

**INFLUENCE OF MARKETING STRATEGIES ON
PERFORMANCE OF STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY, KENYA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been presented to any institution or university other than the University of Nairobi for examination.

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D61/79038/2015

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

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my entire family who gave me invaluable moral support throughout the period.

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I would like to sincerely acknowledge my supervisor Prof Justus Munyoki , who has guided me enthusiastically through the research project. His support is invaluable.

I would also like to acknowledge my family members, friends and colleagues whose support has made it possible for me to come this far in my academics.

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to determine the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. Specifically, the study sought to determine the marketing strategies adopted by Strathmore University and establish the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. This study was based on three theories namely Ansoff growth strategy theory, the resource-based view theory of the firm and the competence-based strategy theory. The study adopted a case study research design. This study used primary data to address the study's objectives. Primary data was collected from the Deans of each of the nine schools or their representatives using an interview guide. Content analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. The study concluded that Strathmore University had adopted marketing strategies. These marketing strategies included product differentiation, pricing, distribution and promotion. The study also concluded that marketing strategies have a positive impact on the organization performance of Strathmore University. The study revealed that marketing strategies has resulted to better customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, time management and service delivery. In addition, adoption of marketing strategies has resulted to an increase in the number of students enrolling, increase in the number of programs and increase in the number of graduates. Further, the study concluded that Strathmore University has adopted product differentiation and promotion strategy to a greater extent compared to pricing and distribution marketing strategies. Based on the study findings he study recommended that Strathmore University should take the initiative to create awareness for all programs. They should strive to erase the notion that is created that the institution only focuses on business related courses. The study also recommends that the institution ought to create a fully operational marketing department which will market all programs as opposed to leaving the responsibility of marketing to individual departments. This would result to better results as the aspect of specialization in business would take effect and the marketers are only tasked with only one main task. The study also recommends that the institution should work towards attaining accreditation from international bodies so as to attract foreign students and achieve the objective of going global. Further, the study recommends that the institution ought to adopt flexible modes of payment so as to accommodate all students. For instance, they can introduce instalment payments of tuition fees. Additionally, they can make arrangements to reach out to people where they are and take the professional short courses to the ground. For instance, they can conduct those trainings at company's boardrooms.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACCA	Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
CECs	County Executive Officers
CFA	Chartered Financial Analyst
CIM	Chartered Institute of Marketing
CIM	Chartered Institute of Marketing
CPA	Certified Public Accountants
EABL	East Africa Breweries Limited
FM	Frequency Modulation
KRA	Kenya Revenue Authority
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
R&D	Research and Development
RBV	Resource - Based View
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Gone are the days when firms used to wait for clients to knock at their door steps. Marketing is essential for every product regardless of how prestigious they are (Kotler, 2001). Achieving competitive advantage is a major pre-occupation of the managers in many businesses today. Globally, organizations are seeking to differentiate themselves from their competitors in terms of flexibility, quality of service, customization, rapid response and innovation (Ghalayani & Noble, 1996). The environment is complex and ever changing and it will continue to change rapidly and unpredictably (Burnes, 1996). According to Ansoff and Mc Donnell (1990), major escalation of environment turbulence implies to a change from a familiar world of new technologies, new consumer attitudes, new competitors, new dimensions of social control and above all the unquestionable role of the firms in the society.

This study was guided by three theories namely; Ansoff's market growth model, Resource - Based view theory and the Competence Based strategy theory that have tried to explain the associations between marketing strategies and the firms' performance. The Ansoff Product-Market Growth model for marketing allows managers to find new avenues for growing their businesses through both existing and new products, in both new and existing markets. The Resource - Based theory argues that the firm's resources play a great role in determining the firm's competitiveness and its overall performance. The theory uses two main assumptions to describe the sources of the firm's competitiveness. The first assumption is that there is heterogeneity within firms in an industry with regard to the type of resources under

their control (Porter, 2008). Furthermore, it presumes that the degree of resource heterogeneity persists over a period of time. The firm's competitiveness is largely dependent on the uniqueness of its resources. The Competence Based strategy theory is used to strengthen the structure-conduct-performance on the organizations' industrial economics. This paradigm is vital since it emphasizes more on the firm's competitiveness in an industry which is based on its attributes (Prescott, 2011). From the assertions of this theory, it can be argued that firm profits are not determined by the firm but rather to industry forces, nature, competition and structure of the market.

Kenyan universities are operating in a more competitive and dynamic environment than they did a decade ago. The universities overall sustainability is determined by how they reposition themselves to increase student enrolment in a competitive environment. In the past, the public universities had an upper hand in student enrolment through Joint Admissions Board students and full reliance of funding by the government. Currently however, public universities are required to seek alternative funding arrangements to increase on their finances. This has led to stiff competition between public and private universities as they compete for self-sponsored students in their colleges. The universities are therefore required to develop proactive marketing strategies that will ensure increased student enrolment and long term university growth and sustainability. This study therefore sought to find out the marketing strategies being employed by Strathmore University.

1.1.1 Marketing Strategies

Marketing strategies refers to methods of diverting the resources and energies of an organization towards a given course of action with the aim of increasing sales and dominating a given market. Its effectiveness is more evident when treated as an

integral component of the overall firm strategy, describing the manner through which the organization will engage its customers, competitors and prospects in the market (Keetch, 2009). Aaker (2008) defines marketing strategy as the process through which the organisation concentrates its resources on the optimal opportunities so as to increase its sales and attain a sustainable competitive edge. Marketing strategies are essential in setting both short term and long-term activities in the field of marketing (Kimani 2014). The formulation, selection and evaluation of marketing strategies eventually contribute to marketing objectives and company's goals.

The current business environment perceives marketing as a combination of business activities tailored to facilitate planning, production, pricing, promotion, distribution and the generation of new ideas so as to meet the constantly changing needs of customers (Dzisi & Ofosu, 2014). The marketing concept matrix demonstrates a customer philosophy which identifies the needs of the customer and integrates marketing strategies within all organizations' functional areas to achieve corporate goals through the satisfaction those needs (Parnell & Spillan, 2006). Innovative marketing strategies such as digital media, brand consistency, creative product placement and the internet are vital promotional tools in the modern days. Universities generate little revenue through sale same old products to similar old market in a similar manner.

Marketing strategy has currently become important game changer across the globe for organizations that opt to build the brand name beyond the national boundaries so as to remain competitive in the current global market environment. The current globalization of markets has made companies to see the international markets as business opportunity thereby crafting marketing strategies as a way to improve market

base, increase business performance and remain afloat amidst tight local and international competition. It is a pattern of systematic allocation of resources to support marketing efforts geared at making positive contribution towards realization of marketing objectives and organizational sustainability. It is a grisly decision that is made to open the horizon and new frontiers of the organization (Aremu & Oyinloye, 2014).

Marketing framework is very essential to the business sector as it gives the continuous flow of the business information daily, monthly, and yearly. Marketing strategy helps the firm to focus on its resources and energies on a given task leading to increased sales and dominance in the market. A marketing strategy integrates product development, pricing, promotion, distribution and relationship management among other issues (Hose, 2011). These strategies are used to identify the marketing goals of the firm and to illustrate how they will be attained, ideally within a given timeframe. According to Cohen (2011), the choice of target market segments, market positioning, the desired marketing mix, and resource allocations.

1.1.2 Firm Performance

According to Richard, Yip, Johnson and Devinne (2009), firm performance is organization's ability to attain its mission through strong governance, sound management and persistent rededication to attainment of results. Efficient nonprofits are adaptable, mission driven, entrepreneurial, customer focused, sustainable and outcome oriented. The initiative of firm performance enables the organization to adjust to increased levels of uncertainty which hinder the attainment of its mission. This initiative seeks to help each organization in every sector of the economy,

businesses, charitable organizations and government. The performance of an organization can be measured through examination of the activities it conducts so as to attain its goals. The most notable aspects that can be used to gauge the performance of an organization are the outputs and their effects (Valmohammadi & Servati, 2011).

No consensus has been reached on the best or even the most sufficient measure of firm performance. This is because, there are many varied views of what desirable outcome of organizational effectiveness and because performance is often characterized by the theory and purposes of the research being performed. Performance measurement focuses on the internal processes to determine the efficiency and effectiveness of an action with a given context. Performance measurement indicators act as proxies for organizational phenomena (Henri, 2003).

Some use financial measures as a criterion to judge the success or fail of a decision or action. According to Richard et al., (2009), the performance of an organization encompasses three specific firm outcome areas: financial performance that is profits, product market performance that is sales, return on assets, return on investment, market share and shareholder return that includes economic value added and total shareholder return. There are, however, challenges in using these measures; for starters most managers are unwilling to allow researchers access their financial records, most studies that are available rely on perceived results rather than actual results. Other challenges to using financial measures include; savings are inconsistent from year to year, constantly changing environments make it more challenging to compare savings many years after outsourcing a contract against inside operations costs that had been earlier discontinued and some organizations outsource services from the onset hence providing no basis for comparison (Bryce & Useem, 1998).

1.1.3 Higher Education in Kenya

The Kenyan education sector has witnessed great expansion in the university education sector over the last one decade. The rise in the demand for university education in Kenya has prompted some students to even seek university admission outside the country. This has forced the Directorate of Higher Education in the Higher Education, Science and Technology ministry to come up with strategies of meeting the increased student enrollment such as the opening Constituent University campuses and colleges affiliated to well established universities so as to increase higher education access (Ministry of Education, 2016). The public university system in Kenya has expanded exponentially rising from one when Kenya gained independence to the current 33 public universities. A spontaneous growth in student enrollment has also been witnessed in the sector with the numbers rising from 1000 in 1963 to the current 276,349 university students in Kenya, (The Conversation Africa, 2010-2018).

Nairobi being the capital city of Kenya is the most populated city in Kenya. This is because it suffers Rural-Urban migration as most Kenyans believe Nairobi is the city to live in so as to enjoy green pastures, for this reason, many universities have established their campuses in Nairobi and areas around Nairobi. The main universities in Nairobi and its environs are: Kenyatta University, University of Nairobi, Strathmore University and United States International University. Many others are satellite campuses for the universities that are located far from Nairobi. This paper will focus on the main universities in Nairobi and its environs and find out the marketing strategies they have implemented in order to beat the stiff competition and their impact

1.1.4 Strathmore University

Strathmore University is a private university which was established according to the Universities Act 1985 (CAP 210B) and the Universities (Establishment of Universities, Accreditation, Standardization and Supervision) Rules, 1989 (Strathmore University Charter, 2008). The University was chartered in 2008 and it is offering degree programs that is; undergraduate and post graduate degrees. The university has 10 schools and faculties offering different programs.

The pillars that guide the school include providing an environment that offers an all-round education. This implies that the school is able to meet the needs of students who are the main clients. The university also uses a triple-helix research cooperation model that ensures students joining Strathmore University are exposed to research opportunities. Strathmore has vibrant research centers and projects spanning across: mobile application and cyber security, health and health care management, public policy, renewable energy and energy efficiency, entrepreneurship, governance and integrity, mathematical modeling and applied statistics, sustainable tourism, intellectual property and extractive industries (Strathmore University Strategic Plan, 2015).

Strathmore University has encountered many challenges that include ensuring they admit students who are able to pay high fees for a private university, stiff competition from other private and public universities that have introduced parallel programmes, competition from foreign universities, lacking a research focus comparable to public universities and offering specific and narrow programmes (Oketch, 2004). To achieve the required number of students, the university had to apply different marketing

strategies. The marketing strategies being employed have to be evaluated every now and then to ensure that the flow of students to the school remains at a high level.

1.2 Research Problem

The position of marketing principle in explaining organizational performance has received prominence throughout the history of marketing field. The need to derive marketing with organizational performance has become more urgent as marketing department are mandated to account and defend the contribution of the marketing efforts and activities vis a vis the corporate budgets and how it contributes to the shareholder's value, profitability and ROI. Over the past two decades, researchers have by a long way enhanced theoretical perspective of the role of marketing principle and its contribution to sustainability and relevance of the organization (Akinyele, 2011). It is highly likely that a firm with marketing strategies will attain higher growth rate than competitors, higher than average return on investment, higher than average net profit margin, the strongest brand reputation in the market, high market share, control of distribution channels in the market and a clearly defined unique selling point or significant access (Porter, 1996).

Strathmore University is operating in a more competitive environment than it did a decade ago. The schools overall sustainability is determined how they reposition themselves to increase student enrolment in a competitive environment. The approval of public universities to offer parallel programmes and to raise additional funds have complicated the market for private universities such as Strathmore. It has brought about stiff competition between public and private universities as they compete for self-sponsored students in their colleges. The universities are therefore required to develop proactive marketing strategies that will ensure increased student enrolment

and long term university growth and sustainability. This study therefore seeks to find out the marketing strategies being employed by Strathmore Business School.

Despite the potential benefits of marketing strategies, there is debate about whether and how their adoption improves organizational performance (Mabrouk & Mamoghli, 2010). Internationally, a study on the effects of marketing-related variables on business performance of small firms in China by Tang et al., (2005) established that marketing strategies are positively associated with a small firm's business performance in China. Becker and Palmer (2011) established that branding has positive results when used in universities. There is a positive effect on brand identity and brand image when there is agreement between the two. Values should be credible and it should not just be a message but also evidence that the communication is true. Lastly, Boscor (2015) establish that universities should adopt new strategies in the field of human resource research, cost reduction and partner with other universities and companies to remain competitive. As such, the studies concentrated on different marketing variables, with others concentrating on a specific marketing strategy which may not be generalized to the Kenyan situation.

A study by Rugut (2012) examined the marketing strategies adopted by SMEs in Nairobi Central Business District and established that SMEs use a variety of marketing strategies including persuasion, reading the market, searching for market opportunities, differentiation and diversification. However, the study investigated the marketing strategies adopted and not their effect on performance. Muchohi (2015) conducted a study marketing strategy adopted by Tennis Affiliated organizations to enhance competitiveness. The results revealed that there is strong association between marketing strategies and competitiveness. Asava (2016), establish that private

universities should pursue branding in order to have a competitive advantage that will ensure the institution image is built hence increase in market value. From the foregoing, it is notable that there is no consensus on the effect of marketing strategies on performance of firms. In addition, the studies conducted in Kenya, concentrated on other contexts apart from Strathmore University to the best knowledge of the researcher. The current study sought to address this research gap by answering the research question; what is the influence of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The study sought to determine the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. The specific objectives of the study were:

- i) To determine the marketing strategies adopted by Strathmore University.
- ii) To establish the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University.

1.4 Value of the Study

The study findings will act as a reference point for future researchers, scholars and students seeking to undertake studies on the same or a closely related field. The scholars and researchers may also find it helpful in the identification of further study areas and related areas by pointing out topics that need further research and reviewing of existing empirical literature to identify study gaps.

This study's findings may be useful to the government and other policy making bodies as a benchmark for development policies formulation related to the sector in the economy. The government will benefit with the findings of this study as it will be

enlightened through understanding the effects of marketing strategies on the progress of education sector in Kenya.

The study provides an understanding on the effectiveness of marketing strategies on the performance of Strathmore University. The inference drawn from this study is useful in regard to assisting in guiding and formulating policies and guidelines that would help universities and other organizations in the sector adopt channels that would enhance their performance which in turn will contribute to the sector performance.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter entails theoretical literature review, marketing strategies and its relationship with organizational performance. The chapter also presents the empirical literature review comprising of local and global studies, marketing strategies and finally the conceptual framework.

2.2 Theoretical Review

This study was based on three theories. These are; the Ansoff growth strategy theory, the Resource - Based view theory of the firm and the Competence Based strategy theory.

2.2.1 Ansoff's Product-Market Growth Model

The Ansoff (1957) Product-Market Growth model for marketing allows managers to find new avenues for growing their businesses through both existing and new products, in both new and existing markets. The matrix gives four possibilities of combinations for product/market. The matrix is helpful in making decisions on the most suitable course of action to be taken given the current performance. The matrix is made up of four strategies; which are; market penetration (existing products, existing markets): This happens when a company penetrates new markets using current products. The best approach to attain this is by snatching competitors' customers away to achieve this (part of their market share). Other ways a company might achieve this is by attracting new users of their product or persuade current clients to increase their usage of the product/service through aggressive promotions

and advertising and/or product development (introducing new products to an existing market).

Firms with existing market share for their products can embark on developing newer products targeted at the same market. Frequently, creation of new products by a firm will attract new customers hence product development serves as a strategy to develop business by firms to fight off competition; Market development (selling existing products in a new market): An already existing product can be modified or sold to a different customer category in order to cash in more revenues to the firm; diversification will enable the firm to expand its outreach to newer markets where there is no established presence. Newer skills, facilities and techniques are necessary for diversification to take place. The results of diversification in an organization are changes in the overall business structure that is distinct from past business experiences (Ansoff, 1957).

The matrix further shows that as the elements of risk increase, the strategy becomes less predictable from existing products and markets. Product development and market extension therefore is a product of greater risks than penetration alone and diversification efforts carry the greatest risks hence most activities geared towards marketing centre around market penetration (Hande & Vedat, 2015). Aaker (2011) argues that the Ansoff Matrix, despite its wide application does provide very little value but nevertheless offers a number of viable options that are open. In particular, Aaker (2011) notes that a viable middle ground exists between strategies and several companies have adopted this approach and generally expanded overtime to key industrial players. Peder and Richard (2013) stated that the success of companies lies in their ability to resolve 'the dilemma of opposites'.

2.2.2 Resource - Based View Theory

This hypothesis contends that maintained upper hand and enhanced execution by a firm might be acknowledged by misusing profitable, uncommon, non-substitutable and incompletely imitable assets (Hart, 1995). A significant asset or heap of assets enables a venture to bridge openings and diminish dangers in its condition. An uncommon asset or heap of assets is one that isn't controlled by countless. A non-substitutable asset or heap of assets is one for which a proportional asset can't undoubtedly be made by contending firm or firms. An incompletely imitable asset or heap of assets is one that is hard to imitate or one that can be repeated at a critical cost (Hart, 1995). Ignorant (1983) records these assets to incorporate all abilities, resources, hierarchical procedures, learning and data controlled by a firm.

Assets can just extend the firm esteem in the event that they are utilized in a manner that thinks about the dynamic outside business condition (Sirmon, Ireland & Hitt, 2007). The assets can be sorted as substantial or elusive (Mentzer, Bobbitt & Min, 2004) Wagner (2006) contends that marketing strategies are defined as the desirable practices acquired from efficient strategies. Desirable practices will support the firm functions in the delivery of services of high quality and sustain superior performance therefore marketing strategy frameworks are resources that fall well within RBV because it leads to improved service delivery and performance.

This study is of the view that higher level of bonding between marketing strategies and sustainability is directly associated with an organization's performance and profitability. Under RBV by exploiting marketing strategies, Universities build capabilities for improved organizational performance. The theory is applicable to the

study since it articulates organizational processes, close working relationships and knowledge sharing as the resources used to improve the organizations' performance.

2.2.3 Competence Based Theory

The Competence Based theory argues that each business should run using a given set of procedures. This approach describes a business as an open system that freely interacts with the environment to acquire resources and increase outputs. According to this theory, the firm's capacity is determined by the firm's specific core competences which are not accessible to the competitors which increase the profitability and performance of the firm (Prescott, 2011). The firm's competitive position is constantly changing in the current competitive environment due to emergence of new technologies, products competitors as well as new markets. Similarly, adaptability and flexibility are critical concepts towards the attainment of sustainable competitive advantage (Whetton, 2011). The Competence Based theory describes the influence a firm's strategies towards its performance improvement. Therefore, the role of this theory in evaluating the firm's competitiveness and sales cannot be underestimated. The theory helps the firm to develop initiatives that it could take to meet the needs of the customer and to improve the general firm performance (Lovelock, 2011).

2.3 Marketing Strategies

According to McCarthy (2011) strategy is defined as an organization's direction and scope in meeting its long-term objectives through use of its resources in the current changing business environment. Nagle and Holden (2012) define strategy as an underlying strategic management concept. Marketing strategies are described as a set of tactical or controllable marketing tools adopted by an organization in meeting the

needs and demands of a given target market. Marketing strategies thus constitute of all firm responses as it seeks to ensure that the target market creates a positive impact on their product demand. Firms that seek to meet the customers' expectations focus on understanding the customers' needs and formulating appropriate strategies for performance improvement. The following section provides a discussion of marketing strategies.

2.3.1 Product Strategy

Wilson et al., (2008) explains that product strategies demonstrate the mission of the business unit and the business being executed. Its brand placement in a given market where it will be preferred against the competing brands. Its objectives include: to facilitate product positioning in the market so that it stands out among competing brands; positioning the product so that customers understand what you are, what you stand for and how you would like to be evaluated by the customers. It also depicts that product strategy specify market needs met through offering different products.

Clark and Fujimoto (1990) put across different product perspectives. Product repositioning strategy evaluates the current product repositioning and marketing mix while seeking a new position. It aims at increasing life of the product as well as correcting original positioning mistake. At the end, there should be an increase in profitability and sales growth among existing customers. Among new users there is expansion of the overall market thus putting the product on a growth route, while increasing profitability. Development of new product uses increases sales, market share as well as profitability.

2.3.2 Pricing Strategy

Price is described as the proposed value of a commodity or service. Foss (2012) argues that the existence of effective development, distribution and promotion of a product has a positive impact on the firm's success. However, critics argue that ineffective pricing negatively influences the firm's performance since effective pricing strategy does not compensate for the poor execution on promotion, distribution and product development (Palmer, 2011). Furthermore, a firm's pricing strategy is important due to high homogeneity levels between service groups, efficient operating systems and shared service delivery. Different pricing strategies are employed by firms which are based on the product stage in the market and organizations' objectives. These include: new product pricing which include penetration pricing strategy, pricing strategies for well-established products as described by competition, price leadership strategy, psychological pricing strategy and price flexibility strategy.

2.3.3 Distribution Strategy

The firm uses its distribution strategy to deliver products and services to different networks and channels so as to deliver it to the end user. These intermediaries are agents, distributors, retailers and the wholesalers. These elements seek to ensure that firms' customers receive quality services which increase the customer satisfaction levels (Palmer, 2011). It is important to deliver products at the customers' doorstep for convenience. Distribution channels describe the firm's competitiveness level since they influence the span taken by a product to reach the customer as well as the products' final price. The distribution strategy helps the organization to understand the methods of channeling goods through better distribution segmentations and

enhanced knowledge within the sales channels, the role of intermediaries on distribution process, understanding areas of interest on sales channels and the firm's position with regards to the sales channel (Whetton, 2011).

2.3.4 Promotion Strategy

These entail all the means of communication used by a marketer to create awareness and convince customers to purchase a given product. To the promotional strategy need to be guided by the marketing concept i.e. focusing on the needs of the customer and integration of all organizational activities to meet the needs (Desimone, Werner & Harris, 2012). These include direct customer interaction and advertising. Small businesses need good salesmanship since they have little funds for advertising. The promotional strategy must function as per the marketing concept so as to be effective as it will seek to meet the customer's needs through integration of all the organizations' activities to meet those needs (Reeder, Brierty & Reeder, 2011).

Cavusgil, Knight and Riesenberger, (2008), argue that effective sales promotion initiatives give a business organization a competitive edge over its rivals in the market. Developing a successful promotional mix requires proper integration the following elements; developing objectives, situation analysis, selecting channels, preparing budget, designing messages, selection mix and evaluation. Situational analysis allows companies to assess the current requirements of the customer, the competitive position and environment. Target audience engagement looks at companies look at the lifestyles and demographics, usage levels, life stages, understanding of the organization and the purchase process of the product (Langes & Montgomery, 2005).

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

Marketing is a critical issue in business performance and innovation with major impact on business strategy. Good marketing facilitates sales and expansion, and significantly contributes to market share growth share in competitive environments (Marjanova & Stojanovski, 2012). The role marketing strategies in improving firm performance has been evidenced by many studies. For instance, Taiwo (2010) concluded that strategic marketing practices have a strong effect on performance variables and that work with different components to improve the performance.

Dzisi and Ofori (2014) examined the relationship between marketing strategies and the performance of SMEs in Ghana and found there was a positive association between the marketing strategies and SMEs performance. Strategic marketing strategies were discovered to be drivers of organizational positioning in a dynamic environment, which facilitate the development of new product/service for the existing markets. Ardjouman and Asma (2015) also explored marketing management strategies employed by SMEs in Cote d'Ivoire for performance improvement and established found high awareness levels about a product to have the significance role on the performance of SMEs.

According to Wanjiku (2015), established that branding is an important element for higher learning institutions since most students consider choosing a university that is well branded, affordable and has good reputation within the community. Universities need to segment their market and know which client they are targeting so that to meet there needs before embarking on brand strategies. The need of the client should involve offering quality education to students that is affordable. Universities should invest on promotional materials to create an image that meet customer's needs. On the

other hand, Boscor (2015) argues that universities are facing challenges due to shift competition in the market all over the world. Universities have to come up with new source of competitive advantage in order to be sustainable in the market. Most universities face stiff competition due to online courses being offered by most universities at a low price compared to regular courses. Universities are required to invest in human resource, research, and partnerships with other companies and universities to remain competitive in the market.

Asava (2016), establish that private universities should pursue branding in order to have a competitive advantage that will ensure their institution image is built hence increase in market value. Private universities work on efficiency so that to reduce the cost of running their operations. Private universities should take part in strategic planning and implementation to ensure there is competitive edge. Naatu (2016), internal branding, customer orientation, brand position, research and development are important factors that make an organization to have competitive advantage. Management of jewelry firms usually conduct market research so that to identify the needs and wants of target customers which assist in building a strong and manageable brand hence gain competitive advantage. Jewelry firms should be innovative, produce quality products and fabricate their products so as to excite customers.

Langat et al (2017), when university hires professional employees, have focus on university goals, good leadership style and proper internal branding is done students choice the institution. Universities policy board should ensure that staff universities carry out their duties by listening to student opinion and grievances are considered as first priority this will ensure the universities are well positioned and well branded in

the market. Opiyo (2017) established that for a party to be successful it has to come up with brand strategies that will ensure united party brand is built to give voters the image.

A study by Mbugua (2013) established that poor marketing was statistically significant in determining growth of micro and small enterprises but most of the small business entrepreneurs were not keen with marketing since they relied on the quality of their products as their marketing tool. Kiveu (2013) also established that marketing strategies are great contributors to growth as well as to profits, thus SMEs should think about their customers, current and potential, could well be beneficial. Mutambuki and Orwa (2014) examined commercial fish farming marketing strategies in Kitui County. The findings indicated that sales promotion, product branding, core competences marketing and market positioning strategies influence commercial fish farming and that poor mechanisms of marketing strategies affected the sale of fish.

A study conducted by Arasa (2014) on the association between the competitive strategies and organizational performance: a case of the Kenyan mobile telecommunication companies showed that high competition is being experienced in this industry forcing most companies to formulate competitive that enhance the companies' survival. The results of regression analysis revealed a weak positive association between competitive strategies and performance. This study however focused on mobile telecommunication companies while the current study will focus on the insurance industry in Kenya.

Oloko et al., (2014) examined the marketing strategies utilized by Safaricom Ltd to spur its remarkable growth regarding the market share and its unprecedented strong

super profit in the telecommunication industry in both Kenya and East Africa region. The study found out that various marketing techniques were employed by Safaricom, which included auditory marketing, animation, new product creation, pricing, content localization, place and the techniques were noted to improve the uptake of Safaricom's products hence, resulting to increased revenue leading to profitability. Kimani (2014) explored the effectiveness of the various marketing strategies, which are undertaken at the Kenya Revenue Authority, the success and impact of marketing on the operations of the Authority. The study found that that marketing has greatly affected the amount of revenue collected by KRA.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework in figure 2.1 shows how system development enhancement, product strategies, distribution strategies, pricing strategies and promotion strategies influence organizational performance of Strathmore University.

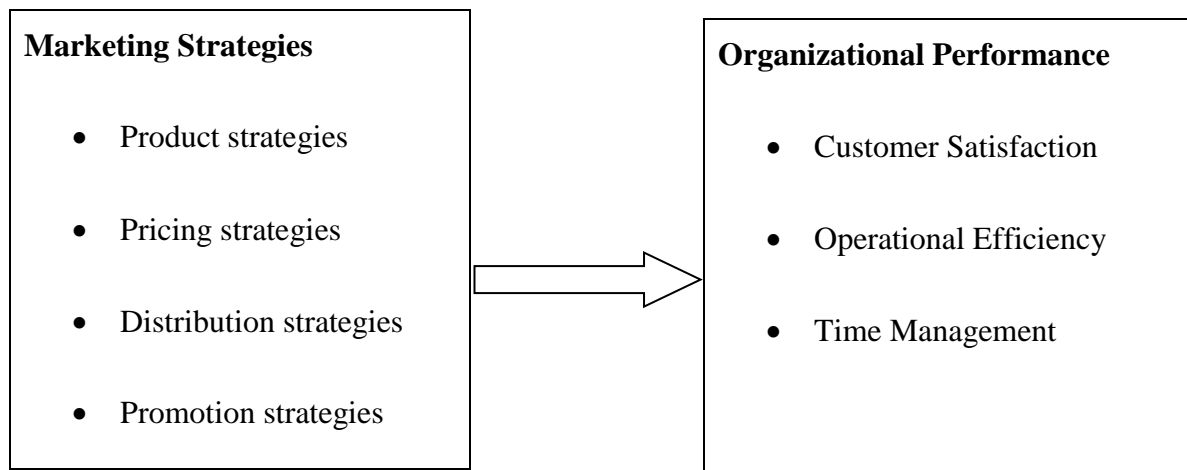


Figure 2.1: The Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher (2018)

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes methods of research that were applied to objectively establish the influence of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. It also shows the research design, data collection and the procedure through which data was analyzed.

3.2 Research Design

The selected research design was a case study. According to Burns and Burns (2008), a case study shows the right profile of persons and events. The design presents data in a meaningful manner which facilitates understanding of attributes of a group in circumstance to critically think about the prospects of a given situation which helps the researcher to reach logical conclusions. A case study involves an in-depth study of a research object or organization. This design is considered suitable since it allows the researcher to focus on one unit namely Strathmore University and to conduct an in-depth study on the influence of marketing strategies on performance at Strathmore University.

3.3 Population of the Study

According to Cooper and Schindler (2013) population is the total number of individuals in a particular group that the researcher is interested in studying. On the other hand Kothari defines population as the total number of individuals or respondents in an environment that the researcher wants to study. The target population for this study will be all the 9 schools that constitute Strathmore University. The respondents in this study were Deans of schools or their representatives in marketing department. Marketing managers are best positioned to give necessary information on the marketing strategies in the schools.

3.4 Data Collection

This study used primary data to address the study's objectives. Primary data was collected from the Deans of each of the nine schools or their representatives using an interview guide shown in appendix one. The primary data was collected directly from the respondents and this was done using the interview guide that captured the respondent's perception of marketing strategies and their impact on performance at Strathmore University.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data collected was inputted into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Since the data is qualitative in nature, content analysis was used to evaluate the response, draw conclusions and to derive recommendations. Content analysis consisted of analyzing the interview responses looking for similarities and difference in order to find themes and to develop categories. According to Khan (2008), content analysis consists of analyzing the contents of documentary materials

such as books, magazines, newspapers and content of all verbal materials which can either be spoken or printed. Further, Burns and Burns (2008), insist that content analysis is the systematic qualitative description of the composition of the objects or materials of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter comprises of data analysis, findings and interpretation. Results are presented in form of diagrams and continuous prose form. The data is in line with the research objectives.

4.2 Interview Guide Response Rate

The researcher had targeted to conduct 9 interviews. However, it was only possible to reach out to 7 interviewees. Additionally, it was not possible to access the dean of students from the various schools as intended and thus the researcher interviewed representatives on their behalf. This reveals an overall successful response rate of 77.8%. According to Babbie (2004), return rates of 50% are acceptable to analyze and publish, 60% is good and 70% is very good. Based on these 77.8% response rate is adequate for the study.

4.3 Background Information of the Respondents

The study sought to first of all get to know the background information of the interviewees. To start with the study sought to establish their position. The results revealed that the key informants held managerial positions in various disciplines such as administration, business development, training, IT and research. The study sought to establish the highest education qualification of the respondents. Results revealed that all the respondents had attained a bachelor's degree I various disciplines. In addition, there were some who were pursuing their master's degree while others had certificates in professional courses such as ACCA, CPA and CIM. This is an indicator

that most of the respondent were educated and thus were better placed to give relevant information. The study sought to establish the period of time that the respondents had served in their current positions. The results revealed that the respondents had served in their current position for a period of between 4 months to 2 years. The study also sought to establish whether the respondents were involved in marketing. All the respondents agreed that they were involved in marketing.

4.4 Marketing Strategies adopted by Strathmore University

4.4.1 Product Differentiation Strategies

The study sought to establish the extent to which Strathmore University has adopted product differentiation strategies in marketing. The feedback from the key informants revealed that Strathmore University has adopted product differentiation strategies in marketing to a great extent. The results revealed that the university had come up diverse ways to market their products.

The key informant from the Business School stated “we use model marketing whereby we visit high schools and enrol students without their KCSE results and instead use their mocks results”. The second one was that they have short courses for teachers and other professionals in the corporate world to help harness their skills. These courses are as short as 2 hours training. Third, is the quality of education offered. The key informant from the School of Humanities and Social Sciences stated “our institution has taken the initiative to hire well trained staff who in return offer quality education to the students”. “The teaching staff are continuously engaged in programs which continually equip them with requisite skills required with changing demand” he added. Further, the institution has engaged in partnerships with other

international universities such as World business school, Harvard University and the University of California which grants the students great exposure.

Fourth, was the fact that students do not take long to finish their courses compared to public universities. This is due to the fact that the institution is not a culprit to the frequent lecture strikes and the fact that they don't go for long holidays unless when going for attachments. Additionally, the students experience is a notch higher as they learning environment has good facilities, academia and are also able to access one on one attention from the teaching staff. The key respondents from the School of Tourism and Hospitality said "our institution has adopted a program that gives the students an opportunity to travel to various places across the globe where they get to experience the practical aspects of what they learn in theory and thus improve on their hands-on skills". "This goes a long way in helping students who have aspirations of becoming entrepreneurs in future" he added. Finally, respondent from the Business School stated that unlike in other universities students are provided with meals and all learning materials including a Samsung tablet to access e-learning materials and offering customized programs depending on the needs of the clients.

4.4.2 Pricing Strategy

The study sought to establish whether Strathmore University adopted any pricing strategy to marketing itself. The results were neutral with some of the key informants stating that Strathmore had adopted a pricing strategy while others indicated no. The key informant from the Business School stated "our institution has engaged into partnerships with companies like Brookside, EABL, I&M whereby we organize maths contests and in return get scholarships fully paid by this companies". "Some courses

offered in the institution such as ACCA are given at a lower compared to other universities.

Further, they added that the institution is a brand and is known for the quality of products offered, hence their students go for quality in as much as the cost is slightly higher than in other institutions. “The pricing strategy in our institution is very clear and transparent” stated the key informant from the faculty of information and technology. However, the key informant from the School of Management and Commerce stated “the pricing strategy in our institution is not customer friendly as many students are locked out”. Our institution ought to adopt better models of payment for inclusivity purpose” she added.

4.4.3 Distribution Strategy

The study also sought to establish whether Strathmore University has adopted distribution as a marketing strategy. “Strathmore doesn’t have branches however, it has adopted distribution strategy in many ways such as visiting schools even outside Kenya in countries like Rwanda. The school has also established regional offices in East African Countries which are Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda to create awareness about the institution existence” recapped the key informant from the Business School. “Our institutional is going global and currently conducting much of regional marketing” stated the key informant from the School of Tourism and Hospitality. Additionally, they reiterated that the institution has continually introduced new programs over time which has continuously increases its scope.

The key informant from the School of Information and Technologysaid “the management of our school is formulating a policy that will guide to conduct social

media marketing’’. The key respondents also stated that the institution has adopted various social media campaigns which have helped to create awareness about its existence. The social media campaigns also give information to the public on when they have intakes. Further, ‘‘our institution has a business club which continuously performs corporate social responsibilities in the low income areas within Nairobi’’ posited the key informant from the Business School. This opens up our institution to sponsorship opportunities from donors within this low income areas as well as create awareness about the existence of the school’’ she added.

4.4.4 Promotion Strategy

The study also sought to establish whether Strathmore University has adopted any promotion strategy as a way of marketing. The responses from the key informants revealed that the institution had diverse ways of promoting their products. ‘‘We have press releases when launching new programmes and also give out discounts to students pursuing CPA and ACCA whose perform is outstanding. These students have the advantage of paying half the fee’’ stated the key informant from the school of accountancy. ‘‘The institution also offers discounts to various groups of people, for instance early birds get a 10% discount, referral of up to 5 people from one organization also earns one a discount, alumni who enrol for other courses get a 15% discount while staff get 20% discount’’ he added. There are also commissions for staff whereby one gets slotted to undertake particular professional courses, such as a senior management training, if they refer many people. Further, the key informants stated that the institution is able to give students partial discounts or full scholarships through partnership with various corporate institutions.

4.4.5 Suggestion for Other Marketing Strategies

The study also sought to find out whether there were any additional marketing strategies that Strathmore University can use. The key informants gave various suggestions which they felt could help the institution to thrive. These suggestions included marketing all programmes such that people outside can know what is offered at the school (such as teachers' programmes, CFA, CISA, CIM, communication) since currently most people associate the institution with accounting business related courses alone. They also suggested that the institution should endeavour to conduct internal marketing amongst all departments whereby they can share contacts and build a common data base which they can use to reach out to many stakeholders all at once and thus create awareness of the courses.

The key informants from the School of Management and Commerce stated "our institution should take advantage of social media to market their products". "Given that our institution is Christian based, we can use religious organizations to market our products such as Waumini radio, Family radio 316 and Hope FM" she added. This can be explained by the fact that their target market is expected to be listeners to these stations especially in the morning when there is traffic. These stations also charge cheaper compared to other mainstream media. Finally, the key informants suggested that the institution should embark on conducting serious marketing in other countries since the number of non-Kenyan students is still low.

4.4 Organization Performance

The study sought to establish the influence of adoption of marketing strategies on the overall performance of Strathmore University. The study also looked into the

influence of marketing strategies on specific aspects that contribute to better performance. These aspects included customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, time management and service delivery.

To start with, the responses from the key informants revealed that indeed market strategies had impacted on the performance of the institution positively. “Numbers say it all” stated the key informant from the Business School. “This is evidenced by the fact that we have experienced an increase in the number of student’s enrolments as well as partnerships form corporate companies” she added. They also stated that use of marketing strategies has led to the introduction of executive programs which are offered to professionals in the corporate world such as hotel managers, tourism CECs in the counties, finance managers, teachers and professionals in the health sector.

With regard to customer satisfaction, the key informant stated that the students served are impressed with the quality of education they acquire which results to increased referrals of friends. The reiterated that students are able to get value for their money. In addition, the institution has internship and job placement programs which take the students experience a notch higher. Further, the institution engages with the alumni to get to know how they are faring. Further, the key informants stated that since the institution is Christian based it upholds good values which make their graduates marketable. In a nut shell, all this initiatives by the institution boost the customer satisfaction to a very great extent.

With regard to operational efficiency, the responses were on the affirmative and stated that the students get value for their money. In addition, they stated that the administration team does a commendable job whereby information is relayed in good time and students queries are attended to promptly. With regard to time management,

the key informants stated that this is a core value that the institutions seeks to adhere to. To start with, they posited that students have to attend three quarters of classes so as to sit for exams. They also pointed out that there exists a departments that ensures that the timetabling of lectures and exams ass well allocation of venues is without flaws. This help a lot in to save time and avoid collision. They went ahead to assert that once the timetable is set, it is followed and students and lectures are punctual for lectures.

Finally, with regard to service delivery, the key informants stated that marketing strategies play a very crucial role in enhancing efficiency in service delivery. In addition, the key informants stated that since the school is a non-profit they channel back the funds collected to enhancing the quality of services offered and better the experience and monitor efficiency.

4.5 Discussion of Findings

The main objective of the study was to determine the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. To start with, the study sought to determine the marketing strategies adopted by Strathmore University. The study findings revealed that Strathmore University had adopted various marketing strategies. These marketing strategies included product differentiation strategies, pricing strategy, distribution strategy and promotion strategy.

Secondly, the study sought to establish the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University. The findings showed that marketing strategies have a positive effect on the performance of Strathmore University. These results are consistent with the assertions of Marjanova and Stojanovski (2012) who reiterated

that marketing is a critical issue in business performance and innovation with major impact on business strategy. They also added that good marketing facilitates sales and expansion, and significantly contributes to market share growth share in competitive environments. This study also concurs with those of Taiwo (2010) who concluded that strategic marketing practices have a strong effect on performance.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the summary of the findings, the conclusions and the recommendations. This is done in line with the objectives of the study.

5.2 Summary of Findings

This section presents a summary of the findings from the analysis. This is done in line with the objectives of the study.

The study results revealed that Strathmore University has adopted product differentiation strategies in marketing to a great extent. The results revealed that the university had come up diverse ways to market their products. The first one was model marketing whereby they visit high schools and enrol students without their KCSE results and instead use their mocks results. The second one was that they have short courses for teachers and other professionals in the corporate world to help harness their skills. These courses are as short as 2 hours training. Third, is the quality of education offered. The institution has taken the initiative to hire well trained staff who in return offer quality education to the students. In addition, they stated that the teaching staff are continuously engaged in programs which continually equip them with requisite skills required with changing demand.

Further, the institution has engaged in partnerships with other international universities such as World business school, Harvard University and the University of California which grants the students great exposure. Fourth, was the fact that students do not take long to finish their courses compared to public universities. This

is due to the fact that the institutional is not a culprit to the frequent lecture strikes and the fact that they don't go for long holidays unless when going for attachments. Additionally, the students experience is a notch higher as they learning environment has good facilities, academia and are also able to access one on one attention from the teaching staff. Fifth, is the adoption of a program that gives the students an opportunity to travel to various places across the globe where they get to experience the practical aspects of what they learn in theory and thus improve on their hands on skills. This goes a long way in helping students who have aspirations of becoming entrepreneurs in future. Finally, unlike in other universities students are provided with meals and all learning materials including a Samsung tablet to access e-learning materials.

The study results revealed that Strathmore had adopted a pricing strategy while others indicated no. For those who were on the affirmative stated that the institution had engaged into partnerships with companies like Brookside, EABL, I&M whereby they organized maths contests and in return get scholarships fully paid by this companies. They also stated that there some cheaper courses offered in the institution such as ACCA. Further, they added that the institution is a brand and is known for the quality of products offered, hence their students go for quality in as much as the cost is slightly higher than in other institutions. The also stated that the pricing strategy is very clear and transparent. However, some of the key informants stated that the pricing strategy is not customer friendly as many students are locked out. Hence, the institution ought to adopt better models of payment for inclusivity purpose.

The study sought to establish whether Strathmore University has adopted distribution as a marketing strategy. The study results revealed that in as much as Strathmore

doesn't have branches it has adopted distribution strategy in various ways. For instance, this is achieved through visiting schools even outside Kenya in countries like Rwanda to create awareness about the institution existence. The results also stated that the institutional is going global and is doing much of regional marketing. Additionally, they reiterated that the institution has continually introduces new programs over time which has continuously increases its scope.

The study sought to establish whether Strathmore University has adopted any promotion strategy as a way of marketing. The responses from the key informants revealed that the institution had diverse ways of promoting their products. These included having press releases when launching new programmes, giving discounts to students pursuing CPA and ACCA who perform exemplary whereby they have the advantage of paying half the fee. The institution also offer discounts to various groups of people for instance early birds get a 10% discount, referral of up to 5 people from one organization also earns one a discount, alumni who enrol for other courses get a 15% discount while staff get 20% discount. There are also commissions for staff whereby one gets slotted to undertake particular professional courses, such as a senior management training, if they refer many people. Further, the results showed that the institution is able to give students partial discounts or full scholarships through partnership with various corporate institutions.

5.3 Conclusion

The study concluded that Strathmore University had adopted marketing strategies adopted Strathmore University. These marketing strategies included product differentiation, pricing, distribution and promotion. The specific, product differentiation strategies included model marketing, existence of short courses for

teachers and other professionals in the corporate world, offering quality education, engaging in partnerships with other international universities, short period for course completion, trips to various places across the globe where students get to experience the practical aspects of what they learn in theory and provision of meals and all learning materials to students.

The specific pricing strategy include engagement in partnerships with companies like Brookside, EABL, I&M in a bid to get fully paid scholarships for students and offering some courses such as ACCA at a cheaper cost. The specific distribution strategies adopted included visiting schools even outside Kenya in countries like Rwanda to create awareness about the existence of the institution, doing much of regional marketing and continuous introduction of new programs. Further, the specific promotion strategies adopted include having press releases when launching new programmes and giving discounts and scholarships to students and commissions to staff.

The study also concluded that marketing strategies have a positive impact on the organization performance of Strathmore University. The study revealed that marketing strategies has resulted to better customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, time management and service delivery. In additional, adoption of marketing strategies has resulted to an increase in the number of students enrolling, increase in the number of programs and increase in the number of graduates. Further, the study concluded that Strathmore University has adopted product differentiation and promotion strategy to a greater extent compared to pricing and distribution marketing strategies.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the study findings the study recommended that Strathmore University should take the initiative to create awareness for all programs. They should strive to erase the notion that is created that the institution only focuses on business related courses. The study also recommends that the institution ought to create a fully operational marketing department which will market all programs as opposed to leaving the responsibility of marketing to individual departments. This would result to better results as the aspect of specialization in business would take effect and the marketers are only tasked with only one main task. The study also recommends that the institution should work towards attaining accreditation from international bodies so as to attract foreign students and achieve the objective of going global. Further, the study recommends that the institution ought to adopt flexible modes of payment so as to accommodate all students. For instance, they can introduce instalment payments of tuition fees. Additionally, they can make arrangements to reach out to people where they are and take the professional short courses to the ground. For instance, they can conduct those trainings at company's boardrooms.

5.5 Suggested Areas of Further Studies

The study recommends that a similar study be conducted but focus on a different university and more so a public university for comparison purposes. The study also suggests that a study seeking to establish the impact of marketing strategies on other aspects of organization performance such as financial, corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability be conducted.

Being that this study was qualitative, the study suggests that a quantitative study should be conducted so as to measure the magnitude of influence of various marketing strategies on organization performance. This would be of great help to identify which marketing strategy has a greater impact and thus create awareness on which market strategy should be prioritized by Strathmore University. However, this could be different for differ organizations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Interview Guide

I would like to request you to give me information on the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore Business School.

The purpose of this interview is to:

- i) Determine the marketing strategies adopted by Strathmore University.
- ii) Establish the effect of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University.

PART A: DEAN OR REPRESENTATIVE PROFILE

- 1) What is your current position in the institution?
- 2) What is your highest qualification?
- 3) For how long have you been in senior level management of the school?
- 4) Are you involved in marketing of the school?

PART B: MARKETING STRATEGIES ADOPTED AT STRATHMORE UNIVERSITY

- 5) In your view, to what extent have you adopted product differentiation strategies in marketing Strathmore University?
- 6) In your view, can you conclude that pricing strategy has been adopted by Strathmore University in the process of marketing the University?
- 7) To what extent do you think Strathmore University has adopted distribution as a marketing strategy?

8) In your view, comment on the use of promotion strategy by Strathmore University as a way of marketing?

9) Please suggest additional marketing strategies you feel that Strathmore University can use or are currently in use

PART C: ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE

10) How has been the performance of Strathmore University as a result of its marketing strategies?

11) Can you conclude that marketing strategies have improved customer satisfaction at Strathmore University?

12) Has the university achieved operational efficiency as a result of application of appropriate marketing strategies?

13) In your view, has time management at the university improved as a result of using effective marketing strategies?

14) Has marketing strategies in the university resulted in effectiveness in service delivery?

Thank you for your co-operation