

**INFLUENCE OF COMPETITIVE STRATEGIES ON PERFORMANCE OF
RUSINGA SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any university.

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This research project has been submitted with my approval as the University Supervisor.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my loving parents, Michael Njoroge and Grace Mumbi, who have been a source of inspiration and sacrificed resources for this cause. I also dedicate this to my brothers Stephen Ng'ang'a and Ian Mwangi, my friends Sheillah Lupao and Clive Lupao for the immense support throughout. Finally, to Albert Gakuru whose encouragement has made sure that I give it all it takes to finish that which I have started. My love for you all can never be quantified. God bless you.

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ABBREVIATIONS

BNC	-British National Curriculum
CIEB	-Cambridge International Examinations Board
KBV	- Knowledge Based View Theory
RBV	-Resource Based View Theory

ABSTRACT

Private international schools in Kenya implement competitive strategies in an effort to achieve the performance objective. Rusinga Schools, which is an example of private international schools, has executed strategic alliances, innovation strategies, focus and differentiation strategies amongst other strategies to achieve high performance. The surge in demand is coupled with the growth of Kenya in the past five years. Despite the adoption of competitive strategies in Rusinga Schools, there is no empirical evidence on the extent to which competitive strategies influences its performance. The study deployed a case study research design. The choice of case study is appropriate as it enabled the study to collect data that required an in-depth analysis and understanding of the effect of competitive strategies on the performance of the school. The study used primary and secondary data collected using an interview schedule. Content analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The study found that the school had adopted cost leadership, differentiation, market focus and collaboration strategies to a large extent. The study revealed that it adopted competitive strategies to improve on performance. From the results, the study concluded that the lower school fees compared to competitors increases the number of students, the revenue and improves on efficiency in provision of education, promotion of quality services in teaching and the improvement as well as the development of the schools. Differentiation strategies were deployed through offering unique courses to different learners in different level of education systems, as well as offering different extra-curriculum activities. Learning focused on social and personal development which resulted into increased number of learners. Results also led to conclusion that market focus strategies such as targeting the Christian segment as well as the international community by offering international studies contributed to better performance as the schools. This led to an increase in its market share, number of learners' enrollment and an increase in the school's revenue. The study also concluded that Rusinga Schools adopted collaborative strategies to enhance discipline amongst students, increase satisfaction of the stakeholders and the school's academic performance. This makes the school experience competitive advantage over the other schools in the market. The study recommends that private international schools should deploy competitive strategies to improve on schools' performance.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Superior performance is achieved in a competitive industry through the pursuit of competitive strategies which includes cost leadership, differentiation, collaborative strategy and focus approach to industry competition. In absence competitive strategies organizations fails to achieve set performance target (Porter, 1980). Organizations that deploy and execute competitive strategies tend to achieve higher performance compared to others that do not. Competitive strategies can foster achievement of high organizational performance, customer satisfaction and increased achievement of competitive advantage in a competitive market (Grant, 2005).

The study is anchored in resource base view model and institutional theory. In the resource based view theory, the institution identifies and assesses its resources, capacity and capabilities that could be utilized to achieve competitive advantage in the future. Utilization of firm resources to achieve competitive advantage and attain better performance is supported by Resourced Based View (RBV). According to Bharadwaj (2008) RBV suggest that a firm achieves competitive advantage through management of internal resources. Schools are not autonomous agents seeking to maximize economic opportunities but are set within a social network of norms and expectations that limit and shape managerial choice and deployment of strategies. These social rules or logics provide overarching frameworks for interpreting social situations and prescribe

appropriate collective purposes and behaviors. The view of Ogolla, Bolo and Muchemi (2011) acknowledged that performance of the firm is achieved through successful execution of competitive strategies.

Private schools deploy competitive strategies to remain competitive in the education market. The private schools owners have continuously executed and formulated competitive strategies, such as innovative strategies, cost leadership strategies, differentiated teaching approach and strategic alliances in efforts to achieve expected schools performance level. The empirical study on the extent to which competitive strategies influence performance of private schools such as Rusinga Schools in Nairobi in Kenya cannot be ignored. This motivates the carrying out of the current study focusing on examining the extent to which competitive strategies influence performance in Rusinga Schools in Nairobi.

1.1.1 Competitive Strategies

The competitive strategies outlined by (Porter, 1980) include; cost leadership, differentiation, location strategy and customer service and communication strategies. In a domestic industry, organization faces environmental challenges and sorts to implement competitive strategies in an effort to achieve competitive advantage in the market (Barney, 2011). This is done by basically utilizing adequate and superior resources and capabilities. This view is supported by Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2007) that competitive strategies such as cost leadership, differentiation and focus give the learning institutions competitive advantage in the current educational environment. Private schools and especially international schools, implement competitive strategies such as

cost leadership strategy, emphasizing on lowering cost of operation, focus strategy as it focus on offering specific learning products and differentiation strategies where the schools focus on offering distinct curriculum and unique education approaches (Pulaj, Kume, & Cipi, 2015).

1.1.2 Organizational Performance

Organizational performance is defined as outcomes achieved after measuring it against set goals or objectives and application of resources (O'Regan & Ghobadian, 2004). Organizational performance is also defined as a set of output indicators which offer information on the extent of accomplishment of set objectives and expected outcome (Lebans & Euske, 2006). The concept of organizational performance form a foundation in which learning institutions is voluntary correlated to asset applied that could include human resources and financial resources focusing on attaining shared results (Robinson, 2007). In education sector, institutional performance is defined in respect to effectiveness that denotes or focuses on comparison between resources employed, that is, the outputs, general and specific goals or criteria. Institutional performance is also defined in respect to efficiency that correlate or link learning institution output with input employed.

1.1.3 Overview of Rusinga Schools in Nairobi

Rusinga Schools is an international school, implying that it offers a curriculum that is different from Kenyan Public schools. International schools offer education systems such as the BNC. In Kenya there are about 35 international schools in Kenya such like Braeburn School, Brookhouse School, St. Andrews Turi and International School of Kenya e.t.c. These are common as they all offer the British Curriculum while there are others that offer the American Curriculum such as Roselyn School and West Nairobi School.

Rusinga Schools was started in 1975 by Dr Jacob Mwangi. It is Christian day school offering the British National Curriculum. It has a strong commitment to academic excellence, a high level of discipline and Christian values. Children are accepted from the age of two and are able to progress through their Kindergarten, Preparatory and Senior schools.

The school adopted British National Curriculum where up to year 9, students study the set national curriculum subjects, but some are adapted to suit the Kenyan situation. The school has strong commitment to academic excellence, a high level of discipline and Christian values. Emphasis is laid up on the following key skills: the vision, mission, interest and commitment of founder members. The school provides high quality education based on a strong Christian background.

After establishing Rusinga Kindergarten, stakeholders and parents found it important to continue providing their children with Primary education based on Christian values. After year ten and eleven, a two year IGCSE course is administered by the University of

Cambridge through Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIE). Successful students go on to study for GCE A Level, an excellent qualification for entry in to universities worldwide.

The Ministry of Education focuses on ensuring equitable access, attendance, retention, attainment and achievement in education, science, research and technology by ensuring affordability of services. It also aims at mobilizing resources for sustainable and efficient delivery of relevant educational, research, technological and other educational services. Private sector involvement in education has been justified on the grounds that public provision of education is inadequate compared to demand.

1.2 Research Problem

Competitive strategies aim at achieving high performance and sustainable position for a firm against the forces that determine industry competition. In Kenya, private learning institutions implement competitive strategies in an effort to achieve a high performance level and contribute to the growth of education sector (Kilavuka 2007). Different private schools in Nairobi may use different competitive strategies or may use the same strategies by comparing the market share and performance of private schools. Currently, there is a growing interest in the private schools and new players are coming in after a long period of dominance with a focus on improving academic performance and increasing student population in schools (Economic Review, February 2010). Private schools such as Rusinga Schools execute strategic alliances, innovation strategies, focus and differentiation strategies among other strategies in efforts to achieve high

performance. The surge in demand is coupled with economic growth of Kenya in the past five years.

Empirical studies done focused on the competitive strategies adopted by banks and other institutions. Internationally, Hin, Kadir and Bohari(2014) found that institutions in Malaysia, gain competitive advantage and improve on performance due to deployment of focus and differentiation strategies. Further, Hua (2011) asserted that differentiation strategies adopted in organization contributed to achieving high output from set performance target.

Locally, Chebet (2011) examined competitive strategies adopted by Private secondary schools in Mombasa County. Mutua, (2007) studied factors affecting competitive strategies, a case of Safaricom, Chege (2008) studied Competitive strategies adopted by Equity Bank Limited. Kitoto (2004) studied Competitive strategies employed by public Universities in Kenya and Omondi (2006) Studied competitive strategies by Airlines in Kenya. These other studies cannot be generalized for the private school sectors. The study established that private schools in Mombasa County in Kenya moderately implement cost leadership and differentiation strategy with significant variations in their adoption while cost leadership was significantly adopted to achieve competitive advantage. Despite Rusinga Schools's dominance in the market and implementing competitive strategies, there is no empirical evidence on the extent to which competitive strategies influence performance. This study therefore seeks to fill in the existing knowledge gap by answering the questions: What competitive strategies are adopted by Rusinga Schools in Nairobi and how do they influence the performance of the schools?

1.3 Objectives of the research study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To determine competitive strategies adopted by Rusinga Schools
- ii. To determine the influence of the competitive strategies have on the performance of Rusinga schools in Nairobi

1.4 Value of the Study

This study is intended to help Rusinga Schools gain understanding on how competitive strategies influence performance. The management from private schools will gain insight on the effect of competitive strategies on school performance and seek measures to develop and deploy competitive strategies to achieve high performance. The research will enlighten the stakeholders on the influence of competitive strategies on improving school's performance and offering of quality education and creating in them awareness and the interest of ensuring stability of their respective institutions.

The government may find the information useful by identifying the influence of competitive strategies within the private sector and come up with measures to foster implementation of strategies to improve of the schools' performance. An insight to policy makers and government institutions in formulating policies and measures that will be provided to foster execution of competitive strategies in improving school performance in private sector and in enhancing provision of quality education to make private learning institutions self-sustaining.

The researchers and academicians will gain from the results of the study. The scholars will gain awareness and knowledge on effect of competitive strategies on performance of internal private schools. The study will add onto the existing theory and practices, the researchers will gain as they will find the study useful as a foundation to further carry out more research on competitive strategies and performance in education sector.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of literature on competitive strategies in private Schools, it comprises of Theoretical and Empirical review, critique and research gaps.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation

Various theories have explained the link between competitive strategy and performance. This information is important to quantify the need for performance, design innovative private education and screen programs that are targeted towards being competitive within the industry (Kotler, 2008). The study was anchored on Institutional theory and Resource Based View model.

2.2.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory was developed by Oliver (1996). The theory posits heterogeneity and differentiation in organizations. Through institutional embeddedness and interconnection, the creation of competitive advantages can be explained because institutional embeddedness has an impact on organizational behavior, causing it to seek an economic and social fit (Ilovi,2011). According to the theory, differentiation supports and sustains competitive advantage. Conformity to institutional pressures provides legitimacy, resources, and competitive advantage in markets with strong institutional and competitive pressures. Both the differentiation and conformity propositions should be important as the theory is applicable to the current study as the institution and competitive pressures that

exert strong effect. The strategic decisions of managers results both in conformity to institutional pressures, which leads to isomorphism and legitimacy and in differentiation, which increases achievement of competitive advantage through heterogeneity in resources and capabilities.

2.2.2 Resource-Based approach

The Resource Based View (RBV) has its foundations in Edith Penrose's work in the late 1950s, the RBV demonstrated to a great extent acquainted with the field of key strategic approach in the 1980s (Worthington & Edwards, 2000). The RBV of the firm, an association's performance is influenced by a firm-particular assets and abilities (Barney, 2001). This suggests that in RBV, assets are distributed heterogeneously inside an industry (Phillips & Peterson, 2011). The significance of assets shifts as per the industry, time, and space and may likewise, rely upon the outside industry conditions. In numerous ventures, customary markets and progressive associations are incompletely being ousted by systems of authoritative connections (Kim & Mauborgne, 2004).

This view is supported by Collis (2001) who acknowledged that resource based model involves assessment of strategies, selection and upgrading by appraisal of firm capabilities. The chief focus of the resource-based framework is deployment of competitive strategies is relationships with resources, capabilities, competitive advantage and the firm's performance.

2.3 Competitive Strategies adopted in Private Schools

Competitive strategies are critical components since they entail matters decisions and actions meant to ensure objectives, goals and purposes of the organization are met. This section will review competitive strategies adopted in schools.

2.3.1 Cost leadership Strategy

Learning Institutions deploy cost leadership strategy to provide quality and educational programmes and achieve growth cheaper relative to competitors in the markets. This could be done through focusing on the efficient scale of operations. Schools open up to sustainable cost advantage over rivals by minimising costs as a foundation. This could be achieved by lowering their pricing to gain large market share compared to competitors.

A study by Ilovi (2011) confirmed that an influence of cost leadership as a competitive strategy will lead to acquiring of competitive advantage amongst the insurance companies in Kenya. The study found that deployment of cost strategies led to an increased customer base, market share and the level of profitability.

2.3.2 Differentiation Strategy

Differentiation strategy focuses on features such as product quality, information technology, innovativeness, reliability, better image, brand image, values and reputation and customer service that build on brand loyalty and marketing strategies. The firm that implements differentiation strategy is one of a kind in its industry.

It is the capacity to offer its differentiation at a value that surpasses what was spent to make value, to beat its opponents and make better gains and returns. A Study by Njiru

(2015) examines the effect of competitive strategies on performance of Express Connections Limited in Kenya. The results revealed that the use of standard pricing within specific timing, utilization of unique color as well as creation of similar branches to build on bodies of the buses led to the firm achieving competitive advantage which in turn increased the market share of the firm.

2.3.3 Market Focus Strategy

The market focus strategy competitive strategy influences an organization to concentrate its resources on entering or expanding in a narrow market industry. It is employed where the firm knows its segment by identification of the market needs in order to satisfy the market. The market focus aims at developing market share through the operation in the unique and niche market.

Market infiltration or market advancement can be a focus-based strategy. Average size and extensive learning foundations adopt focus based strategy which is related to separation or cost administration non-exclusive methodologies. Be that as focus based strategy pursue unique market it does not focus in the market (Tam, 2005). Firms gain competitive advantage through being innovative rather than efficiency to gain performance goals.

Focus strategies adopted by schools focus on providing unique education programmes, use different curriculum that concentrates on specific needs in the market. This strategy centers and focuses on a certain market segment based on geographical location, the system of education and labour market needs. This view is acknowledged by Ndugo,

Kyongo and Njoroge (2018) who indicated that schools adopt focus strategies through advertisement and marketing of a service that satisfies a unique need in the market and thereby offer unique educational programs to a niche market. Focus marketing strategies led to school growth and improved performance in schools.

2.4 Competitive Strategies and Performance in Private Schools

Institutional performance is achieved from successful implementation of competitive strategies. The offering of differentiated curriculum, provision of quality education and learning programs designed for different learners in the school, foster achievement of individual academic performance as well as the overall schools' performance (Martinez & Wolverton, 2009). Private schools are run by private organizations, individuals or churches. Policy documents and education programmes have been regarded as important competitive strategy for achieving competitive advantage.

Learning institutions implement competitive strategies such as changing the mode of distribution channels, forming strategic alliances and collaboration within the education sector to cope with competition, globalization, change in technology and instituted regulatory framework governing the markets (Collis, 2001). Further, drivers of change in the education sectors include: change in education curriculum, country economic broad objective, regional economic integration, change in learners needs and numerous labour opportunities which influence implementation of the competitive strategies amongst the private schools in developing countries (Devlin & Enne, 2007). Kitoto (2004) studied Competitive strategies employed by public Universities in Kenya and found that focus strategies and cost leadership were implemented in public universities in Kenya.

A study by Ndugo, Kyongo and Njoroge (2018) examined the relationship between competitive strategies and performance of private primary schools in Kiambu County. The study hypothesis was that competitive strategies have no significant influence on performance of primary schools in Kiambu County. The results revealed that competitive strategies have a positive effect on school's performance. The study, however, focused on private schools without specifying whether it was international primary schools or locals. The results could not be generalized to all the categories of schools.

Kabutia (2014) assessed strategies implemented by Catholic Schools sponsored in Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi. The study adopted a survey design. The target population of the study was 20 schools. Descriptive analysis technique was adopted to analyze the data. The Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi sponsored schools deployed differentiation, collaborative strategies, discipline and value based education system as strategies to foster performance of the schools. Also results indicated that the schools deployed combination of Catholic religion contributed to unique responsibilities. Further, results indicated that Catholic secondary schools deployed differentiation and collaborative strategies in an effort to achieve competitive advantage. The study revealed that Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi sponsored schools adopted strategic alliance with other schools, ministry of education and parents which led to improvement in school performance to a great extent. Advocating on student discipline and characters as a unique nature in moral development of students constituted a strategy adopted to foster performance. The schools also formed collaborative partnerships with other schools to share ideas on winning strategies. Through deployment of differentiation strategy schools

offers unique and different services in the market contributing to the overall school's performance as they ranked the best performing in the County of Nairobi.

A study by Njoroge (2017) determined the effects of competitive strategies on performance of Strathmore University. The purpose of the study was to examine the extent to which competitive strategies influenced performance at Strathmore University in Nairobi, Kenya. The study employed case study and collected data using interview guide. The results revealed that adoption of differentiation and market focus strategies had significant influence on performance of Strathmore University. The study revealed that through implementation of the strategies, the university increased numbers of students from 892 in the year 2014, 790 in the year 2015 and 1,055 in the year 2016. The university offered unique study programs and enforced discipline as well as upholding high moral standards and this made the university to be ranked as the best private university in the country.

Mbwaya (2007) examined competitive strategies adopted by private primary schools and the challenges they face while implementing them. The category of private schools that were studied are under the 8-4-4 curriculum and revealed that established differentiation strategies were applied in 8-4-4 education in primary schools in Nairobi to a great extent while cost leadership and focus were adopted to a less extent. Kamau (2013) assessed competitive strategies adopted by Private Universities in Kenya and found that private universities in Kenya adopted product differentiation, cost leadership, customer focus, ICT strategy, strategic alliances and horizontal integration in efforts to achieve competitiveness.

2.5 Summary and Knowledge gaps

From the review of the past studies, empirical studies have been done on competitive strategies adopted by schools. A study carried by Mbwaya (2007) examined competitive strategies adopted by private primary schools and the challenges they face while implementing them. The study revealed that private-primary schools in Nairobi used differentiation strategies to a great extent while cost leadership and focus were least adopted.

Further, a study by Kamau (2013) revealed that Private Universities in Kenya adopted product differentiation, cost leadership, customer focus, ICT strategy, strategic alliances and horizontal integration in efforts to achieve competitiveness. This study failed to link competitive strategies to performance of the schools.

Other empirical studies such as Kabutia (2014) assessed effect of strategies implemented by Catholic schools sponsored in Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi. The study revealed that Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi sponsored schools deployed differentiation, collaborative strategies, discipline and value based education system as strategies to foster performance.

The results indicated that the schools deployed combination of Catholic religion that contributed to unique responsibilities. The results revealed that Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi sponsored schools adopted strategic alliance with other schools, Ministry of education and parents and led to improvement in school's performance. Advocating on student discipline and characters as a unique nature in moral development of students

constituted a strategy adopted to promote holistic performance. The study failed to establish whether the strategies employed had significant influence on performance.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter looks into the methodology that was employed to adequately meet the study objective. Within the chapter is the design of the research, how data was collected and how data analysis was conducted.

3.2 Research Design

The study deployed a case study research design. Cooper and Schindler, (2008) acknowledged a case study research design as a critical strategy of qualitative assessment that involve a single unit of analysis and focused on in-depth analysis of a social unit in a more insightful approach. The choice of the case study was informed by the need to place more emphasis on the contextual analysis and the description of the phenomenon under the study.

The study deployed a case study. The choice of the case study is appropriate as it enabled the study to collect data that requires an in-depth analysis and understanding on the effect of competitive strategies on performance of Rusinga Schools. The case study allowed collection of adequate data to answer to research questions

3.3 Data Collection

The primary data was collected using an interview guide. The interview guide enabled the study collect detailed qualitative information. It contained open ended question items

addressing the research objectives. This was done in an effort to collect in-depth information regarding competitive strategies adopted by Rusinga Schools and its influence on the school performance.

The interview guide was divided into three sections. The first section addressed the demographic information of the Rusinga Schools. The second section focused on the competitive strategies deployed at the Schools. Section three addressed the effect of competitive strategies on performance of the schools.

3.4 Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected data was well examined and checked for completeness and comprehensibility. The data was then summarized and tabulated where necessary for ease of analysis. The study used content analysis technique to analyze the qualitative data that was collected using interview schedule. Content analysis was used to analyze data that was collected using open ended questions. This method made it possible to analyse data and present it with an in-depth insight on competitive strategies on the performance of Rusinga Schools in Nairobi.

Mugenda (2008) acknowledged that content analysis helps in studying existing information so as to determine the in-depth influence of the study variables. In coding qualitative data, the studies assessed all the responses, key information and interpretation.

The results were compared with response of other interviewees so as to get in-depth understanding on the effect of competitive strategies on market share of the schools in terms of number of schools and number of learners.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, results and discussion of the study as set out in the research methodology. The results were presented on the competitive strategies adopted by Rusinga Schools in Nairobi and how the school achieved performance due to implementation of the competitive strategies in the schools. The data was gathered exclusively through an interview guide as the research instrument. The interview guide was designed in line with the objectives of the study and was used to collect qualitative data.

4.2 Demographic Information

The interviewees were requested to indicate their positions in the schools. The results indicated that 52% (6) of the interviewees were managers of the schools 38% (3) were heads of departments in the schools while 10% (1) were members of the Board of Directors of the schools. This clearly demonstrated that data was collected from officers responsible for initiation of competitive strategies in the schools and were in a better position of offering relevant information to answer to research questions.

Table 4.1 Response Rate

Category	Response Rate
Managers	52%
Head Of Departments	38%
Directors	10%
Total	100%

The results on how long the interviewees had served in the current positions, 75% indicated that they had served in their current position for more than 10 years, 25% of the respondents indicated that they had served in their current position for less than 10 years. This clearly demonstrated that the respondents had worked in their current position for more than 5 years and had experiences on competitive strategies adopted in Rusinga Schools and the extent of its contribution to performance of the schools.

Table 4.2 Work Experience of the Respondents

Work Experience	Percent (%)
More Than 10 Years	75%
Less Than 10 Years	25%
Total	100%

The respondents indicated the period the schools had been in operations. All they indicated that the Rusinga Schools had been in operation for approximately 43 years. Further results indicated growth of the schools led to opening of new branches offering education services to toddlers in Rusinga's kindergarten level.

They all confirmed that the growth of the schools was due to the adoption of competitive strategies.

4.3 Competitive Strategies Adopted in Rusinga Schools

The Rusinga Schools has been in operation for over four decades. The study aimed at establishing competitive strategies adopted by Rusinga Schools and determining whether competitive strategies influence the achievement of competitive advantage.

4.3.1 Cost leadership Strategy

Cost leadership strategy was embraced to a large extent. Schools fees structures were at a lower price compared to other international schools ranging from Kshs 65,000 for toddlers at kindergarten level to Kshs. 443, 000 per year at A-Level. Explanation was that lower cost leadership strategy adopted by the schools focus on achieving above-average returns over other competitor's schools such as International School of Kenya with a fee of Ksh 2,070,204 per year, St Andrews Turi with a fee of Ksh 994, 500 per year and Greensteds International School is Ksh1,010,000 per year.

Table 4.3 Annual Fees of Rusinga Compared to Other International Schools

	Annual Fees in Kshs
International School of Kenya	2070204.00
St Andrews Turi	994500.00
Greensteds	1010000.00
Rusinga Schools	443000.00

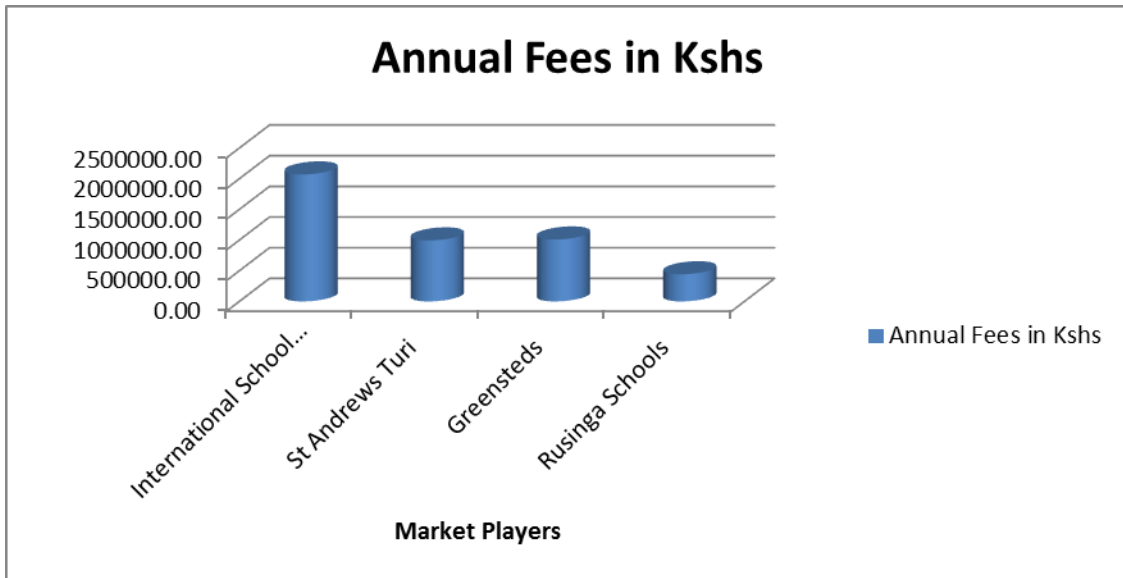


Figure 4.1 Annual Fees in Kshs for Other Schools compared to Rusinga

The interviewees also indicated that management at Rusinga Schools allow parents to make payment of school fees in installment that is twice per terms and this ensure the school run efficiently. The school management was found also to allow parent to choose school mode of transports or provide individual transport so as to minimize cost of operations and focus on offering quality education services to learners.

The school offers discounts to parent who enroll more than one child in the school. Discounts offered to parent lead to reduction of school fees by approximately 10% to 15% lowering school fees an indicator of successful implementation of lower prices.

4.3.2 Market Focus Strategy

The study sought the extent to which market focus strategy was implemented. From the results, the school management adopts market focus strategies through focusing on Christian based customers who were interested on British curriculum, focused on upper

market who could afford the school fee and emphasized on learners from all over the world as an international school.

Focus was on offering unique courses and extra-curricular activities in an effort to equip them spiritually, physically, socially, morally and intellectually. Explanation was that the school adopted marketing strategies such as branding of the schools and schools buses, advertising in media and online using digital platform such as websites to attract their target market.

Basically, focus is evident as it offers an education service laid on a firm Christian background and management remaining strong and committed to offering academic excellence in a high level of discipline and Christian values. The values include: Mastery, Leadership, Honour, Fortitude, Compassion and Adventure.

4.3.3 Differentiation Strategy

The examinees specified how Rusinga Schools adopted differentiation strategies. From the findings, the study found that the schools adopted differentiation strategies through offering quality education as stipulated in the school core mission and enshrined in Christian values. The school implemented this differentiation strategy by adopting British National Curriculum and the learners in Years 10 and 11 takes a two year IGCSE course administered by the University of Cambridge through Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIE). It offers other different courses different from ones offered in education system in Kenya. The school provides education at all level from toddler's primary to senior levels and offer learners opportunities to proceed with British System

of education or the Kenyan System of education in an effort to develop learners in a holistic approach equipping them spiritually, physically, socially, morally and intellectually.

At the kindergarten level, the key learning courses focuses on social and personal development, communication and literacy, mathematics, creative, physical and spiritual growth and knowledge about the world. The extra-curricular activities at Rusinga Schools kindergarten include; music using piano and guitar and swimming. At prep-school level the teaching is learner based and focused on nurturing skills and holistic growth and development. The interviewees indicated that the foundation subjects include: Geography, French, German, Mandarin, History, Art and Design, Religious Studies, Physical Education, Music, ICT, Mathematics, Swahili, and English Swimming while extra-curricular activities include; community service, drama, sports, LAMDA, drama, clubs, trips, choir, and band ensemble. The O-level and A-level students are provided with and honed on research skills, interpersonal skills, communication, self-discipline and personal responsibility. The subjects they do include: Geography, French, German, Mandarin, History, Art and Design, Religious Studies, Physical Education, Music, ICT, Business Studies, Mathematics, Swahili, Literature, English, Global Perspective, Environmental Management, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Swimming. Extra-curricular activities include: a wide range of sport activities, community service, drama and annual school plays, World Scholars and debate club.

4.3.4 Combination/ Collaborative Strategy

The study found that Rusinga Schools also adopted collaborative strategies. The schools used combination strategies through cooperating with the government, follow standards as expected by the government, and collaborate with the church in offering spiritual wellbeing to learners. It is a member of the Kenya Association of International Schools and currently, they are in a process of becoming a member of the Council of International Schools. The school collaborates with other schools in interschool's activities such as Science congress, Business symposium, sport tournaments and world Scholars. It also allows the teaching staff to participate in interschool conferences.

The school level that focuses on offering a solid foundation Christian values, academic, social and spiritual growth the school management, administrators, teachers and parent work jointly to provide student with guidance toward excellence in academic and character as well as individual development.

4.3.5 Resource base Strategy

The results were positive as Rusinga Schools adopted resource based strategies to a great extent. The management have implemented framework for acquisition of qualified and competent human resources both teaching and non-teaching staff. This is done through a thorough recruitment and selection process. They purchased and installed modern learning facilities and equipment such as use of computers, laptops, projectors and have modern social amenities to ease and facilitate leaning process.

Table 4.4 Annual Fees of Rusinga Compared to Other International Schools

Resources	Availability
Budget for supplies (e.g., paper, pencils)	Adequate
School buildings and grounds	Adequate
Heating/cooling and lighting systems	Adequate
Computer support staff	Adequate
School buildings and grounds	Adequate
Heating/cooling and lighting systems	Adequate
Instructional space (e.g., classrooms)	Adequate
Special equipment for disabled students	Adequate
Instructional materials (e.g., textbook)	Adequate

4.3.6 Competitive strategies deployed in Management of Rusinga Schools

Diversification strategy encompasses the ability of schools to offer diverse learning activities and services. Market penetration strategy is characterized by schools' ability to retain and expand the current student enrolment. Market development strategy indicates schools' capacity to tap into new regions for increased student enrolment. Product development strategy connotes the ability of schools to provide learning services that have unique high quality attributes.

4.4 Competitive Strategies and Performance of Rusinga Schools

The study found that Rusinga Schools adopted competitive strategies. The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of competitive strategies on the performance.

4.4.1 Cost leadership strategy influence on performance of Rusinga Schools

The study showed that Cost leadership strategy was achieved by lowering cost of school fees relative to other competitors international schools influence attraction of more parent bringing their children to the schools. The school receives most payments from parents

on time therefore they break-even leading to more efficient running of the school. This resulted into increase in schools' enrollment improve student base, increase more classes as well as increasing number of teaching staff. Adoption of lower costs strategy compared to other international schools ranging improve school liquidity volume, foster operation efficiency, employ more teachers and result into student base, and improve schools' revenues. The school does constant reminders to parents with outstanding balances to clear.

The parents are allowed make payment of school fees in installment, twice per term to enable the school run efficiently. The school management was found also to allowed parent to choose school mode of transports or provide individual transport so as to minimize cost of operations and focus on offering quality education services to learners.

Discounts to parents who enrolled more than one child into the school are offered. This contributes to an increase in number of students, enables the management gain more cash and improve on efficiency in provision of education, promotion of quality of teaching and improve development of the school. The interviewees further indicated that implementation of lower cost leadership strategy at Rusinga Schools enhanced efficiency in school operations and led to an increase in schools' assets such as acquisition of new technology as well as improving quality of teaching in schools.

4.4.2 Differentiation strategies on performance of Rusinga Schools

The fact that the school is value-based founded on Christian values is an indication of differentiation strategy. The school upholds discipline and academic excellence. This is not the case of other international schools, therefore, the school offers a differentiated

product. The school offers quality education guided by school core mission and enshrined in Christian values which has attracted many parents from the Christian background to enroll their children in the schools increasing school market share in term of school enrollment as in the year 2017 the enrollment was 787 student, in June 2018 the enrollment was 808 while in August enrollment was 839 learners.

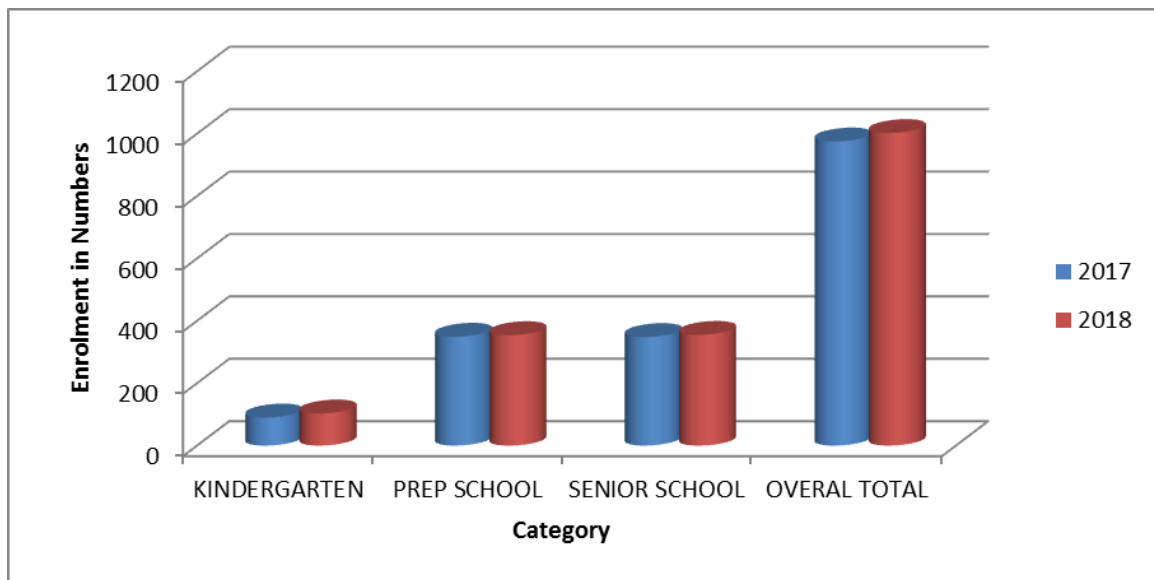


Figure 4.2 Schools Enrolment Performance

Years 10 and 11 students take a two year IGCSE course administered by the University of Cambridge through Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIE). The curriculum of the school is shifting and deepening to accommodate the current trends and growth of the market. For instance, there is the introduction of new subjects such as Environmental Management, BTech and Global Perspectives. This enables the students to remain relevant as well as shaping students to be ready for the world as they will be equipped with the necessary skills.

The school also offers Business Studies to Year 7, 8 and 9 unlike other schools where the subject is done from year 10 onwards. This differentiates the product offered as by the time students will be getting to year 10, they will be conversant with the subject leading to high academic performance.

The school offers a rich menu for the students as the management is open to new ideas from the stakeholders. For instance, there is the introduction of robotics which was a suggestion from students. The management values the students' voice making it diverse and dynamic.

The results indicated that Rusinga Schools adopted differentiation strategy by offering courses to different learners in different level of education systems increasing school market share through increase learners base and opening of different schools units and school level. Interviewees indicated that offering different courses to learners in different level of education as well as offering different co-curriculum activities contributed to increase in school enrollment.

The unique characteristics of courses offered in the school promotes trust, flexibility, integrity, good reputation and a strong social relationship building avenue. Differentiation strategies through lower costs and use of different school fees for different children in different classes as well as pricing transport for children influence the schools avoiding price competition in the market leading to normal efficiency operations in the schools, improve student enrollment and improve schools revenues.

4.4.3 Market focus strategy influence performance of Rusinga Schools

The school's market focus is on the middle-class, business community and international families or community. The niche market that is Christian segment as well as offering of international studies targeting international market contributed to better performance as the schools increase its market share, increase level of learners' enrollment. The market focus strategies have contributed to an increase in number of learners who were interested in both British curriculum and Kenyan Curriculum. The learners increased from 119 to 124 in year 2017 while in the year 2018 the student number increased to 349.

This has led to gaining of market share by venturing into international and local market to remain attractive compared to competitors in the market.

4.4.4 Combination strategy influence performance of Rusinga Schools

The school is in collaboration with its stakeholders. It is a member of Kenya Association of International Schools in Kenya and operates under the rule of the government of Kenya regarding international schools. The painting of buses to yellow and Swahili been made a compulsory subject shows collaboration with the government. The school is in the process of bring certified by The Council of International Schools.

The school participates in joint insets and league matches with other schools as well as participation in interschool symposiums such as Business Symposium, World Scholars and forms alliances with corporate organizations for student-learning visit and securing of internships for students. The school also does benchmarking for students, where they visit other schools in different parts of the world such as Germany and China.

Rusinga is the only international school that has ‘Parents-Teacher Association’ PTA forum. This shows that it values her stakeholders for the betterment of the students. This forum provides a platform for viewing critical issues affecting the school therefore leading to effective management of the school. The schools’ management, administrators, teachers and parent work jointly to provide student with guidance toward excellence in academic and character as well as individual development improve school academic performance among learners and foster quality of education being offered to learners.

There is a department of University Careers Placement that collaborates with universities to provide students with information needed as they prepare to join the Institutions of higher learning.

The school is in collaboration with its suppliers especially the food industry whereby they trace the food to source, to identify if the standards are met so as to provide healthier food for the students and the workforce. This undoubtedly shows that Rusinga Schools implemented the collaborative strategy.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The findings revealed that Rusinga Schools had adopted Cost leadership strategy to a large extent. The study revealed that schools adopted lower cost leadership strategy by offering lower fees structures ranging from Kshs 65,000 for toddlers at kindergarten level to Kshs 443, 000 per terms at A-Level. The study established that management at Rusinga Schools allow parents to make payment of school fees in installment that is twice per terms and this ensure the school learn efficiently and focus on offering quality education services to learners. The school further revealed that Rusinga Schools adopt

lower cost leadership strategy through offering 10% to 15% fees discounts to parent who enrolled more than one child in the school lowering school fees. The findings concurred with Kabutia (2014) that catholic schools sponsored in Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi deployed cost leadership and differentiation strategies to foster school performance

The study revealed that management at Rusinga Schools adopted market focus competitive strategies by targeting local and international market where the niche market is the middle-class, business community and international communities too. It offers a product to the students that is laid on a firm Christian background and management remain strong committed to offering academic excellence in a high level of discipline and Christian values. The results of the study revealed that Rusinga Schools adopted differentiation strategies. This was demonstrated by the schools offering quality education as stipulated in the school core mission and enshrined in Christian values. Students undertake the Cambridge International Examinations. The curriculum of the school shifted and deepened to accommodate the current trends and growth of the market. For instance, there is the introduction of new subjects such as Environmental Management, BTech and Global Perspectives. The school also offers Business Studies to Year 7, 8 and 9 unlike other schools where the subject is done from year 10 onwards. This study is linked to Kyongo and Njoroge (2018) who indicated that schools adopt focus strategies through advertisement and marketing of a service that satisfies a unique need in the market and thereby offer unique educational programs to a niche market. Focus marketing strategies led to school growth and improved performance in schools.

Discounts to parents who enrolled more than one child into the school contributed to an increase in the number of the students, enabling the management gain more revenue and an improvement on efficiency in provision of education, promotion of quality teaching and development of the schools.

The implementation of British National Curriculum and the learners in Years 10 and 11 taking a two year IGCSE course, that is administered by the University of Cambridge through Cambridge International Examinations Board (CIE) has increased student enrollment. Offering variety of curricular courses and extra-curricular activities improves the school's performance, by gaining competitive advantage over other schools and leads to creation of value for the learners and parents compared to rivals in the market. The finding concurred with Njoroge (2017) that through deployment of differentiation strategies, the Strathmore university increased numbers of grandaunts from 892 in the year 2014, 790 in the year 2015 and 1,055 in the year 2016.

The findings established that market focus strategies have contributed to an increase in number of learners who were interested in British curriculum. The results revealed that focusing on a niche market that is the middle-class market and Christian segment as well as offering of international studies targeting international market contributed to better performance as the schools increases its market share. The results was supported by Kamau (2013) that Private Universities in Kenya adopted product differentiation, cost leadership, customer focus to achieve competitiveness.

The school successfully adopted collaborative strategies in that it is a member of Kenya Association of International Schools in Kenya and operates under the rule of the

government of Kenya regarding international schools. The school is in the process of bring certified by The Council of International Schools which provides an international platform.

The school participates in joint insets and league matches with other schools as well as participation in interschool symposiums such as Business Symposium, World Scholars and forms alliances with corporate organizations for student-learning visit and securing of internships for students where there is a department of University Careers Placement that collaborates with universities to provide students with information needed as they prepare to join the Institutions of higher learning. The findings were supported by Kabutia (2014) that collaborative strategies foster discipline and value based education system fostering schools' performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the findings from chapter four. It builds its summary on the study findings, study conclusion and recommendations with highlights on the major study limitations and suggestions for further research. The objectives of the study were to establish the influence of competitive strategies on performance Rusinga Schools.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study found that Rusinga Schools had adopted Cost leadership strategy to a large extent where the organization obtained competitive advantage by having the lowest cost of operation through its efficiency and cumulative experience of managers in minimising costs.

Market focus competitive strategies were achieved whereby the school concentrated its resources on entering a narrow market industry, the school was conversant with its segment and competitively satisfied their needs by offering a valued based product founded on Christian values and academic excellence and a high level of discipline. It targets children in different ages and offer courses based on ages of the children.

The differentiation strategies were adopted, where BNC curriculum was offered, a wide menu of courses for students to choose from such as Business studies for year 7-9, Global

Perspectives and Environmental Management. The school provided unique products that stakeholders especially the customers find better than services offered by competitors. The curricular was geared towards ensuring a holistic approach equipping students spiritually, physically, socially, morally and intellectually.

The school successfully adopted collaborative strategies, in that, it is a member of Kenya Association of International Schools in Kenya and operates under the rule of the government of Kenya regarding international schools. The school is in the process of being certified by The Council of International Schools which provides an international platform.

The school participates in joint insets and league matches with other schools as well as participation in interschool symposiums such as Business Symposium, World Scholars and forms alliances with corporate organizations for student-learning visit and securing of internships for students where there is a department of University Careers Placement that collaborates with universities to provide students with information needed as they prepare to join the Institutions of higher learning.

The study revealed that Rusinga Schools adopted resource based strategies through acquisition of qualified and competent human resources both teaching and non- teaching staff, purchased and installed modern learning facilities and equipment such as use of computers, laptops, projectors and have modern social amenities to ease and facilitated leaning process. The Rusinga Schools used revenue to purchase schools buses, built more classes, purchasing learning materials and developing learning facilities to provide quality learning in the schools.

5.3 Conclusions

The study concluded that differentiation strategy was effectively adopted by Rusinga Schools. They offered a unique product that was value-based and founded on Christian foundation, discipline as well as the academic excellence. The unique product led it to gaining competitive advantage over other international schools.

Market focus was also achieved in a myriad of ways. The focus on a segment of Christian families aided in competitive advantage over other schools as they satisfied the needs of the customers. Focus was on provision of a differentiated product to local and international learners by using British National Curriculum.

The study concluded that the school successfully adopted collaborative strategies in that it is a member of Kenya Association of International Schools in Kenya and operated under the rule of the government of Kenya regarding international schools. The school is in the process of being accredited by The Council of International Schools which provides an international platform. The school participated in joint insets and league matches with other schools along with participation in interschool symposiums such as

Business Symposium, World Scholars. There was formation of alliances with corporate organizations for student-learning visit and securing of internships for students where there is a department of University Careers Placement that collaborates with different universities to provide students with information needed as they prepare to join the Institutions of higher learning.

The study concluded that Rusinga Schools adopted diversification strategy as the schools offer diverse learning activities and services, market penetration strategy as the schools expand student enrolment, market development strategy indicates schools' capacity to tap into new regions for increased student enrollment and product development strategy demonstrated by the schools provision of learning services that have unique quality attributes. The curriculum is dynamic and diverse. Students were actively involved in extra-curricular activities.

5.4 Recommendation of the Study

The study recommends that private international schools should deploy cost leadership strategy through lowering their prices compared to the competitors, by having an effective management system and encouraging debtors to pay off debts on time or giving provisions. For instance, by allowing parents to make payment of school fees in installments, giving discounts to parents who enrolled more than one child. This will lead to gaining of market share.

Differentiation strategies should be used by the management of private international schools. This can be achieved by offering variety of courses to different learners in different level and by offering a wide menu of different extra-curricular activities. This

would lead to an increase in the number of students, therefore, improving the performance and thereby, gaining competitive advantage.

Collaboration builds up to the brand image of an organization and can go a long way of attracting more customers to the school. Collaboration with different organizations gives customers satisfaction as it is an indication of growth of a business and could build up customer relationships. For instance, through cooperation with the government, participation in interschool's activities such as sports and allowing teachers to participate in interschool conferences and participation in interschool symposiums and forms alliances with corporate organizations as well as partnering with other stakeholders such as churches. Collaborative strategies contributes to school's performance as it improves the satisfaction of learners and improves school's academic performance amongst learners. This leads to quality of education, improves satisfaction amongst the stakeholders as well as the competitiveness of schools in the market.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

In conducting the research, the researcher encountered a number of challenges. One of the challenges was that it was difficult for some of the managers to find time for the interview owing to the nature of their jobs. Additionally, the study focuses on Rusinga Schools a private group of schools, hence, the findings could not be generalized to other government institutions and/or other public schools in Kenya.

Lastly, the information given was limited as some interviewees were secretive or rather limited the information they gave out. Some of the information such as performance of the schools was crucial for the study to make a formidable conclusion. However, the

researcher made efforts and informed the interviewees that the information they provided would be held confidential.

5.6 Recommendation for Further Study

The study recommends that other studies should be carried out to determine influence of competitive strategies on performance of other international private schools in Nairobi Kenya.

The researcher recommends that further study should be carried out to determine the competitive strategies adopted by other international private groups of schools. This would provide a broad-based analysis and empirical evidence on the extent to which private international schools adopt competitive strategies and the extent to which the schools achieve performance due to implementation of the strategies in schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview GuideSchedule

The interview schedule is set to collect data that will assist in conducting the study on influence of competitive strategies on performance of Rusinga Schools in Nairobi Kenya. I kindly request you to provide as much information as possible honestly and accurately to enable collection of adequate information. Any information you will provide will be held confidentially and will be used for academic purpose only.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. What is your position in your school.....?
2. How long have you served in your current position
3. How long has your school been in operation

Section B: Competitive strategies adopted in Rusinga Schools

4. Describe the extent the following competitive strategies have been deployed in Rusinga Schools
Cost leadership Strategy.....
- 4 Market Focus Strategy
- 5 Differentiation Strategy
- 6 Combination/ Collaborative Strategy
- 7 Resource base Strategy.....

8 Marketing Strategy.....

5. Indicate any other competitive strategy deployed in management of Rusinga Schools

Section C: Competitive Strategies and Performance of Rusinga Schools

6. Explain how cost leadership strategy have influence on performance of Rusinga Schools
7. Discuss the influence of differentiation strategies on performance of Rusinga Schools
8. Explain the extent market focus strategy influence performance of Rusinga Schools
9. Indicate how combination strategy has influence performance of Rusinga Schools
10. Describe how other competitive strategies deployed in Rusinga Schools influence performance in Rusinga Schools

11. Kindly indicate the change in performance indicators in the table

Performance Indicators	Performance Level
Branches of schools	
Number of students	
School assets	
Enrollment of student	

Appendix II

ENROLLMENT FIGURES AS AT 29TH JUNE 2018

CLASS	29/06/2018	WITH-DRAWALS	New Admissions	Projections for Sep 2018	TOTAL PROJECTIONS
KINDERGARTEN					
Butterflies [Toddlers]	9	0	1	2	12
Ladybirds [KG1]	28	0	1	4	33
Busybees [KG2]	24	3	2	1	24
Beetles [KG3]	45	1	7	2	53
SUB-TOTALS	106			9	122
PREP SCHOOL					
Year 1	57	5	0	12	64
Year 2	60	6	2	8	64
Year 3	60	2	1	3	62
Year 4	55	1	1	8	63
Year 5	63	3	0	2	62
Year 6	57	9	1	4	53
SUB-TOTALS	352			37	368
SENIOR SCHOOL					
Year 7	51	5	1	6	53
Year 8	53	8	1	3	49
Year 9	60	6	2	5	61
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 3]	164			14	163
Year 10	65				65
Year 11	57				57
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 4]	122				122
Year 12	33				33

Year 13	31				31
SUB-TOTALS [A-Level]	64				64
SUB-TOTALS SENIOR	350				349
OVERAL TOTAL	808				839

ENROLLEMENT FIGURES AS AT 22ND AUGUST 2018

CLASS	07-06-18	New Admissions for Sept 2018	Total
KINDERGARTEN			
Butterflies [Toddlers]	5	3	8
Ladybirds [KG1]	12	5	17
Busybees [KG2]	33	6	39
Beetles [KG3]	24	11	35
SUB-TOTALS	74		99
PREP SCHOOL			
Year 1	45	16	61
Year 2	52	6	58
Year 3	54	4	58
Year 4	58	5	63
Year 5	54	1	55
Year 6	59	4	63
SUB-TOTALS	322		358
SENIOR SCHOOL			
Year 7	48	8	56
Year 8	46	5	51
Year 9	45	3	48
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 3]	139		155
Year 10	54	5	59
Year 11	65	0	65
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 4]	119		124
Year 12	57		57

Year 13	33		33
SUB-TOTALS [A-Level]	90		90
SUB-TOTALS SENIOR	348		369

ENROLLMENT FIGURES AS AT 19TH JANUARY, 2018

CLASS	SUB TOTALS 22/12/2017	WITH- DRAWALS	JANUARY ADMISSIONS	SUB TOTALS 22/12/2017
KINDERGARTEN				
Butterflies [Toddlers]	5	0	1	8
Ladybirds [KG1]	21	0	2	26
Busybees [KG2]	24	0	1	24
Beetles [KG3]	40	0	0	45
SUB-TOTALS	90			103
PREP SCHOOL				
Year 1	53	0	1	56
Year 2	64	0	0	64
Year 3	58	0	2	60
Year 4	56	0	1	55
Year 5	60	0	1	62
Year 6	58	1	0	57
SUB-TOTALS	349			354
SENIOR SCHOOL				
Year 7	47	0	3	50
Year 8	56	1	1	55
Year 9	57	0	7	60
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 3]	160			165
Year 10	66	0	1	67
Year 11	58	0	0	58
SUB-TOTALS [Key Stage 4]	124			125
Year 12	32	0	0	33
Year 13	32	0	0	32
SUB-TOTALS [A-Level]	64			65

SUB-TOTALS SENIOR	348			355
OVERAL TOTAL	787			812

April admissions - 4 students (3 Kindergaten and 1 in Year 8)

Total (April 2018) **816**