION C: BRANDING GENERATE INCOME

7. University involvements in branding may lead to increase in the number of

students?

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

8. Branding helps universities generate revenue?

1 = Strongly disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly agree

Appendix IV: Certificate of Field Work

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COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM & MASS COMMUNICATION

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Nairobi, GPO
Kenya

REF: CERTIFICATE OF FIELD WORK

This is to certify that all corrections proposed at the Board of Examiners' meeting held on _10th April 2015_ in respect of M.A./Ph.D final Project/Thesis defence have been effected to my/our satisfaction and the student can be allowed to proceed for field work.

Reg. No: _K50/79459/2012_

Name: _GAKINYA PATRICIA GIAKINYA_

Title: _THE ROLE OF BRANDING IN ATTRACTING PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS_

TO INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING. A CASE STUDY OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY.

DR. JOY MUENI
SUPERVISOR   SIGNATURE   8/10/2015
                                                  DATE

Dr Samuel Siringi
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Dr. Ndeti Ndati
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