THE EFFECTIVENESS OF MARKETING COMMUNICATION TOOLS ON ALUMNI RELATIONS FOR UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

By:

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degree of Master of Business Administration, School of Business, University of Nairobi.

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

This project is my original work and has not been presented for the award of a degree in any other university.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

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Declaration by the supervisor

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Prof. Francis N. Kibera

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am most grateful to Prof. F.N. Kibera, my project supervisor, for his guidance and assistance. Their suggestions and criticisms at various stages of this work made it possible for me to see it through. I will not forget my other lecturers who always encouraged me to work hard. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my colleagues for their words of encouragement as we struggled through the semester. Lastly but most important, God bless you all.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my alma mater for all the effort it makes towards quality alumni relations. I am proud to be an alumnus of University of Nairobi.

ABSTRACT

The study attempted to establish the effectiveness of marketing communication tools in Kenya. A sample of 136 alumni from all 34 universities in Kenya was targeted as respondents for the study. The study had an 89% response rate. A descriptive survey design was used to achieve the objective of the study. Semi-structured questionnaires were used for data collection. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the findings of the study while statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and Ms Excel were used to perform the analysis of quantitative data. The study established that most universities in Kenya have one form or another of alumni relations. This is either managed by alumni associations formed by alumni, alumni relations officers who are employees of the university, some have both alumni and associations and alumni officers. However, about a third of the population of our universities, do not have any form of institutionalized alumni relations management. The study also found that universities with alumni relations are making use of a mix of marketing tools for its alumni relations activities. Usage and effectiveness of these tools vary in degree. Advertising, especially through online social media has been sighted as the most effective tool for most of the alumni relations activities. The study recommends that universities need to invest in acquiring and training alumni relations management either in the form of alumni associations, university alumni officers or both. It also recommends that a mix of marketing communication tools be used for alumni relations activities to synergize on the effectiveness of each tool. Further, it recommends that specific tools be matched with specific alumni relations activities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CASE- Council for Advancement and Support for Education

CHE- Commission for Higher Education

CUEA- Catholic University of Eastern Africa

EU- Egerton University

JAB- Joint Admissions Board

JKUAT- Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology

KAFP- Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals

KU- Kenyatta University

LIA- Letter of Interim Authority

MMUST- Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology

MSU- Maseno University

MU- Moi University

SALO- Strathmore Alumni Liaison Office

SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UoN- University of Nairobi

USA- United States of America

USIU- United States International University

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Alumni refer to former students of an educational institution. However, sometimes the term includes other persons such as former employees of an institution. The alumni are vital stakeholders in organizations and when harnessed can play a vital role in the execution of the mandate of the institutions. In the recent past there have been numerous attempts by institutions of higher learning in Kenya to revamp their Alumni Associations to make them more effective in performing their functions. Several lessons can be drawn from the experiences that some of these institutions have gone through.

Alumni relations entail all forms of interactions between the alumni and their alma mater, former institutions of learning. Many highly reputed universities in the United States of America maintain very close links with their alumni. This trend has now spread to other regions of the world. In Europe, alumni associations are getting more and more popular as universities continue to receive less money from the Exchequer and depend more on civil society for funding. Alumni relations are also being practiced in Africa including Kenya. In a workshop held in October 2008 in Uganda, many universities sent representatives to familiarize themselves with alumni relations and fund raising for universities. From Kenya a number of universities sent representatives to the workshop (Wesonga, 2008). Five years on and we have more universities with every passing year, attending alumni workshops organized by Council for Advancement and Support for Education (CASE) and the Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals (KAFP).

Marketing Communication tools are employed by universities to reach out to their alumni. The tools are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brands that they sell (Kotler, 2001). Personal and non-personal channels can be used for marketing communications. The marketing communications mix is now thought of as consisting six major modes or types of communication alternatives namely advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and personal selling. A combination of these is employed by universities world-over to enhance alumni relations. The proposed study seeks to establish the types of marketing communication tools, for alumni relations, used by universities in Kenya and to evaluate their perceived effectiveness.

1.1.1 Marketing communication tools

The concept of marketing communication tools is the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brands that they sell (Kotler, 2001). The tools are divided into personal communications and non-personal communications. Personal communication tools are those in which two or more people communicate with one another, and word of mouth is the primary means of communication, although other media, such as email, are growing significantly. Non-personal communication tools are those in which communication occurs through some other media other than person-to person. These include national and regional newspapers and magazines, television, satellite, and cable television. Within both personal and non-personal tools, there are many sub-channels.

The marketing communications mix is now thought of as consisting six major modes or types of communication alternatives: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and personal selling.

1.1.2 Alumni relations

The concept of Alumni Relations can be understood as to entail all forms of interactions between the alumni and their alma mater, former institutions of learning. In the United States, where alumni relations are at a developed or advanced stage, alumni associations are almost as old as the universities there. Arizona State University for example, was chartered as an institution in the Arizona Territory in 1885. Only nine years later, a group of alumni organized and chartered the alumni association. Their primary mission was to lobby the Territorial Legislature to raise admission standards and improve the academic stature of the school Dolbert (2002). This trend has with time improved and has now spread to other regions of the world. For instance, in Europe, alumni associations are getting more and more popular as universities receive less money from governments and depend more on civil society for funding.

Alumni relations are affected by the benefits that accrue to both the alma mater and the alumni. It is also affected by the communications that enable the two parties and other stakeholders to pursue the set goals and objective of their relationship. University policies, operations and strategies are often influenced by alumni as they are considered by university management as key stakeholders who represent the university's outcome and who hold and drive the institutions culture and traditions.

1.1.3 Alumni relations in Kenyan universities

The study is in the context of a growing interest in alumni relations by universities in Kenya. In Kenya, there are seven public universities and fourteen private universities that have already been chattered. There are also eleven private universities that have received a letter of interim Authority and two which have been registered. There are a total of thirty four universities in Kenya. This is according to the Commission of Higher Education's website. Most of the websites for these universities have Alumni sections. Further, this is evident in the various training seminars organized for alumni relations professionals in Kenyan universities. Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) and the Kenya Association of Fundraising Professionals (KAFP) have been enlisting more and more universities through training for their professionals.

Alumni Relations like in the United States and in Europe have been a critical source of the third stream income to universities through alumni donations. This is steadily picking up in universities in Kenya. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology identifies the alumni as one of the strengths of the university and sees a growing alumni support base as an opportunity while Kenyatta University has an Alumni Policy that highlights how the university intends to harness the potential of her alumni (Wesonga, 2008). The USIU Alumni Association, for instance is a powerful network of more than 8000 members. It represents, promotes and facilitates the interests of USIU alumni. It enhances relationships between alumni and the university. The association offers alumni benefits and services that include networking opportunities, special events and access to career services.

Further, we have the Strathmore Alumni Liaison Office (SALO), an international alumni office established in Kenya with the support of Strathmore University Foundation in Princeton, New Jersey, United States of America to promote and support alumni linkages and activities world-wide.

1.2 Research problem

Kenyan universities are operating in different markets than they did a decade ago; their overall marketing orientation and survival is determined by how well they reposition themselves as distinct academic entities to increase student enrollment in the competitive academic environment created by technological changes and globalization (Siringi, 2005). Alumni relations have over the years influenced student enrollment in universities in Kenya and also continues to contribute to the universities third stream income. This study therefore endeavored to fill the study gaps by focusing on evaluating the effectiveness of selected marketing communication tools on alumni relations in universities in Kenya.

In the Kenyan context, there are a number of researches that have already been conducted in the context of this research. Examples of such related research include one on the effect of selected marketing communication tools on student enrolment in private universities in Kenya (Mutali, 2011) and another on the role of alumni in institutions of higher learning in Kenya (Wesonga, 2008). In the United States of America, an example of such related research also includes alumni relations, fundraising and development in United States of America universities (Ekaterina, 2006).

The author of this research therefore intended to fill the gap on the effectiveness of the marketing communication tools in the Kenyan universities. The study sought to find out what is the effectiveness of marketing communication tools on alumni relations in universities in Kenya?

1.3 Research objective

The objective of this research was to determine the effectiveness of marketing communication tools on alumni relations in universities in Kenya.

1.4 Value of the study

In theory, this research intended to add to the existing information about marketing communication tools in institutions of higher learning for alumni relations. It will be a source of information for related topics. The research will therefore be referenced and applied by researchers all over the world.

In practice, the study is useful to different groups of people in different ways. It will help university alumni relations managers especially those in Kenya to make informed marketing communications decisions that will help to grow and maximize their alumni relations activities and how they can apply the various alumni marketing communication options to grow their third stream income through fundraising from alumni. Also, to university policy makers as it will provide useful information relating the choice of marketing communication tools for the various alumni relations activities.

Moreover, the alumni community that forms graduate members of the general public too will benefit with improved marketing communication from their alma mater with successful implementation of the recommendations from the findings of this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of bibliographies available in relation to the variables under this study. They include marketing communication tools, alumni relations and universities in Kenya.

2.1 Marketing communication tools

According to Harold Lasswell's (1948) communication model, "Who" is the Source; "Says what", the message; and "To Whom" the destination. Communication involves a planned exchange of deliberate communication between a sender and receiver through pre-determined channels of communication to create a desired response and generate feedback (Malan and L'estrange, 1991). Marketing communication tools are the means by which firms attempt to inform, persuade, and remind consumers directly or indirectly about the products and brands that they sell (Kotler, 2001). The marketing communications mix is now thought of as consisting six major modes or types of communication alternatives: advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and personal selling. A combination of these is employed by universities world-over for alumni relations.

The intangibility nature of the education service industry pushes universities to pursue holistic marketing approach to effectively interact with all its surrounding environs.

Marketing communication tools are therefore especially important for services because they help create powerful images and a sense of credibility, confidence, and reassurance. It is vital to evaluate the effectiveness of all the marketing communication elements and how to use them effectively to generate desired results. The primary goal of marketing communication is to affect the perception of value and behavior through directed communication. In the rapidly changing and highly competitive world of the twenty-first century only strategically oriented marketing communication tools can help businesses to move forward (Schultz and Kitchen, 2000).

Traditional marketing communication tools like billboards, posters, radio, university newsletters, and alumni magazines were rated as less effective tools to reach and provide information to a market (Porter, 2001). This report is contradicted by Miller (2005) in his conclusion that advertising, through print and electronic media is a key tool for universities in reaching potential customers at a wider reach. It is therefore critical for a university to analyze its target market and publics to determine each group's communications needs, what response it wants from each group and appropriate marketing communication tools to use. A combination of marketing communication tools is better placed for effectiveness to create an impact and desired response to for example increase student enrolment (Mok, 2000).

Past studies have shown that no single marketing communication tool can be effective on its own. Universities should therefore analyze their target markets and public to determine each group's communication needs there by placing it in a better position to

choose the best mix of marketing communication tools. Studies also suggest that universities should consider embracing new technology up to date marketing using social networks like face book, my space and twitter which have a wider reach. Most alumni are technologically literate and can access these tools on their mobile phones. Traditional methods of communication are now being considered too slow for this generation.

2.3 University alumni relations

According to Taylor et al (1995), alumni are a unique, select, and continuing source of support that is one of the most valuable resources any institution has. The need for institutional alumni associations is great, as public colleges and universities depend upon these organizations to cultivate relationships with their alumni, which in turn translates into alumni giving and support. One of the ways in which alumni associations cultivate relationships and maintain alumni involvement is through dues-based membership. Dues-based alumni associations utilize their membership program as a means to build relationships, introduce non-donor alumni to institutional philanthropy, and to provide the funding necessary for the association to operate with minimal university funding. Public higher education institutions are presently faced with a perfect storm of financial crises. State appropriations are on the decline, endowments have been substantially reduced as a result of the declining stock market, generally poor economic conditions across the board, and recent, historically high tuition increases make additional tuition hikes an unattractive option for a non-tax based revenue source. As a result of the economic climate within public higher education finance, institutions must increasingly rely on alternative revenue sources, which are largely made up of alumni support (Melisa, 2009).

One of the first organized efforts to institutionalize philanthropic support began in 1890, when Yale graduates established an Alumni Fund and solicited 385 alumni for gifts. This initiative resulted in a financial return of only $11,000 (Curti et al, 1965). By 1910, however, the Alumni Fund was receiving close to $500,000 annually in alumni gifts for operating expenses. Despite Yale's pioneering attempts and ultimate success, it was not until around 1915 that other institutions, such as Brown, Illinois, Cornell, and Dartmouth, were operating similar funds and the concept of organized alumni support gained momentum. Alumni associations cultivate alumni relationships through programs, services, and activities such as legislative advocacy; alumni publications and communications; legacy programming; alumni record management; alumni clubs and chapters; and alumni awards and events. Another tool used by interdependent and independent associations is alumni association membership (Gill, 1998).

2.4 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is the researcher's idea of how the independent variables influence the dependent variable. The conceptual framework will provide the basis for developing the research findings and recommendations for the study. The framework explains the major marketing communication tools as independent variables that influence the dependent variable of alumni relations. See Figure 1.0 below:

Figure 1.0 Conceptual framework

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES   **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

(Marketing Communication Tools)   (Alumni Relations)

ADVERTISING

SALES PROMOTION

PR AND PUBLICITY	→	ALUMNI RELATIONS

EVENTS AND EXPERIENCES

DIRECT MARKETING
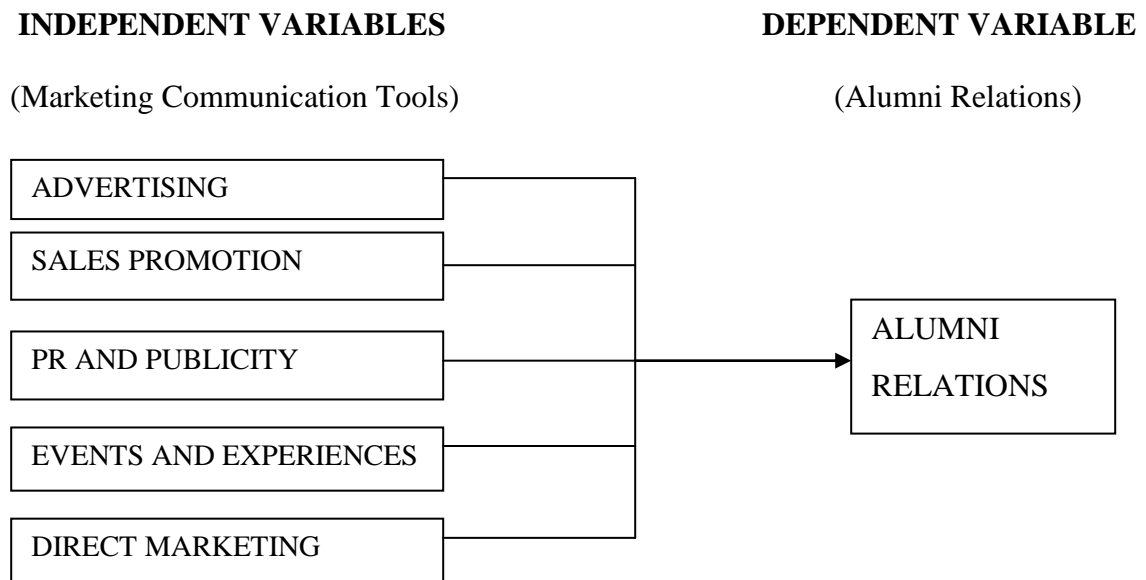
Source: Researcher, 2012.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the study design, study population, sample design, data collection and data analysis methods. This chapter therefore gives a detailed methodology of the research for the purpose of validation of the data and findings.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional research design in order to study the effectiveness of variables of Marketing Communication tools as applied to the dependent variable of alumni relations without manipulating the variables. The descriptive research design sets the ground for more quantitative research on the subject.

3.2 Study population

The population for this study comprises university alumni from all universities in Kenya. This population has been estimated from the total number of student enrollments from Public and Private Universities as established by the researcher from the Commission for Higher Education in Kenya, (CHE). It comprises all students enrolled in Kenyan Universities from the year 1961; which was the first year of enrolment to 2009/2010; which is the enrolment that will start graduating in 2011/2012. The total population of the study is therefore estimated at 768,916 alumni (See Appendix Two, page V).

3.3 Sample design

A sample is a portion of the population which has been selected for observation and analysis. Snowball non-probability sampling technique was adopted for this study. Snowball sampling is defined as a sample design in which the respondent is asked to mention other persons, according to some inclusion criterion defined by the researchers. By interviewing the newly mentioned persons, the sample size can be extended; the basic assumption being the existence of some kind of linkage or bond with other people in the sample population Spreen (1992).

Berg (1988) portrays snowballing method as being created by a series of referrals that are made within a circle of people who know one another, permitting loops in which a person named in a later wave in turn names someone from an earlier wave, creating interesting comparisons. Snow balling is useful where the respondents are hard to find or locate. Snowballing was preferred for this reason and also because of time and financial constraints. The sample comprises two male alumni and two female alumnas from all the universities in Kenya. The total sample was thus a hundred and thirty six alumni.

3.4 Data collection

The researcher collected primary data using questionnaires. The questionnaire had open-ended questions. They were self administered. They were tested for validity in a pilot test. These were administered to a hundred and thirty six alumni from the selected universities. These sample target alumni were reached by way of setting up appointments with them through their university alumni relations offices and through snow-balling.

Secondary methods of data collection were also used to supplement the primary data. These were: in-depth discussion with the Kenyan universities' alumni professionals. Cooper and Schindler (1998), emphasize the value of personal interview when they stated that it enables in depth and detailed information to be obtained. Documents and records belonging to the institutions, books, journals, and the worldwide web, university websites, indexes and bibliographies and alumni magazines also constitute these secondary sources.

3.5 Data analysis

The data collected by the researcher was analyzed using statistical methods using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was analyzed in form of descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies, pie-charts and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with data analysis and the interpretation of findings. The data analysed and presented is based on questionnaire responses. The data presented also includes background information of the respondents.

4.1 Demographic information

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, the researcher found it paramount to establish the demographic information of the respondents, which forms the basis under which the study could justifiably make inferences.

4.1.1 Alumni gender analysis

The respondents were of near equal gender balance. They consisted 61 male and 60 female; translating to 51% male and 49% female. See Table 1.0 below:

Table: 1.0 Alumni gender analysis

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Male	61	51%
Female	60	49%
Total	121	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.1.2 University attended by alumnus/na

The research received responses from a hundred and twenty one respondents of the targeted sample of a hundred and thirty six respondents. This is an 89% response rate. Respondents were drawn from all Universities in Kenya.

4.1.3 Course attended by alumnus/na

According to the findings of the study, the courses attended by the respondents were as shown in Table 4.1 and Figure 2.0 below:

Table 4.1: Course attended by alumnus/na

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Diploma level	21	17%
Bachelors degree level	68	56%
Masters degrees level	30	25%
Doctorate degrees level	2	2%
Total	**121**	**100.0**

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 2.0: Course attended by alumnus/na

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.1.4 Age as an alumnus/na

According to the findings of the study, the ages of the respondents as alumni were as

shown in Table 4.2 and Figure 3.0 below:

Table 4.2: Age as an alumnus/na

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 5 years	84	69%
6– 10 years	26	21%
11 and above years	11	25%
Total	**121**	**100.0**

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 3.0: Age as an alumnus/na
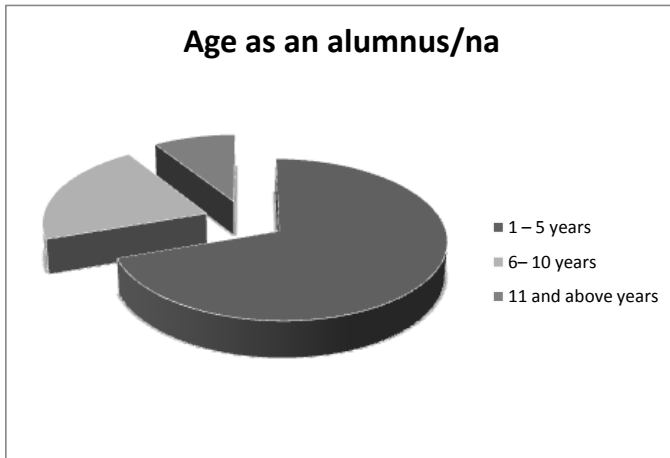
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.2. Alumni relations management at universities in Kenya

According to the findings of the study, the alumni relations management at universities

was as were as shown in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.0 below:

Table 4.3: Alumni relations management at universities

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Universities with an Alumni office only	5	15%
Universities with an Alumni association only	13	40%
Universities with both Alumni office and association	5	15%
Universities with no Alumni Relations management	11	30%
Total	**34**	**100.0**

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 4.0: Alumni relations management at universities

Alumni relations management at universities

Alumni office
only, 15%

Alumni
Relations
management,
30%

Alumni
association
only, 40%

Alumni office
and
association,
15%
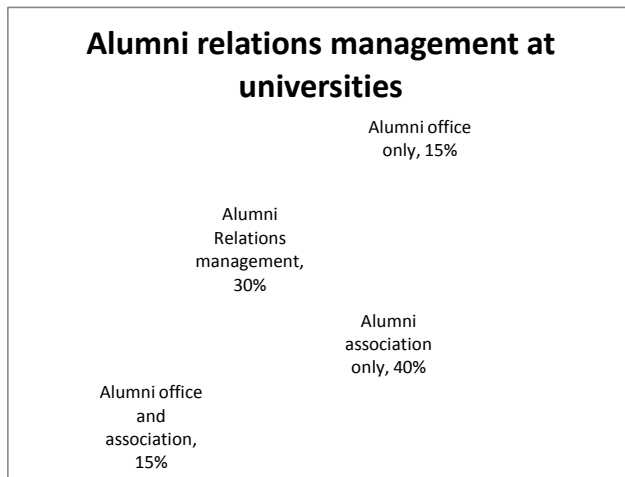
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.3 Marketing communication tools used by universities in Kenya

The respondents were asked about the use and effectiveness of various marketing communication tools as applied by their universities. These included advertising, sales promotion, events and experiences, public relations and publicity, direct marketing and personal selling. Their responses are captured under the headings that follow.

4.3.1: Advertising for alumni relations

According to the findings of the study, majority 104 of the respondents sighted online advertising such as Facebook and Twitter as the most used form of advertising. Of these, 85 said it was effective while 19 said it was not an effective advertising alumni marketing communication tool. This is shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 5.0 below.

Table 4.4: Use and effectiveness of advertising for alumni relations

Category	Frequency by use	Effective	Not Effective	Total
Television advertising	10	90%	10%	100%
Radio advertising	15	87%	13%	100%
Online advertising (Facebook, Twitter)	104	82%	18%	100%
Print press advertising	33	76%	14%	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 5.0: Use and effectiveness of advertising

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

21
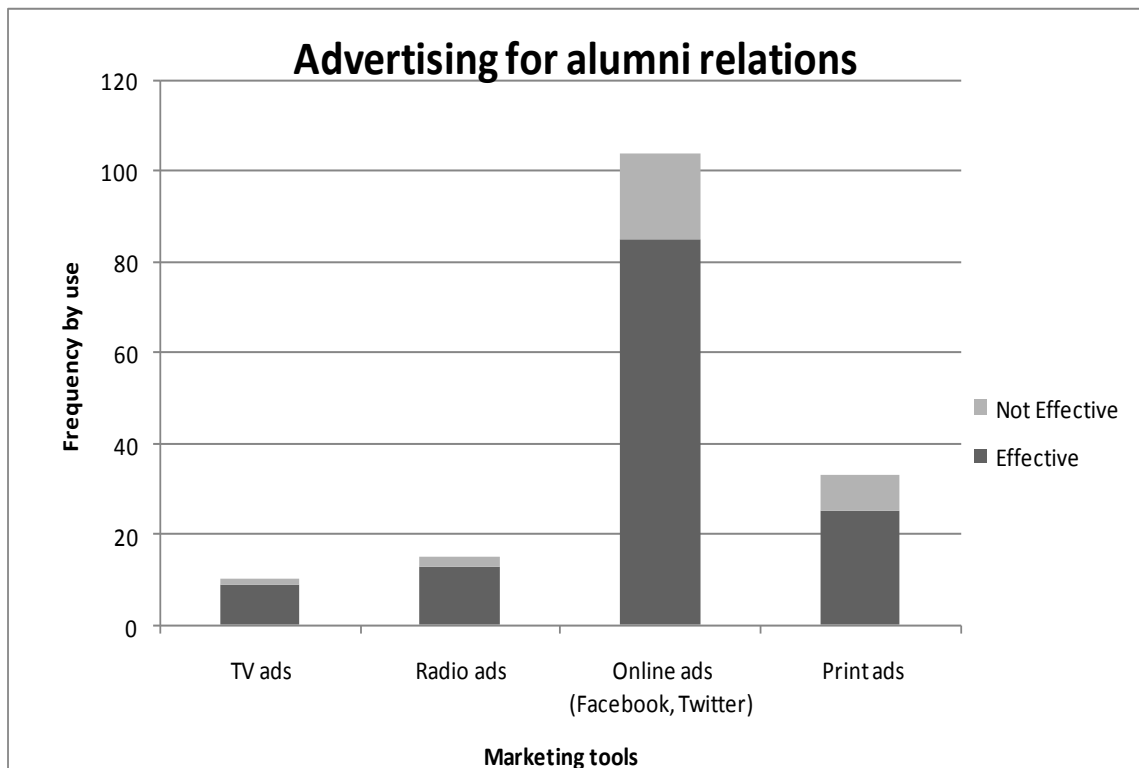
4.3.2: Sales promotion for alumni relations

According to the findings of the study, eleven alumni of the respondents sighted Prizes for alumni as the most used form of sales promotion for alumni relations. All eleven of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool. This is shown in Table 4.5 and Figure 6.0 below.

Table 4.5: Use and effectiveness of sales promotion for alumni relations

Category	Frequency by use	Effective	Not Effective	Total
Contests	4	100%	0%	100%
Coupons	0	0%	0%	0%
Freebies	3	100%	0%	100%
Prizes	11	100%	0%	100%
Rebates	7	86%	14%	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 6.0: Use and effectiveness of sales promotion
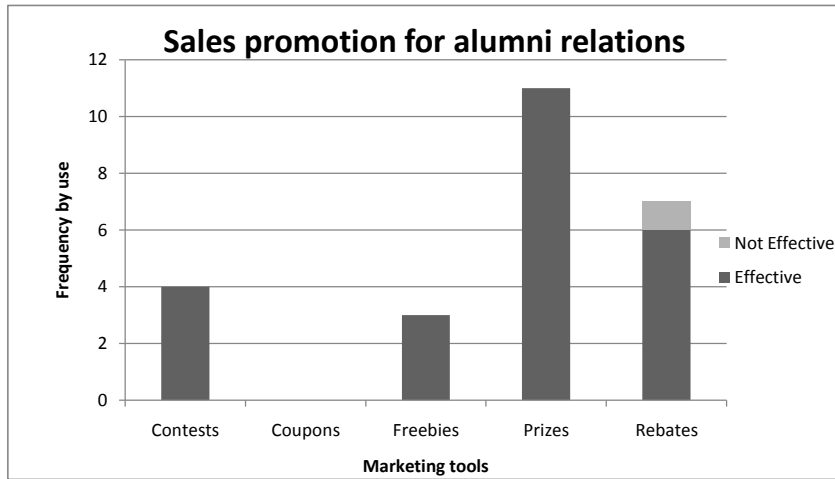
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.3.3: Public Relations and Publicity for alumni relations

According to the findings of the study, thirty one alumni of the respondents sighted campus tour of university and/or university projects for alumni as the most used form of public relations and publicity for alumni relations. Twenty seven of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while four said it was not effective. This is shown in Table 4.6 and Figure 7.0 below.

Table 4.6: Use and effectiveness of public relations and publicity

Marketing tool	Frequency by use	Effective	Not Effective	Total
Sponsorships	13	85%	15%	100%
Speech or talk for Alumni	19	100%	0%	100%
Alumni poll or survey	29	69%	31%	100%
Alumni awards	12	100%	0%	100%
Alumni debates	0%	0%	0%	0%
Tour of university and/or its projects	31	87%	13%	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012

Figure 7.0: Use and effectiveness of public relations and publicity

PR and Publicity for alumni
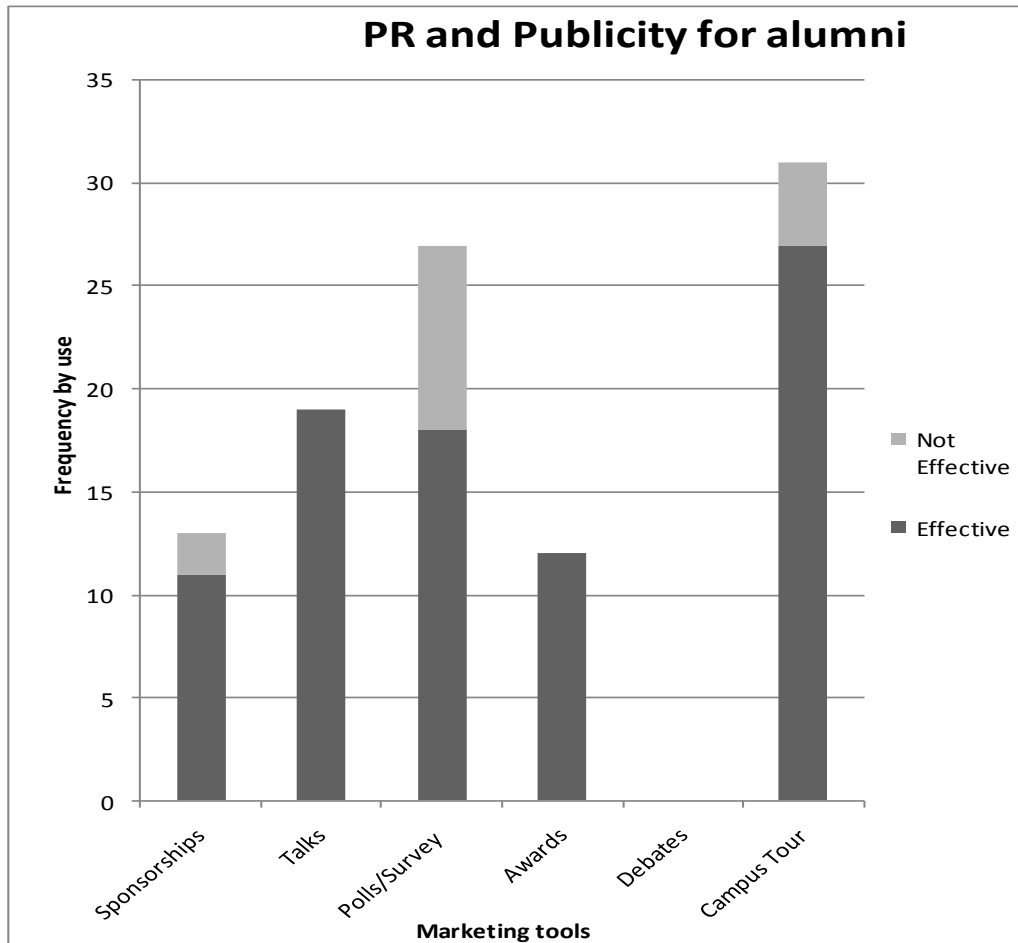
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.3.4: Direct marketing and Personal selling for alumni relations

According to the findings of the study, fifty six of the respondents sighted direct emails as the most used form of direct marketing and personal selling for alumni relations. Thirty nine of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while seventeen said it was not effective. This is shown in Table 4.7 and Figure 8.0 below.

Table 4.7: Use and effectiveness of direct marketing and personal selling

Marketing tool	Frequency by use	Effective	Not Effective	Total
Mobile messaging	20	90%	10%	100%
Email	56	67%	33%	100%
Interactive alumni websites	29	100%	0%	100%
Fliers	33	61%	39%	100%
Promotional direct letters	19	84%	16%	100%
Personal visit by alumni officers	5	100%	0%	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012

Figure 8.0: Use and effectiveness of direct marketing and personal selling
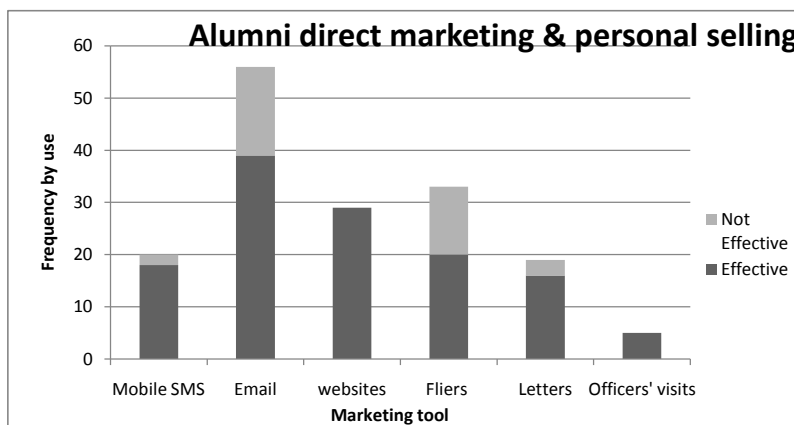
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.3.5: Events and Experience for alumni relations

According to the findings of the study, sixty seven of the respondents sighted alumni class reunions as the most used form of events and experiences for alumni relations. Fifty eight of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while nine said it was not effective. This is shown in Table 4.8 and Figure 9.0 below.

Table 4.8: Use and effectiveness of events and experiences for alumni relations

Category	Frequency of use	Effective	Not Effective	Total
Alumni class reunions	67	87%	13%	100%
Alumni stories and experiences	16	100%	0	100%
University graduation	23	87%	13%	100%
Alumni dinners	43	95%	5%	100%
Alumni seminars and talks	14	100%	0	100%

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

Figure 9.0: Use and effectiveness of events and experiences for alumni relations
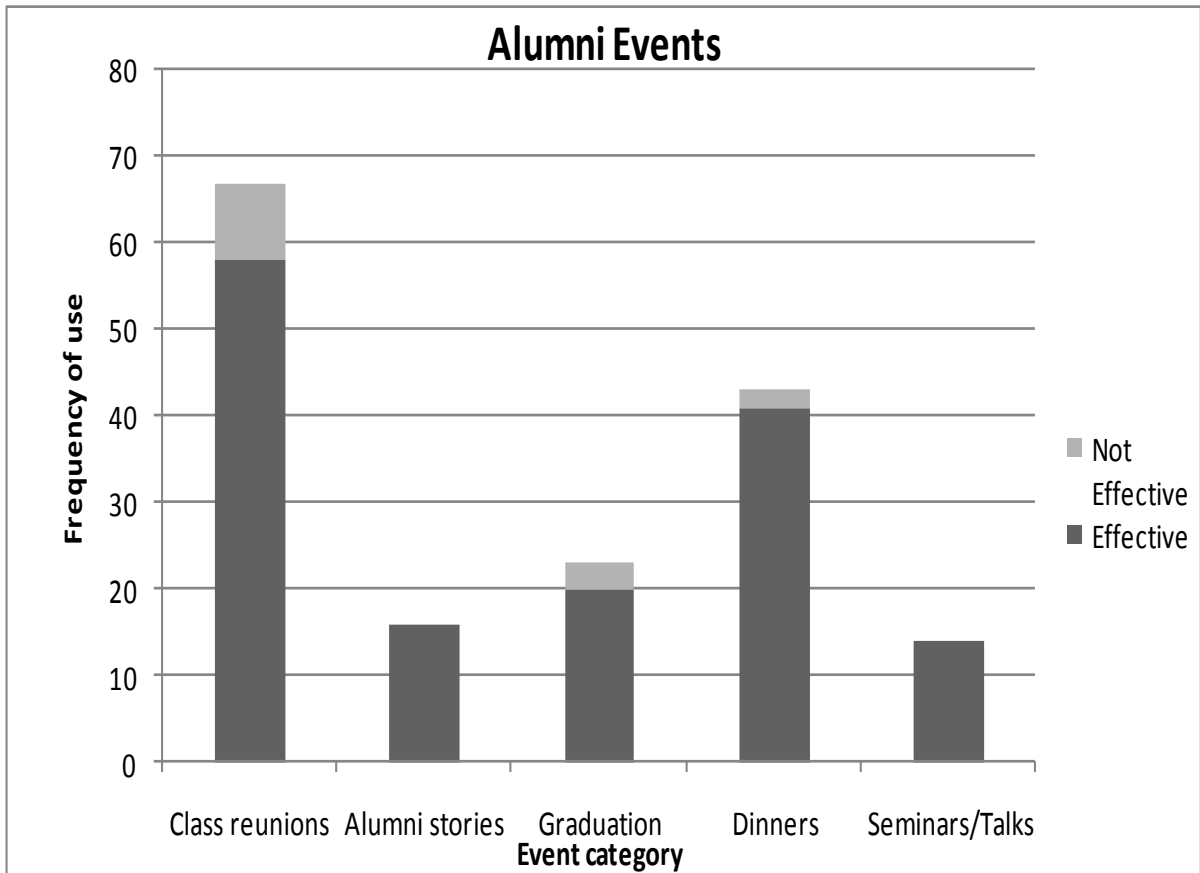
Source: Survey Data, 2012.

4.4: Marketing communications tools for alumni relations activities

According to the findings of the study, respondents made suggestions regarding which marketing communication tool is best suited for the following common alumni relations activities. Respondents suggested advertising especially through online social media like Facebook and Twitter as a key marketing tool for most of the alumni activities. This is shown in Table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Suggested marketing communication tools for alumni relations activities

Alumni activities	Suggested marketing tools	Examples
Alumni contacts developments	Advertising and/or Events and experiences	Facebook and Twitter and/or Class re-unions and Dinners
Fundraising and gifts	Direct marketing and personal selling and/or Events and experiences	Appeal letters and direct emails and/or Class reunions
News update for alumni	Public relations and publicity and/or advertising	Campus tour and talks and/or Facebook and Twitter alerts
Alumni Reunions	Events and experiences and/or advertising	Class re-unions and/or Facebook and Twitter alerts
Alumni services	Direct marketing and/or personal selling	Letter, emails and Alumni Officer visits
Alumni awards and recognition	Public relations and publicity and/or Events and experiences and/or	Sponsorships and/or Graduation, Class reunions
University events and developments	Events and experiences and/or advertising	Graduation, Class reunions and or Facebook and Twitter alerts

Source: Survey Data, 2012.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of selected marketing communication tools on alumni relations in universities in Kenya. Using questionnaires and interview schedules, the researcher collected data from alumni of all universities in Kenya. Data was then presented and analysed accordingly. This chapter provides the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations and proposes areas for further study.

5.1 Summary of findings

This section presents the findings of the study sub-divided into four parts: demographic information on alumni, alumni relations management at universities in Kenya, effectiveness of marketing communications tools used for university alumni relations and suggested marketing communication tools for various alumni relations activities.

5.1.1 Demographic information on university alumni

A total of a hundred and twenty one respondents out of a targeted a hundred and thirty six, participated in the survey. This was an 89% response rate. Respondents were drawn from all Universities in Kenya. The respondents were of near equal gender balance. They were sixty one male and sixty female; translating to 51% male and 49% female.

The respondents attended various courses in their alma mater with majority having attended bachelors courses, they were distributed as follows: 17% attended diploma courses, 56% bachelors courses, 25% masters courses and 2% attending doctorate courses. The alumni had been alumni for various periods of time, with majority; 69% being alumni for between one to five years, 21% being alumni between six to ten years and the other 25% having been alumni for more than ten years at their alma mater.

5.1.2 Alumni relations management at universities in Kenya

Alumni relations management at all thirty four universities in Kenya according to the respondents varied from those with alumni office at 15%, those with alumni associations at 40%, those with both alumni office and associations at 15% and those with no alumni relations management at 30%. These findings when compared to interviews at universities also revealed that some alumni management at universities especially those constituting the 30% found to be with no alumni management, were not effective in their marketing communication and thus were deemed to be nonexistent by some of their alumni. This suggests that universities could do more marketing communications tools.

5.1.3 Marketing communication tools used by Universities in Kenya

The respondents were asked about the use and effectiveness of various marketing communication tools as applied by their universities. These included advertising; where majority, a hundred and four of the respondents sighted online advertising such as Facebook and Twitter as the most used form of advertising. Of these, eighty five said it was effective while nineteen said it was not.

Sales promotion was also evaluated and eleven alumni of the respondents sighted Prizes for alumni as the most used form of sales promotion for alumni relations. All eleven of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool. Events and experiences were also evaluated and sixty seven of the respondents sighted alumni class reunions as the most used form of events and experiences for alumni relations. Fifty eight of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while nine said it was not effective. Also, thirty one alumni of the respondents sighted campus tour of university and/or university projects for alumni as the most used form of public relations and publicity for alumni relations. Twenty seven of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while four said it was not effective. Fifty six of the respondents sighted direct emails as the most used form of direct marketing and personal selling for alumni relations. Thirty nine of them said it was an effective alumni marketing communication tool while seventeen said it was not effective.

5.1.4 Marketing communications tools for alumni relations activities

When asked to match different marketing tools with various common alumni relations activities, respondents made the following suggestions: advertising especially through online social media like Facebook and Twitter as a key marketing tool for most of the alumni activities including news updates, reunions and alumni contacts developments. Direct marketing and personal selling through use of direct emails, letters and by alumni officers visiting alumni at their work places was matched as most effective communication tools for alumni fundraising activities and alumni services communication.

Public relations and publicity such as event sponsorships, campus tours and alumni talks was said to be most effective for news updates for alumni and alumni awards and recognition activities. University events and development as well as alumni reunion activities were said to be best effectively communicated through events and experiences marketing communication tools such as graduations, dinners and class reunions.

5.2 Conclusions

This study has established that most universities in Kenya have one form or another of alumni relations. This is either managed by alumni associations formed by alumni of the university and mandated by the university to handle its alumni relations and all activities pertaining to alumni. Usually a memorandum of understanding exists between the university management, the students of the university and officials of the alumni associations to guide the relationship and affairs of all stakeholders party to alumni relations in the universities. Another form of alumni relations management is that of alumni relations officers who are employees of the university mandated to manage the universities alumni relations. This group coordinates alumni relations activities and is the point of service for the universities alumni. Some universities have both alumni and associations and alumni officers working together to manage alumni relations for the university. However, about a third of the population of our universities in Kenya, do not have any form of institutionalized alumni relations management and alumni deal directly with their faculties or are left out of the affairs of the university. We can conclude that though there is interest in university alumni relations in Kenya, it is not as developed as in the United States of America or Europe.

The study also has established that the universities with alumni relations in Kenya are making use of a mix of marketing tools for its alumni relations activities. The use and effectiveness of these tools vary in degree. Advertising, especially through online social media has been sighted as the most effective marketing communication tool for most of the alumni relations activities. Other marketing communication tools used with a good degree of effectiveness include sales promotion such as prizes for alumni; events and experiences such as alumni class reunions and direct emails as the most used form of direct marketing and personal selling for alumni relations. Sales promotion and public relations were least marketing communication tools used for alumni relations. Emails, fliers, surveys or polls and sometimes online social media as used under advertising, direct marketing and public relations were said not to be effective by some alumni. This therefore establishes that marketing communication tools cannot be a hundred percent effective for all alumni relations activities and therefore the need for a combined or mix use of marketing communication tools.

Various marketing communication tools were matched to a variety of common alumni relations as follows: advertising especially through online social media like Facebook and Twitter was matched as a key marketing tool for most of the alumni activities including news updates, reunions and alumni contacts developments. Direct marketing and personal selling through use of direct emails, letters and by alumni officers visiting alumni at their work places was matched as most effective communication tools for alumni fundraising activities and alumni services communication.

Public relations and publicity such as event sponsorships, campus tours and alumni talks was said to be most effective for news updates for alumni and alumni awards and recognition activities. University events and development as well as alumni reunion activities were said to be best effectively communicated through events and experiences marketing communication tools such as graduations, dinners and class reunions. This then leads us to a conclusion that though a mix of marketing communication tools would be effective for various alumni relations activities in Kenya, particular tools are most effective for specific alumni relations activities.

5.3 Recommendations

Kenyan universities that aspire to reach out to their alumni need to invest in alumni relations management either in the form of alumni associations or university alumni officers or better yet have both structures in place working with an understanding. This is crucial to a university because alumni relations is an involving affair that needs close management for efficiency and effectiveness. Lessons can be learnt on how to set up such offices through consulting those universities that are already doing very well in this area. Training is also available for continuous alumni staff development for universities that have alumni relations management so as to keep abreast with trends in alumni relations that will continuously enhance their alumni relations management.

The study also recommends that universities in Kenya need to make use of a mix of marketing communication tools for its alumni relations activities since no single tool is fully effective if used on its own. The use and effectiveness of these tools vary in degree.

Advertising, especially through online social media has been sighted as the most effective marketing communication tool for most of the alumni relations activities. Other marketing communication tools that could be used with a good degree of effectiveness include sales promotion such as prizes for alumni; events and experiences such as alumni class reunions and direct emails as the most used form of direct marketing and personal selling for alumni relations. Sales promotion and public relations were least marketing communication tools used for alumni relations. Emails, fliers, surveys or polls and sometimes online social media as used under advertising, direct marketing and public relations were said not to be effective by some alumni.

The study also recommends that though a mix of marketing communication tools would be effective for various alumni relations activities in Kenya, particular marketing communication tools are most effective for specific alumni relations activities. This therefore suggests that various marketing communication tools need to be matched to specific alumni relations as follows: advertising especially through online social media like Facebook and Twitter needs to be matched as a key marketing tool for most of the alumni activities including news updates, reunions and alumni contacts developments. Direct marketing and personal selling through use of direct emails, letters and by alumni officers visiting alumni at their work places can be matched as most effective communication tools for alumni fundraising activities and alumni services communication. Public relations and publicity such as event sponsorships, campus tours and alumni talks can be most effective for news updates for alumni and alumni awards and recognition activities.

University events and development as well as alumni reunion activities can be best effectively communicated through events and experiences marketing communication tools such as graduations, dinners and class reunions.

5.5 Suggestions for further research

This study which is descriptive in nature makes a good pre-cursor for more quantitative research on the area of marketing communication tools for alumni relations in Kenya. Also, more related research could be made on the following: return on investment for various marketing communication tools for university alumni relations, a research on whether the age of the alumni affects the effectiveness of various marketing communication tools on university alumni relations and challenges in university alumni relations in Kenya.

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APPENDIX ONE: Research Questionnaire

Dear respondent,

Please fill in all the questions by <u>writing</u> and <u>ticking</u> | √ | appropriately in the spaces provided. By taking just a few minutes to participate in our survey, you will be helping us evaluate the effectiveness of various marketing communication tools used by your alma mater (university) for alumni relations. Findings of the study will be used to advice your alma mater accordingly. The following sets of questions about your experiences or opinions relate to the various marketing tools used by your alma mater to reach you as an alumnus/na. The information you share with us is confidential and will only be used for purposes of this research.

Section A: Alumni details

Gender: Male   ☐   Female   ☐

Name of University   _____

Course taken at University   _____

1. How long have you been an alumnus/na of this University?

1 – 5 years   ☐

 6– 10 years   ☐

11 and above years   ☐

2. Which Alumni Relations Management does your university have?

Alumni office   ☐   Alumni association   ☐

Both Alumni Office and Association   ☐   None   ☐

Section B: Alumni experience and feedback

3. Tick below which of the following advertising by your alumni association or office has reached you as an alumnus/na. Was it effective? Yes or No

   i.   Television advertising   [   ]   _____

  ii.   Radio advertising   [   ]   _____

  iii.   Online advertising (Facebook, Twitter) [   ]   _____

  iv.   Print press advertising   [   ]   _____

  v.   Outdoor Advertising   [   ]   _____

Advertising by the alumni relations is an effective way of reaching me as an alumnus/na.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 [ ]	2 [ ]	3 [ ]	4 [ ]	5 [ ]

4. Tick below which of the following sales promotion by your alumni association or office has reached you as an alumnus/na. Was it effective? Yes or No

   i.   contests   [   ]   _____

  ii.   coupons   [   ]   _____

  iii.   freebies   [   ]   _____

  iv.   prizes   [   ]   _____

  v.   rebates   [   ]   _____

Sales promotion by the alumni relations is an effective way of reaching me as an alumnus/na.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 [ ]	2 [ ]	3 [ ]	4 [ ]	5 [ ]

5. Tick below which of the public relations and publicity by your alumni association or office has reached you as an alumnus/na.   Was it effective? Yes or No

   i.   Event sponsorship   ☐   ————

   ii.   Arrange a speech or talk   ☐   ————

   iii.   Conduct a poll or survey   ☐   ————

   iv.   Invent then present an award   ☐   ————

   v.   Stage a debate   ☐   ————

   vi.   Organize a tour of the university or projects ☐   ————

Public relations and publicity by the alumni relations is an effective way of reaching me as an alumnus/na.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

6. Tick below which of the direct marketing and personal selling by your alumni association or office has reached you as an alumnus/na.   Was it effective? Yes or No

   i.   Mobile messaging   ☐   ————

   ii.   Email   ☐   ————

   iii.   Interactive alumni websites   ☐   ————

   iv.   Fliers   ☐   ————

   v.   Promotional direct letters   ☐   ————

   vi.   Personal visit by alumni officers ☐   ————

Direct marketing and personal selling by the alumni relations is an effective way of reaching me as an alumnus/na.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

III

7. Tick below which of the following events and experiences by your alumni association or office has reached you as an alumnus/na.   Was it effective? Yes or No

   i.   Alumni class reunions   ☐   _____

   ii.   Alumni stories and experiences   ☐   _____

   iii. University graduation   ☐   _____

   iv. Alumni dinners   ☐   _____

   v.   Alumni seminars and talks   ☐   _____

Events and experiences by the alumni relations were effective ways of reaching me as an alumnus/na.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1 ☐	2 ☐	3 ☐	4 ☐	5 ☐

8. What suggestions do you have regarding which marketing communication tool is best suited for the following alumni relations activities?

Fill in the text box with either 1/2/3/4/5 to represent the following respectively: 1. advertising, 2. sales promotion, 3. events and experiences, 4. public relations and publicity, 5. direct marketing and personal selling

                                     Which type? E.g TV/Radio

(i) Alumni contacts developments   ☐   _____

(ii) Fundraising and gifts   ☐   _____

(iii)News update for alumni   ☐   _____

(iv)Alumni Reunions   ☐   _____

(v) Alumni services   ☐   _____

(vi)Alumni awards and recognition   ☐   _____

(vii) University events and developments   ☐   _____

Finally, thank you for participating in the survey!

APPENDIX TWO: List of University Student enrolment 1961-2010

The list of university student enrollment from the year 1961 to 2010, on Table 5.0 below has been used to estimate the number of alumni of all universities in Kenya to date.

Table 5.0: List of University Student enrolment 1961-2010

Years:	Students' Enrollment:
1961-1970	20,000
1971-1984	28,900
1985-1989	20,000
1990-1993	21,450
1994-1995	25,450
1996-1999	101,800
2000-2001	59,193
2004-2005	91,541
2006-2007	100,000
2008-2009	122,847
2009-2010	177,735
Total Enrollment:	**768,916**

Source: Commission for Higher Education, 2012.

APPENDIX THREE: List of universities in Kenya

Public universities:

These were established in their respective years through institutional Acts of Parliament and are not currently subjected to the accreditation process of CHE. They are:

1. University of Nairobi (UoN) - 1970
2. Moi University (MU) -1984
3. Kenyatta University (KU) - 1985
4. Egerton University (EU) - 1987
5. Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT) 1994
6. Maseno University (MSU) - 2001 and
7. Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology (MMUST) - 2007

Chartered Private Universities:

These are universities that have been fully accredited:

1. University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, 1991
2. Catholic University of Eastern Africa, 1992
3. Scott Theological College, 1992
4. Daystar University, 1994
5. United States International University, 1999
6. Africa Nazarene University, 2002
7. Kenya Methodist University, 2006
8. St. Paul's University, 2007
9. Pan Africa Christian University, 2008
10. Strathmore University, 2008
11. Kabarak University, 2008.
12. Mount Kenya University, 2011.
13. Africa International University, 2011
14. Kenya Highlands Evangelical University, 2011
Source: Commission for Higher Education, 2012.

Universities with Letters of Interim Authority:

The following universities are operating with Letters of Interim Authority, while receiving guidance and direction from the Commission for Higher Education in order to prepare them for the award of Charter:

1. Kiriri Women's University of Science and Technology, 2002
2. Aga Khan University, 2002
3. Gretsa University, 2006
4. Great Lakes University of Kisumu, 2006
5. KCA University, 2007
6. Presbyterian University of East Africa, 2007
7. Adventist University of Africa, 2008
8. Inoorero University, 2009
9. The East African University 2010
10. Genco University
11.Management University of Africa

Several other universities are still working towards fulfilling the requirements for grant of Letter of Interim Authority (LIA).

Registered Private Universities:

These are institutions that were offering university level education before the establishment of the Commission for Higher Education in 1985. They were issued with Certificates of Registration in 1989. However, a number of universities which initially fell within this category have since progressed to the award of Charter. The following registered universities are at various stages of preparedness for the award of Charter:

1. Nairobi International School of Theology
2. East Africa School of Theology
Source: Commission for Higher Education, 2012.