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Effect of Competitive Strategies by Religious Sponsored Private Universities on Student Attraction in Kenya

Agnes Mueni Mutinda[1], Isack Odiwuor Abiero[2], Dennis Juma[3]

[1]Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

[2]Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O. Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

[3]Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, P.O. Box 62000-00200, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract: ***The general objective of this study was to establish the effect of competitive strategies on student attraction by religious sponsored private universities. Specific objectives of the study were: To establish the effect of growth, focus, differentiation and cost leadership by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya. Descriptive survey design was used in this study. Primary data was collected using semi- structured questionnaires. The target population of this study was religious sponsored private universities in Kenya. The sampling frame was drawn from staff and students of Catholic and Umma universities in Kenya. 379 respondents were selected from the two universities using simple random sampling. Questionnaire was used as the research instrument and data collected was presented in the form of frequency distribution, percentage, tables, graphs, pie charts that facilitated description and interpretation of the study findings. The study reveals that religious sponsored private universities engage in a variety of strategies to attract students which include the following: lowering fees, aggressive advertisement on TV, newspapers, and radio; having bursary fund to support poor students who cannot afford fees and offering scholarships to those who excel in various activities in the university. It also established that religious sponsored private universities have heavily invested in technology to increase efficiency.***

Keywords: Competitive strategy, firm, generic business strategies, industry, product, strategy, student attraction

1. Introduction

Organizations are facing dynamic challenges as business environment continues to become more turbulent as a result of major forces such as advanced technology, globalization, economic restructuring and competitive pressure. Firms require strategic thinking and sustainable competitive corporate strategies in order to gain competitive advantage. Ndungu (2006) avers that firms adopt different competitive strategies prompted by turbulent business environment. A sustainable competitive advantage is achieved when a firm implements a value, creating unique strategy which other companies are unable to duplicate or find it too costly to initiate. Corporate strategy includes the commitments, decisions and actions required for a firm to achieve strategic competitiveness and earn above average returns.

Thomson and Strickland (2002) state that competitive strategy consists of all the moves and approaches that a firm employs in order to attract buyers, withstand competitive pressure and improve its market share. Therefore, the choice of the competitive strategy is critical as it determines the success or failure of an organization. The focus of firms therefore is gaining competitive edge in order to respond to and compete effectively in the market. This therefore means that firms must identify their core competencies and concentrate on those areas that give them a lead over their competitors.

Porter (1985) opines the ability of firms to survive in the business environment as being dependent upon their selection and implementation of a competitive strategy that sets it apart from the competitors. A company's ability to be competitive and profitable depends not only on the type of strategy it formulates and implements, but also on the way in which it is formulated.

Porter, (1985) argues that strategy is about seeking a competitive edge over rivals. Strategy guides the organization in achieving its objectives and positioning the firm within the business environment (Johnson & Scholes,1999).

Higher education in Kenya has experienced rapid growth over the last decade with over 40,000 students qualifying for admission to university each year. However, only an approximate 10,000students are admitted to public universities through KUCCPS, leaving an approximate 75% of students who qualify to join universities with nowhere to go. This has left a wide gap in higher education sector (Oketch, 2004). The liberation of University education sector in the 1980's and 1990's led to rapid mushrooming of private universities to fill this gap. Currently, there are eighteen(18) chartered private universities as at July 2015 (CHE, 2015).

Universities in Kenya are therefore operating in a highly competitive environment as they offer similar products and target the same market making it difficult to survive in the industry without unique and sustainable competitive strategies. Private universities are facing stiff competition from public universities. Public universities are offering parallel programmes similar to those offered by private universities at affordable prices as well as opening new campuses and constituent colleges (Ministry of education 2010). As a result many students are opting to do their private degrees from the more prestigious public universities. all their activities. This has led to rivalry among the universities as they struggle to position themselves in the market. Future growth of university education will depend on how well each institution positions itself in the market in order to attract students.

2. Statement of the Problem

Privatization of university education and liberalization of student selection since the formation of Commission for University Education (CUE) in 2012 has made university education dynamic and highly competitive. Universities are competing for limited resources and market share in the university education sector. Universities are being forced to develop sustainable competitive strategies to increase their market share as well as produce graduates for the global market as part of their competitive strategies to remain relevant. According to Porter (2002) a firm that adopts an effective competitive strategy maintains its competitive advantage.

Kimani (2011) conducted a survey on the factors influencing strategy choice in commercial banks in Kenya while Kinyuira (2014) assessed the effects of Porter's generic competitive strategies adopted by saccos in Murang'a County on their performance. In another study, Mulwa (2010) carried out a survey on factors affecting the competitiveness of business schools in Kenyan Universities.Gitonga (2011) investigated the influence of positioning in the enrolment of students in Nairobi's private middle level colleges while Kaburu (2012) researched competitive strategies adopted byZetech College to cope with competition among middle colleges in Kenya. The researcher established that competition poses many challenges to any business and managers need toformulate strategies to counter the challenges and strive to attain a competitive edge over their rivals. These studies established that different firms in different industries employ different strategies which suit their market situation. However, little has been done on the effect of competitive strategies by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.

Finally, universities in their reports of enrolment show crises at several institutions, resulting in a decline in student enrolment which has led to budget cuts and last-minute appeals to students who had never responded to their offers of acceptance (Grainger, 1994). While situations may differ from one university to another, the key issue for universities remains: how to ensure that each institution attracts a big number of qualified students who are able to pay for their university education (Paisley, 1992). KUCCPS report released in September, 2015 found that 37 percent of higher education leaders surveyed from both public and private institutions are "very concerned" about the declining enrolment levels in universities. This study therefore examined the effect of competitive strategies by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.

General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate the effect of competitive strategies by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.

Specific Objectives of the study

1) To establish the effect of growth strategy by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.
2) To establish the effect of focus strategy by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.
3) To establish the effect of differentiation strategy by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.
4) To establish the effect of cost leadership by religious sponsored private universities on student attraction in Kenya.

3. Literature Review

Porter's Five Forces Theory

Porter's five forces model pays particular attention to five forces that influence any industry: threat of new entrants, intensity of rivalry, threat of substitutes, bargaining power of buyers and bargaining power of suppliers (Porter, 1985). The model can help universities as they define the parameters within which new rules, participants and markets continue to emerge. In Kenya, universities are being called upon to be competitive. However, a clear understanding of the competitive nature of higher education in Kenya is lacking. The turbulence and dynamism of the environment has led to the current competitive nature of higher education sector. Colleges and universities compete for students, research support, faculty members and financial contributions, and this competition is becoming both increasingly aggressive and global (Dill, 2005).

A close scrutiny of policy documents as argued by previous researchers on higher education in Canada calls for an analysis of higher education in Kenya as an industry. Interestingly, many researchers do not think of higher education as an industry and, by extension, in terms of profitability, nor do they consider the possible application of Porter's analytical five forces framework (Pringle &Huisman, 2011). Although Porter's framework has in the past typically been reserved for business and private enterprises, the changes taking place in the external environment in which universities in Kenya operate warranted this study.

Understanding and being able to analyse the impact of the five underlying forces will be beneficial in formulating various strategies (Anand, 2012). Commodification of higher education in Kenya especially adopting competitive activities intended to generate income has culminated from reduced government funding (Mathooko, 2013) among other reforms in higher education. It is this concept of generating income and profits that supports the application of Porter's five forces theory to higher education in Kenya. The theory focuses on the following:

Bargaining power of Suppliers

This refers to how much power and control suppliers have over a business and the potential to raise prices and therefore lower profitability. Business performance and success depends on product and service innovation, super customer service, geographical expansion & product differentiation and sales promotion. Competition intensifies as a result of slow rate of industry growth, high fixed costs and lack of differentiation between products (Cook, 1995). Supplier power is determined by the number of suppliers. The fewer the suppliers, the more power they have. Powerful suppliers can bring down profits in an industry by raising prices or reducing quality of goods and services they supply.

The bargaining power of suppliers determines the cost of raw materials and other inputs. Supplier power is high when; the market is dominated by a few powerful suppliers, when there are no substitute products or services and switching costs are high. According to (Singh and Wah, 1997) firms should maintain a good relationship with their suppliers for their mutual benefit. Religious based private universities should design unique competitive strategies and do aggressive marketing for their products as well as venture into new markets in order to attract students.

Bargaining power of buyers

Buyers are those who use the products or services of an organization. Buyers compete with the industry by bargaining for lower prices, high quality products or services. Buyer power is high when the volume of purchase of the buyer is high, there are alternative sources of supply or cost of switching supplies is low; Buyer power is low when consumers purchase products in small amounts and the product is unique. When buyers are powerful they can exert pressure on business by demanding lower prices and higher quality services Buyer power affects pricing and quality (Porter, 2002). Religious sponsored private universities should offer unique academic programmes in order to attract students.

Competitive Rivalry

Competitive Rivalry is determined by the number of existing competitors and their capabilities. This force examines how intense the competition is in the market. Competitive rivalry is high when there few businesses selling the same product or service and when the cost of switching to competitor offering is low. Rivalry among firms competitive strategy results in sustainable profitable position against the forces that determine industry competition (Porter, 2002). Many universities offer similar equally attractive programmes. Religious sponsored private universities should therefore adopt unique competitive strategies in offering unique differentiated academic programmes and services to beat competition and increase overall profitability.

Threat of Substitution

This is the ability of consumers to switch from a product or service to that of a competitor (Porter, 2002). The absence of close substitutes for a product means that consumers are comparatively insensitive to price hence demand is inelastic with respect to price while existence of close substitutes means that customers will switch to substitutes in response to price increases for the product. Threat of entry ensures that established firms constrain their prices to the competitive level. Easy substitution weakens a firm's power. Religious sponsored private universities should provide programmes and services that are unique differentiated and not easily substituted.

Threat of New Entry

This refers to how easy or difficult it is for competitors to join an industry. New entrants are attracted by high sustainable profits in an industry. Entry of new players disrupts the level of industry's profitability by increasing the industry capacity and reducing the price leading to reduced profit margin and market share (Keegan, 1995). Industry growth is another determinant to entry as growing industries attract new firms. Barriers to entry can be maintained by having unique capabilities which cannot be duplicated by competitor firms, making it difficult for other firms to enter the industry (Hax & Majluf, 1996). Such capabilities include; low product pricing, access to inputs, economies of scale and recognized brands. Religious sponsored private universities should set up strong and durable barriers to entry, build strong brands and charge reasonable prices for their programmes which will attract students and increase their marketshare.

Porters Five forces theory however has been criticized for leaving out some forces that are considered very powerful in any industry. Government, logistics and information power play should have been included in the theory (Aosa (1997) while Wheeler and Hunger (1990) argue that stakeholders are a strong force that influences any industry and should have been included in Porter's theory. McFarlan (1984) avers that Information Technology could be used to exploit or counter any of the forces. He further argues that using Information Technology to forge links with suppliers and customers would increase the power of the organization within the market and should therefore have been included in theforces.

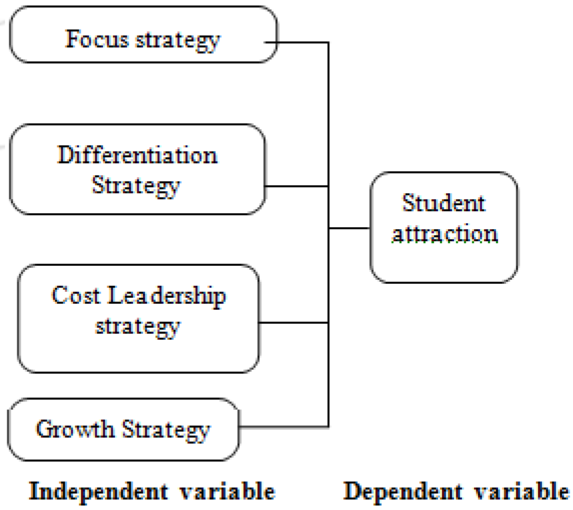

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Growth Strategy

According to Ogolla, et al (2011) the growth or sustainability of a firm depends on how it responds to competition. Organizations, whether for profit or non profit,

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private or public, have found it necessary to engage in strategic thinking in order to achieve their corporate goals. The environment in which Universities operate has become increasingly competitive. The universities are required to position themselves more strategically, translate their insight into effective strategies to cope with the competitive environment and develop rationale necessary to lay the groundwork for adopting and implementing strategies. Porter (2008) sees strategy as the process of creating a unique and valuable position by means of a set of activities that create synergistic pursuit of the objectives of a firm. For a firm to sustain competitive advantage, it should look at how to compete, whom it is competing with, the basis of competition and the ways to create barriers to competition (Aaker,2011).

Market penetration is a growth strategy based on increasing a firm's existing share of products and markets. This strategy aims at increasing the sale of present product in the present market through aggressive promotion. There is need for religious sponsored private universities to develop new programmes and diversify existing ones. The universities should engage in aggressive marketing for their academic programmes and facilities in order to penetrate new markets and increase market share. A firm penetrates deeper into the market to capture a larger share of the market. Mascarenas et al. (2006) assert that growth requires expanding what a firm is doing currently to a more potential customer.

In market development strategy, religious sponsored private universities need to respond to new market opportunities by introducing existing products to new markets or customer groups such as opening new campuses in different areas where the demand for their products is high. It implies increasing sales by selling present products in the new markets. Market development leads to increase in sale of existing products in unexplained markets. Diversification directs the organization towards introducing new products to new markets (Aaker,2011).

Focus Strategy

In focus strategy, a firm selects a specific segment or group of the market and tailors its strategy to meet the needs of the consumer in that segment (Davison, 2011). The target segment must have buyers with unusual needs or needs that are unmet (Porter, 1990). Focus strategy has two variants: cost focus; where a firm seeks cost advantage in its target segment and differentiation focus where a firm seeks differentiation in its targetsegment.

David (2000) suggested that religious sponsored private universities need to focus on certain segments while developing their programmes and aim at satisfying the needs of the particular niche so as to build their loyalty. The challenge facing this strategy is imitation from competitors. Competitors may pursue the same market by making quality substitutes available to the same niche being targeted by a certain firm making the target segment unattractive. In addition the needs and preferences of the niche being focused may shift towards product attribute desired by the market (Hitt et al, (1997); Thompson and Strickland, (1992).

Universities in their reports of enrolment show crises at several private institutions, which resulted in a fall of freshman acceptance rates one-quarter to one-third lower than expected, leading to budget cuts and last-minute appeals to students who had never responded to their offers of acceptance (Grainger, 1994). The biggest concern for universities is how to ensure that each institution attracts a big number of qualified students who are able to pay to support their university education, while fulfilling its mission and attracting sufficient philanthropic support to carry on that mission so as to attract future students (Paisley, 1992). KUCCPS report released in early September, 2015 found that 37 percent of higher education leaders surveyed, from both public and private institutions, are "very concerned" about maintaining current enrolment levels.

Davison (2011) agrees that the pressures on enrollment offices is growing, with more competition for fewer students, demographic shifts that are changing the makeup of the available student body and its ability (and willingness) to pay, and the ever escalating demand for financial aid. Enrolment management should be part of a broader strategy, one that the administration, faculty, and board must all be in agreement on if they want to achieve their institutional goals to attract students, bring in net revenue, grow philanthropic support offering scholarship among others.

Differentiation Strategy

In differentiation strategy a firm develops and markets unique products for different customer segments. According to Davidow and Utal (1989), differentiation strategy is positioning a brand in such a way as to set apart the firm from competition and establish an image that is unique. Differentiation offers a company a lead over its competitors by reducing competition and the fight for scarce resources, thereby improving performance.

Differentiation strategy is usually created around several features such as product quality, technology and innovativeness, reliability, brand image, firm reputation, durability, and customer service, which is unique and difficult for rivals to imitate (Davison, 2011). In differentiation strategy a firm selects one or more attributes which buyers perceive to be important and positions itself to meet the needs of the buyers (Porter 1985). This strategy is usually associated with charging a premium price for the product often to reflect the higher production cost and extra value added features provided for the consumer.

Differentiation in religious sponsored private universities may involve making unique academic programmes or services which are different and more attractive than those offered by competing universities. These may include offering scholarships and sponsorships aimed at attracting students. To make success of a differentiation strategy, religious sponsored private universities need research, heavy investment, development and innovation and the ability to provide high-quality programmes, effective marketing, so that the market understands the benefits offered by the differentiated programmes (Aringo, 1987).

Cost Leadership Strategy

Porter's generic strategies are ways of gaining competitive advantage, in other words, developing the "edge" that gets religious sponsored universities the sale and takes it away from their competitors (Davison, 2011). According to Porter (1980), there are two main ways of achieving this within cost leadership strategy: Increasing profits by reducing costs. When universities reduce fees charged to the self-sponsored students they attract more students to join the university leading to increase in revenue brought about by the numbers, while charging industry- average prices. Mutai (2002) avers that cost leadership can be achieved through increased market share by charging lower prices and making reasonable profit on each sale as a result of reduced costs.Cost leadership may also be achieved by reducing the cost of delivering products and services. The cost or price paid by the customer is a separate issue (Keling,2006). Religious sponsored private universities that are successful in achieving cost leadership usually have access to the capital needed to invest in modern technology that will bring costs down, very efficient logistics and a low cost base (labor, materials, facilities), and employ sustainable cost cutting strategies that are below those of other universities(Kochlar,1993).The biggest challenge in pursuing a cost leadership strategy is that the sources of cost reduction are not unique to religious sponsored private universitiesand other competitors may copy the cost reduction strategies. One successful way of being a cost leader is by adopting the philosophy of "continuous improvement." (Onyango,2001).

By pursuing low costs, companies not only operate efficiently, but also become an effective price leader, undercutting competitors' growth in the industry through its success at price war and undercutting profitability of competitors. However, only one firm can be an industry leader (Porter 1998).Cost leadership is only effective if a firm can command prices close to the industry average and does not have to give away its cost advantage by discountingprices.

4. Student Attraction

Higher education in Kenya has experienced increasing competition among universities and higher education institutes to attract students both locally and internationally (Mazzarol, 1998). Competitive pressure has forced higher educational institutions to adopt more competitive marketing strategies in order to compete for students. Therefore, to study the important attributes especially institutional factors that affect student attraction in higher education institutions became pertinent on the part of marketing strategy planning for student recruitment of higher educational institutions. Joseph & Joseph (2000) concluded that course and career information, physical aspects and facilities are critical issues that must be kept in mind as educational institutions create sustainable competitive advantage in marketing strategies. LeBlance and Nguyen (1999) identified perceptions of price in the form of the price/quality relationship as most important factors, while Ford et al. (1999) recognized academic reputation, cost/time issues and program issues as the determinants of university choice.

Sevier (1986) stated that research has consistently shown that college or university location can be a major factor for potential student's decision to apply and enrol in an institution. Some students may be interested in a school close to their hometown or place of work for convenience and accessibility (Absher& Crawford, 1996; Servier, 1994). A study by Kohn et al. (1976) discussed that an important factor in student predisposition to attend college is the close proximity of a higher education institution to home. It was found that a low-cost, nearby college was an important stimulator of a students' decision to further his or her education.

Ismail (2009) indicated that students are satisfied with college choice based on information available to them with respect to academic recognition (external influence). Institutional image and reputation has a tremendous effect on institutionchoice.Lay and Maguire (1981); Murphy (1981); Sevier (1986); Keling (2006, 2007) all found that the most influential factor that students evaluate in selecting an institution was reputation of the institution. Absher& Crawford (1996) avers that educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries are important in a student's selection of a college or university.

5. Research Methodology

Survey design was used in this study. The target population of this study was religious sponsored private universities in Kenya. In this study the sampling frame was 5827 students and 484 staff from Catholic University(CUEA), 900 students and 138 staff from UMMA University. Yamane's formula was used to get a sample size of 379 from the population and simple random sampling was used to get the respondents. The study collected primary data by way of structured questionnaires. Primary data was collected from the staff and students of Umma University and Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) using semi-structured questionnaires. The questionnaires were pilot tested on 38 respondents, which is 10 % of the sample size (379). Data was analyzed using quantitative approach. The data obtained from questionnaires was entered into a computer and analyzed using SPSS version 21. The data was then summarized and presented using tables, bars, charts, graphs and percentage with the aid of regression model as illustrated as: Students attraction = Growth Strategy+ Focus Strategy + Differentiation Strategy+ Cost Leadership Strategy. $Y = \alpha + \beta 1X1 + \beta 2X2 + \beta 3X3 + \beta 4X4 + \varepsilon$

6. Results and Discussions

The researcher set out to conduct the study and 319 out of 379 questionnaires were filled and returned giving a response rate of 84%.

Growth Strategy

100% of the respondents agree that the environment in which Universities are operating in has pushed them to engage in strategic thinking in order to achieve their goals. 92.3% agree that the universities have developed strategies to address competition issues while 7.7% disagree with the statement. The study established that religious sponsored private universities have been forced to constantly review their strategies in order to cope with stiff competition in university education. However, 69.2% of the respondents disagree that the university offers short courses that attract many students, whereas, 30.8% agree that the university offers short courses that attract many students.

Focus Strategy

Table 4.2 shows that 92.3% of the respondents agree that the university targets a specific segment such as religious groups and endeavors to meet the needs of this consumer so as to build their loyalty, while 7.7% disagree with the statement. The findings also show that 84.6% of the respondents agree that the university has created unique academic programmes which attract a variety of students whereas 15.4% disagree with the statement. The findings further show that 100% agree that the academic programmes are global because the student body is made up of different nationalities while 76.9% disagree that the university niche is unique and has not been pursued by rival universities.

Differentiation Strategy

The study established that 77% agree that students are attracted to university by their academic performance, whereas, 23.1% disagree with the statement. 69.3% of the respondents agree that lecturers are dedicated to their work, while, 30.8% disagree. 92.3% agree that students are involved in co-curricular activities such as music, sports, and spiritual programs. 77% agree that the university has bursary fund to support the poor students who cannot afford fees, whereas 23% disagree with the statement. The study shows that 76.9% agree that classes are small and therefore students can relate one on one with the lecturers, whereas, 23.1% disagree with the statement.

Cost Leadership Strategy

From the study, 69.2% agree that the university reduces fees charged to self-sponsored students to attract more students to join the university, while 30.8% disagree with the statement. 84.6% of the respondents agree that the university has heavily invested in new technology in order to increase efficiency compared to the other universities, while 15.4% remain neutral to this statement. 92.3% agree that the university holds regular meetings to discuss the major issues affecting the institution like quality of service and marketing, whereas 7.7% disagree with the statement. However, the findings show that 100% of the respondents disagree that the university charges low fees compared to other universities while 76.9% disagree that the university has reduced feesbecause it is sponsored by the church, whereas, 23.1% remain neutral to this statement.

Student Attraction

61.1% of the respondents agree that they were attracted to the university by their faith, whereas 38.9% disagree with the statement. This is because today most religious sponsored private universities admit students from different religious backgrounds. Majority of the students are attracted by conducive learning environment at 100%. 64.7% of the respondents are attracted by adequate and qualified personnel and staff while 35.3% disagree with the statement. 82% of the respondents agree that the university is accessible. 94% of the respondents agree that the university offers programmes that are relevant to the market. The findings also revealed that 70.6% of the respondents were attracted by the good image and reputation of religious sponsored private universities, while 29.4% disagree with the statement.

However, 82.4% disagree that fees charged by religious sponsored private universities is affordable, whereas 17.6% agree with this statement. All respondents, 100%, disagree that scholarships and financial aid are available in the university.

Regression Analysis

A regression analysis was done to establish the effect of independent variables (growth strategy, focus strategy, differentiation strategy, and cost leadership) on the dependent variable (Student attraction). According to the regression analysis results, the independent variables (growth strategy, focus strategy, differentiation strategy and cost leadership) explain 53.5% of change in the dependent variable (strategy implementation). These results are shown in the model summary below:

Table 4.1: Model summary

Model Summary				
Model	*R*	*R Square*	*Adjusted R Square*	*Std. Error of the Estimate*
1	.732[a]	.535	.505	.818
a. Predictors: (Constant), Growth strategy, differentiation strategy, cost leadership strategy, focus strategy				

7. Conclusion and Recommendations

Growth Strategy

The findings show that the business environment in which religious sponsored private universities operate in today has become increasingly competitive and has pushed them to engage in competitive strategies that enable them to gain competitive edge. The study reveals that the universities have adopted different strategies to attract students such as opening more campuses, involving management in decision making as well as offering different promotions such as unit exemption.

Focus Strategy

The study established that religious sponsored private universities create programs to attract a specific segment of people such as religious groups and endeavors to meet the needs of this consumer so as to build their loyalty. Programmes offered in religious sponsored private universities are global so as to attract students from different nationalities. The study established that most religious sponsored private universities have many students from diverse nationalities attracted by specific programmes offered by the universities and aggressive marketing by advertisings.

Differentiation Strategy

The findings of this study show that religious sponsored private universities have achieved differentiation in various areas; lecturers are dedicated to their work as compared to other universities; students are involved in structured and well organized co-curricular activities such as music, sports and spiritual programmes where they compete for awards such as scholarships. They have bursary funds to support students who cannot afford the high fees. Classes are small compared to public universities and this allows a one on one interaction with students as well as personalizedattention.

Cost-Leadership Strategy

The findings of the study show that religious sponsored private universities have heavily invested in new technology in order to increase efficiency compared to other universities. The universities have also reasonably reduced their fees as a strategy to attract more students. The findings show that although the universities have reduced fees, it is still high compared to fees charged in public universities. The universities also hold regular meetings to discuss major issues affecting the institution like quality service and marketing.

Recommendations

The study recommends that the universities should offer short courses to a greater extent than they do currently as a strategy to attract more students. The research also recommends that religious sponsored universities increase the number of campuses as a strategy to attract more students. The study equally shows that religious sponsored private universities charge high fees for their programmes since most of them target the rich whose interest is quality programmes. This study recommends that religious sponsored private universities increase their academic programmes to attract students.

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