

B2012-05: Marketing Strategies that Attract and Increase Student Enrollment in Institutions of Higher Learning: Case of Private Universities in Kenya

Bowen D. Jeptepkeny¹, Gogo O. Julius², Maswili Richard²

¹Kabarak University, ²Daystar University, daisytepkenny@gmail.com

Abstract

University Education in Kenya has experienced tremendous growth in the last decade due to rising number of students seeking post secondary school education. A mismatch between capacity in public university and the number of students, who directly qualify, result in a number of students to seek admission in private universities while some still find admission in public universities as privately sponsored students. It is important for private universities to have up-to-date knowledge and information regarding marketing strategies to adopt in order to attract and enroll a good number of students. This study is aimed at identifying marketing strategies that could be applied by private universities so as to attract and enroll students. Descriptive research design was adopted in the study. Probability-simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 98 continuing undergraduate students and 28 employees from two private universities in Kenya and a questionnaire was used as the research instrument. Descriptive data was analyzed using statistical program for social science (SPSS). The findings indicate that advertising using an institution web site, advertising using the various media stations, use of social networks such as face-book, encouraging word-of-mouth, career fair involvement, open day on campus and alumni support are marketing strategies that can offer opportunity to attract and increase enrolment of students.

Keywords: *Marketing Strategies, Students Enrolment, Private Universities*

Introduction

University education in Kenya has expanded dramatically in recent years. Since the year 2000 there has been a significant expansion of both public and private universities in Kenya in response to higher demand for university education. This is evident by the number of constituent colleges and campuses that have so far been established in the past three years. A number of Technical Training Institutions including National Polytechnics have been upgraded to university college status. Currently there are 25 Private Universities and 7 Public Universities in Kenya, with 24 public university constituents' colleges (Commission for Higher Education, 2012).

The emergence of several private universities and public university constituent colleges means that private universities must become more aggressive in marketing their institutions in order to increase their market share in terms of student number and the quality of those enrolling. This has resulted to fierce competition among the private and public universities trying to offer the best so as to enhance its enrolment of students. Nevertheless, public universities have an upper hand arising from support in terms of long standing government financial support. As such, even without aggressive marketing strategies, public universities still enroll students to their programmes through Joint Admissions Board (JAB) while

some enroll through self sponsorship programme (SSP). However, the number of students absorbed by public universities represents a small fraction of those who qualify. For instance, in 2007, about 82,000 had qualified but public universities through JAB enrolled about 16,000 students only (Daily Nation, March 6, 2009). Normally, the remaining students with financial ability and desire to pursue university education seek admission either in Private universities or Public universities' self sponsored programmes. As a result, Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) make every effort to maximize their full potential through effective use of marketing strategies in order to create awareness of their services in order to attract and enroll students.

According to Richardson (2000) an institution can fail to achieve its objectives thereby losing its competitive edge hence lose its market share to its competitors. Further, it will depend on how effectively the institution uses the scarce institutional resources to enhance quality on the same. With a view to gaining a competitive edge and gaining a larger share of the national market, universities have finally realized the role of marketing as a powerful source of competitive advantage in increasing enrolment of its students (MacGregor, 2000; Merten, 2000). Competitive pressure has forced the higher educational institutions to look for more competitive marketing strategies in order to compete for students in their respective markets (Joseph & Joseph, 2000). In response to these changes, the value, effectiveness and potential benefits of using marketing theories and concepts, which have been effective in the business world, are gradually now being applied by many universities so as to attract and enroll a good number of students. It is against this background that the study sought to establish competitive marketing strategies towards enhancing students' enrolment (a case of two Private Universities in Kenya).

Objectives

Though the results may have implications for all private universities in Kenya, the study focused on two selected private universities. The first objective was to determine the rate of student enrolment between the period (2006 - 2010) in the selected private universities. The second was to establish marketing strategies that offer opportunity to attract and increase enrolment of students and what could be improved on in order to attract and increase students' enrolment. . We sought to answer the questions on what was the rate of student enrolment between the period (2006 - 2010) in the selected private universities in Kenya and what are the marketing strategies that could be employed in order to attract and increase enrolment of students in private universities. Finally, to answer the question on what marketing strategies that private universities could improve on in order to attract and increase students' enrolment.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive research design aimed at collecting information by interviewing a sample of individuals to determine their attitudes, opinions and habits (Kothari, 2004). This design was suitable for the study for it sought to describe staff and students' attitude and perception towards their institutions in regards to marketing strategies that could be employed by institutions of higher to attract and increase enrollment of students. This design was preferred because it enables direct generation of information and creates the opportunity for in-depth responses, and consequently provides a good understanding of the phenomenon under study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

Population refers to the entire group of individuals, objects, items, cases, articles or things with common attributes or common observable characteristics that fit specifically for being sources of the data required to address the research problem (Mugenda, 2008). The population comprised all continuing undergraduate students and staff working in the marketing/corporate affairs, admissions and academic departments (HODs) in the selected private universities. Target population comprise of all individuals, objects or things that the researcher can reasonably generalize his or her findings (Mugenda, 2008). The target population was derived from all 4th years continuing undergraduate students and all staff working in the admissions, marketing/corporate affairs and academic departments (HODs). A total of 976 students fall under the targeted 4th year continuing undergraduate students (Kabarak 276, Daystar 700) and 28 members of staff (Kabarak 11, Daystar 17).

A sample size refers to the number of objects to be selected from the population to constitute a sample (Gravetter & Forzano, 2009). The sample size was 98 fourth year continuing students which was 10% of the target population of 976 which is in line with Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) who gives 10% of the target population as the minimum sample size for descriptive studies. Since the number of staff working in the selected departments was relatively small, all the 28 employees in these departments were included in the study (100%). The sample size therefore, was 98 for continuing undergraduate students and 28 staff as shown in Table 1 on page 5.

Table 1: Target population and Sample size

University	Target population		Sample size	
	Staff	Students	Staff	Students
Kabarak university	11	276	11	28

Daystar university	17	700	17	70
Total	28	976	28	98

Source: Kabarak and Daystar University Admissions offices (2011)

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a number of individuals for study in such a way that the individuals selected represent the large group from which they are selected (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). Simple random sampling method was used whereby three classes of 4th year students for Daystar University were identified where a sample of 70 undergraduate 4th year students were asked to voluntarily fill the questionnaires. For Kabarak University, a sample of 28 students was randomly sampled from a class of 36 continuing 4th year students where the first 28 students to enter class had a chance of being included in the sample. All the staff (28) working in the admission, corporate affairs and academic staff (who were represented by Head of Departments) were part of this study. The sample was therefore 98 for continuing undergraduate 4th year students and 28 for staff as shown in Table 1 on page 5.

Both primary and secondary data was used for this study. Primary data was collected from the respondents through the questionnaires while secondary data was collected from the institutions' records and reports. Based on our own insights developed during learning marketing, a questionnaire was developed and tested on a judgmental sample of students and staff in a private university, resulting in some changes being made to clarify certain issues. Permission were sought from the government (National Council for Science and Technology) to conduct research. A number of questionnaires were administered at the beginning or end of lecture, with the permission and assistance of the lecturers while the researcher self-administered other questionnaires to staff members.

A total of 126 questionnaires were administered to 4th year continuing students and staff in the corporate affairs/marketing, admissions and academics department (represented by HODs) where a total of 113 were filled and returned which constituted an 89.6% response rate. Out of the 113 respondents (those who answered and returned the questionnaires), 79.6% were students while 20.4% were the staff as shown in Table 2 on page 7. The 89.6% is adequate response rate as argued by Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) that the return of 50% or more is acceptable. Non response rate in this study was 10.3%. The

findings and the results were analyzed using SPSS. Presentation is done in frequencies and percentages followed by the interpretation of the occurrences of the findings from the data analyzed. Other findings of the open ended questionnaires were examined qualitatively.

Table 2: Response rate

Respondents	Questionnaires Issued	Questionnaires Received	Percent
Students	98	90	79.6
Staff	28	23	20.4
Total	126	113	100.0

Results and discussion

The study used enrolment data obtained from the admission offices in the selected universities, as reflected in Tables 3 and 4 on and Figure 1 and 2 on page 19 & 20 respectively which indicated that there was a steady growth in student enrolment of undergraduate students of Kabarak university between the periods 2006 and 2007 but it declined between 2007 and 2009 whereby the student enrolment started increasing in the year 2010. Daystar university students' enrolment also increased steadily between the years 2006 and 2009 whereby it declined in the year 2010. The figures for May semesters and January 2010 were not included because it was not forthcoming; hence the results regarding the student enrolment indicated in Table 4.3 excludes data for May semesters.

Table 3: Kabarak University undergraduate student total enrolment (2006-2010)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	437	749	943	974	1191
May	526	859	952	941	1191
September	640	984	968	1059	1400

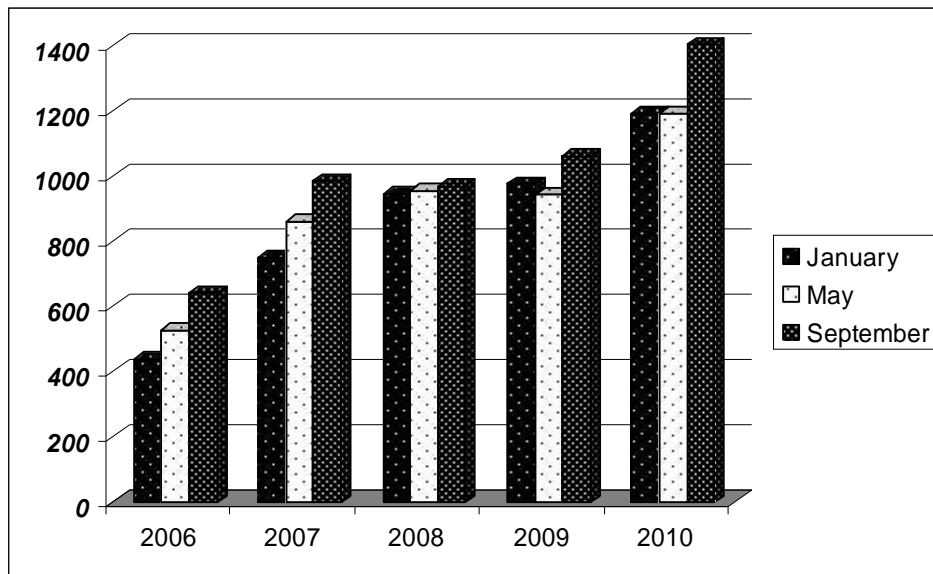


Figure 1: Kabarak University undergraduate student total enrolment

Source: Kabarak University Admission office

Table 3: Daystar undergraduate student total enrolment (2006-2010)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
January	2109	2210	2491	2655	0
September	2180	2339	2612	2914	2828

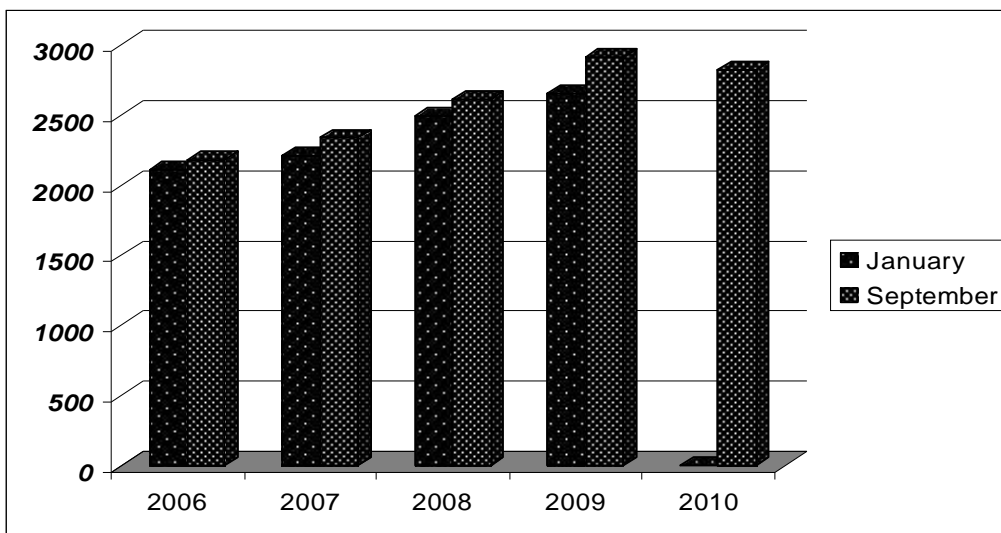


Figure 2: Daystar University undergraduate student enrolment

Source: Daystar University Admission office

Rate of student enrolment

The study sought to establish the rate of student enrolment for the last five years from 2006 to 2010 in the selected private universities. Regarding Kabarak University rate of student enrolment, the results in Table 4 and Figure 3 on page 59 indicates that rate of students' enrolment between the period 2006 to 2007 was 71.3% in January, 63.3% in May and 53.8% in September while, between the year 2007 and 2008 the rate of students' enrolment decline at a rate of 25.9% in January, 10.8% in May and -1.6% in September. Consequently, between the year 2008 and 2009, the rate of increase of students enrolment also increased but on a declining rate of 3.2% in January, -1.1% in May and 9.4% in September and finally between the year 2009 and 2010 the rate of increase of student enrolment increased on an increasing rate of 22.3% in January, 15.9% in May and 32.2% in September. This implies that although there was an increase in enrolment of students, the rate of increase was on the decline in some years however, an increase of student enrolment was realized in the year 2010 as seen in Table 4.2 and Figures 4.2 respectively.

Table 4: Kabarak university undergraduate student rate of enrolment

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
January	71.3	25.9	3.2	22.3
May	63.3	10.8	-1.1	15.9
September	53.7	-1.6	9.4	32.2
Total rate of increase	61.7	10.5	3.9	27.2

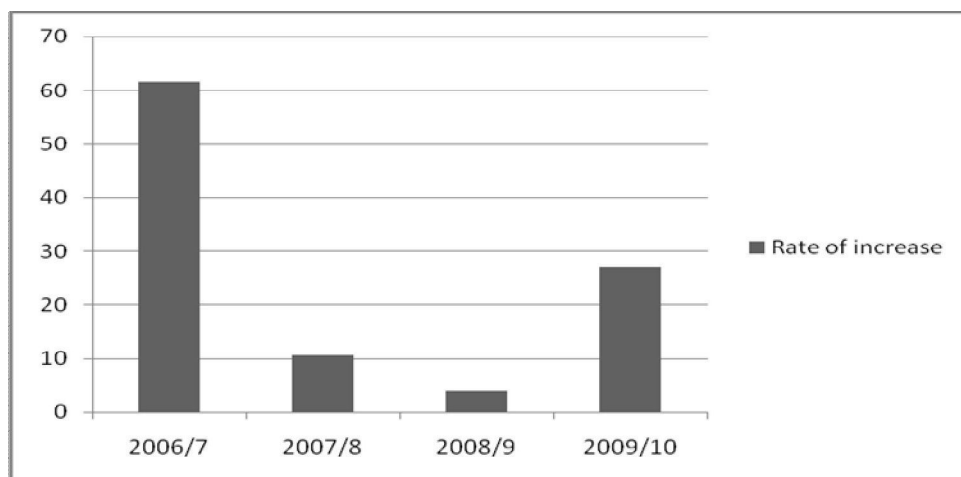


Figure 3: Kabarak university undergraduate student rate of enrolment

Source: Daystar University Admission office

Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 shows the findings of Daystar University rate of undergraduate student enrolment between the period 2006 to 2010.

Table 4.3: Daystar university undergraduate Student rate of enrolment

	2006/7	2007/8	2008/9	2009/10
January	4.8	12.7	6.6	0
September	7.3	11.6	11.6	-2.9
Total rate of increase	6.1	12.1	9.1	1.5

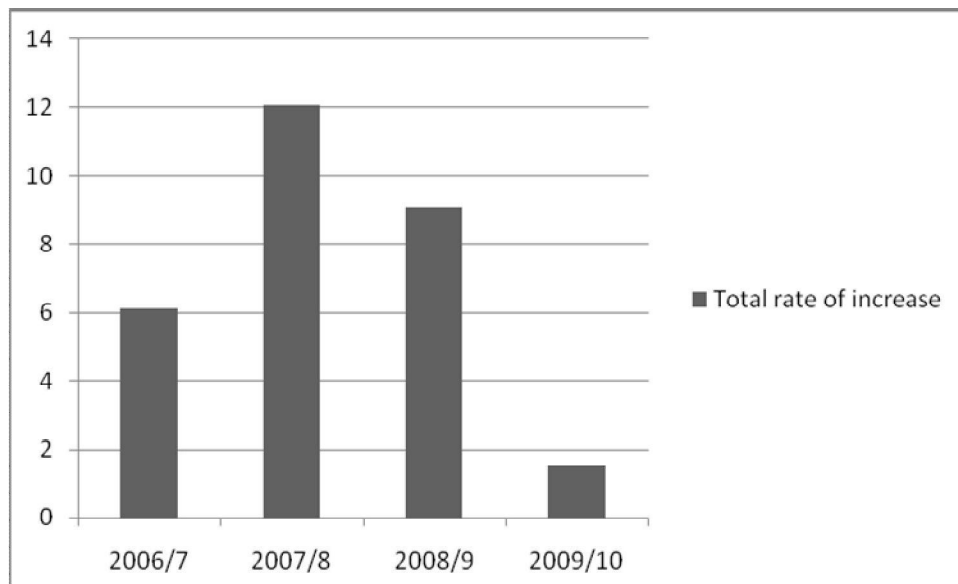


Figure 4.3: Daystar University undergraduate student rate of enrolment

Source: Daystar University Admission office

The results therefore, revealed that in the period 2006/7 there was an increase of students' enrolment with a rate of 4.8% in January and 7.3% in September. For the period 2007/8 there was also an increase of student enrolment with rate of 12.7% in January and 11.6% in September. But in 2008/9 the rate of increase of students' enrolment increase with a declining rate of 6.5% in January and an increasing rate of 11.5% in September. Consequently, in 2009 to 2010, the rate of increase of student enrolment decreased on a declining rate of -2.9% as indicated in Table 4.3 and Figure 4.3 on page 60 respectively.

The findings regarding the rate of undergraduate student's enrolment in the selected Universities revealed that the rate of student enrolment was increasing on an increasing rate but the increase is on the decline as reflected in Figures 4.2 and 4.3 on page 59 and 60 respectively. The changes in enrolment rate could be as a result of the emergence of several private universities and public university's constituent

campuses that has made the field of Higher Education to become increasingly competitive as stated by (CHE Handbook, 2010).

Marketing strategies that can offer opportunity to attract and increase enrolment of students

The study sought to find out the extent of some marketing activities that private universities may employ in order to attract and increase enrolment of students by extent of agreement. The findings revealed that 83.3% of the respondents agreed with higher employability after graduation while 10% disagreed. This was followed closely with promotional aspects like promotion via the web (i.e. world wide web), with 80.5% agreeing while 10.6% disagreeing, advertising with 79.6% agreeing while 10.6% disagreeing, whose findings are in line with the literature according to Hayes (2009) who claimed that advertising is but one of the tools the universities employ to inform, remind and persuade prospective students to select their institution. At the same time, the respondents also agreed with Career fair involvement, Open day on campus and alumni support each with 79.6%, 72.5% and 71.9% respectively. Respondents also regarded faculty specific prospectuses as important with 72.5% agreeing while 10.7% disagreeing which support the findings of Nicholls (1985) who argued that despite there being a considerable growth in the role of the internet in accessing information about universities and the programmes that they offer, printed materials mailed to or collected by students remains an important tool in the marketing armoury and considerably more so than the traditional forms of promotion. In regard to contact with university career counsellors and recruiters visit high schools 69.0% and 65.4% of the respondents agreed while 16.8% and 22.1% disagreed respectively.

The findings showed that the main marketing strategies that can offer opportunity to attract and increase enrolment of students are promotional strategies which include promotion via the web (i.e. world wide web) advertising through the media, Career fair involvement, open day on campus and recruiters visit high schools. Faculty specific prospectuses, higher employability after graduation, alumni support and contact with university career counsellors are some of marketing strategies that can attract and enhance enrolment of students.

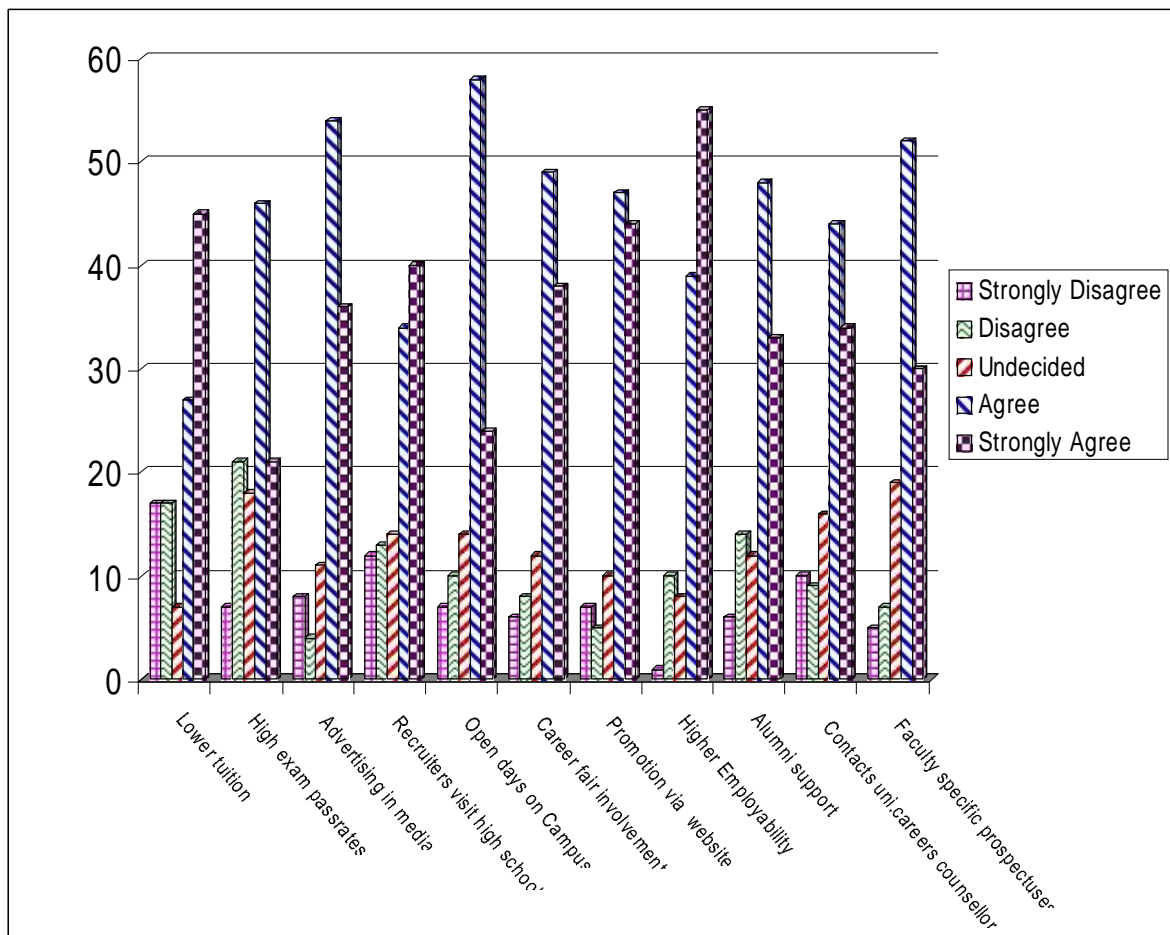


Figure 4.5: Extent to which marketing activities may be employed by private universities

Other suggested marketing strategies that private universities could employ in order to attract and increase students' enrolment included advertising through various media stations such as print media like newspaper, radio stations, and social networks such as Facebook as well as word of mouth. Others are promotional strategies such as career days, exhibition, open days and campus visit. Image and reputation through publicity in form of corporate social responsibility, support for the community, educational scholarship through sports and assisting students get employment. Others included support from the management, fee waiver for parents with more than one student, outdoor advertising such as billboards and road shows.

Marketing strategies universities need to improve on

The study found that there are several areas that a university needs to improve in order to attract enrolment of students. These areas include improving registration process by going online, constant update of the institution website, creation of close links with industries, involving students in marketing

and encouraging word of mouth. There is need to introduce sports into academic curriculum through which sports scholarship can come in. The study also found out that programs should always be reviewed and more to be developed that are marketable and are in line with the industry needs in order to attract student's enrolment. This supports the literature by Kotler and Keller (2009) who stated that highly innovative firms are able to identify and quickly seize new market opportunities. This can be done through development of new programs, new learning concepts and new research findings.

B2012-07: Relationship between Human Capital and Business Performance of Pharmaceutical Firms in Kenya

Ngari J. Mark¹ & Gichira Robert²,

¹Kenya Methodist University, ²Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology,
jamesngari@gmail.com

Abstract

Human capital is a range of valuable skills and knowledge a person has accumulated over time and it is the resourcefulness that gives an organization a competitive advantage since it cannot be imitated by the competitors and therefore it is a strategic resource and an asset to the organization. There is no doubt human capital plays a crucial role in the current ever-challenging and aggressive business environment, particularly in knowledge-intensive organizations such as pharmaceutical industry. The organizations that aspire to be successful and competitive need to demand and find better ways to improve their business performance by utilizing their human capital. This study sought to establish the relationship between human capital and business performance of pharmaceutical firms in Kenya. Three research questions were used to test the relationship of the components of Human capital with the Business performance of the pharmaceutical companies in Kenya. Data was collected from 19 pharmaceutical firms. Pearson correlation and regression were used to test the relationship and significance. The findings indicated that the three dimensions of Human capital that is learning and education, experience and expertise, innovation and creation have positive and significance relationship with business performance of pharmaceutical firms'. However learning and education was the most significant variable. Therefore, accounting for human capital is essential for the improved business performance of pharmaceutical firms.

Key words: *Human Capital, Learning and Education, Experience and expertise, innovation and creativity, Business performance, pharmaceutical industry.*

Introduction

The growing importance of human capital and intellectual property as determinants of economic success at both the macroeconomic and enterprise levels, it should also be clear that the nature of investments made by firms needs to shift to reflect the new economic realities. Specifically, if human capital is a key determinant of organizational success, then investments in training and development of people also become critical (Flamholz, 2002).