Strategies for Sustainable Competitive Advantage in Christian Universities in Nairobi, Kenya – Awareness Gap: A Case of Pan Africa Christian University

Joyce W. Nderitu
Ph.D. Student (Strategic Management), Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology, Juja, Kenya

Abstract:
Employment of new and relevant strategies to gain sustainable competitive advantage is necessary in Christian universities. Strategies in an organization determine competitive advantage. The goal of this research was, therefore, to widen the sphere of knowledge and understanding about strategies adopted by Christian universities to gain sustainable competitive advantage. The objectives of this research were to identify the strategies adopted by Pan Africa Christian University to gain a sustainable competitive advantage, and to establish the effects of using various strategies to gain sustainable competitive advantage.

Keywords: Strategy, competition, competitive advantage, and competitive strategies, universities and the strategies they use

1. Introduction

Universities have strategic initiatives or directions which translate to their vision, mission, identity and position into strategies that are identified which results to specific actions and measurable goals (Morrill, 2007). During President Moi's regime, Kenya succeeded by using two strategies in reducing the students' political activism. These two strategies were decentralization and co-opting of students' leadership politically (Adjibolosoo, 1995). Adjibolosoo (1995) has further noted that this strategy of cooptation of the leaders was done through special invitations of students in State House by the President when there were special functions or events, and there was sometimes financial support.

Studies investigating the strategies that have been used in reading show that readers use different types of strategies in their reading process (Aebersold & Field, 1997; Ikeda & Takeuchi, 2000 in Chomphuchart, 2006). Further studies show that the online strategies are employed by universities especially in commonwealth countries such as Australia, Botswana, Canada, Bangladesh, India, Malawi, New Zealand, South Africa, Tanzania and United Kingdom, among others (Remenyi, 2008); and introduction of the online learning was to improve or enhance teaching on-campus. Remenyi (2008, p. 389) has further commented that "the commonwealth universities in Garret's study were driven by the need to 'keep up with the competition,' namely those universities in the forefront of e-learning strategies". The university management prefers these kinds of strategies because they are cost effective.

1.1. Strategies and Their Importance in Management of Universities

Olum (n.d.) has pointed out that the use of strategies in university management helps the university clarify goals and objectives, and move away from routine management by developing systematic and long term plans that position the institution to face increasing uncertain future. It helps the university to have an idea of optimizing resources to meet objectives while taking into account external focus. Applying strategic planning to Makerere University, Olum (n. d.) contended that use of relevant strategies will help the university to use SWOT analysis as a guide to development, marketing and implementation of new programs in demand in their highly dynamic market. Olum (n. d.) further added that use of strategies helps academic and administrative members, institutions and departments to conduct effectively their daily operations. Both private and public universities when they use strategies are able to generate revenue they need to run the universities.

Tavernier (2005) has observed that strategies are applicable to teaching in institutions of higher learning. Face-to-face lecture has to work hand in hand with e-learning. Networking with other universities in order to run some programs effectively is becoming the norm. Stakeholders of universities keep a critical eye on what they do and how they do it. Tavernier (2005) has further noted that appropriate use of strategies helps the universities to be accountable to governments and stakeholders. In few words, strategic management for universities is benefiting them through the power of networking, widely shared vision/mission statement, delegated initiative with a large part of decision making under lower level university management. As a result, the higher level management is able to steer the institutions effectively.

1.2. Competitive Advantage
Competitive advantage "is an advantage gained over competitors by offering customers greater value, either through lower prices or by providing additional benefits and service that justify similar, or possibly higher, prices" (Ehmke, 2005, p.1). The foundation for a competitive advantage is both the resources and abilities that an organization has. An organization looks at the product and service offerings, and also the existing resources (Ehmke, 2005). Barone and DeCarlo (2003) has affirmed that building sustainable competitive advantages goes around differentiating a product from the competitors accompanied with attributes that are valuable and relevant to customers.

1.3. Competitive Advantage Concepts in Strategic Management
Strategic management can be defined as the proper integration of strategic planning and implementation in the organization in an on-going manner to enable fulfillment of its mission, and meeting of its mandates. It is a continuous learning and sustained creation of public value (Bryson, 2011). Strategic management is relevant in all institutions of higher learning regardless of their size or composition. Middlewood and Lumby (1998) have observed that in England and Wales, schools and colleges are required by the responsible body to have their own strategic plans. They must show how their individual management is going to fulfill those responsibilities to help them gain sustainable competitive advantage.

1.3.1. Resources and Capabilities
Resources and capabilities are able to cause a firm gain competitive advantage. With the available resources, companies need capabilities such as technology, marketing skills, good product development processes, and management capabilities. Resources are tangible assets while capabilities are intangible. Products or services do not help a company attain sustainable competitive advantage but it is the types of resources and capabilities that a company have. A company must have the right type of resource; unique physical resources, property rights, intangible values, intangible internal resources, and intangible capabilities (Foss, 1997). Past studies show that capabilities and resources have close relationship and they enhance achievement of competitive advantage (Ismail, Rose, Uli & Abdulla, 2012). The theories discussed below show the importance of Christian universities having available resources and the need for capabilities.
Further studies show the importance of having a relevant strategy to achieve competitive advantage from the resource-based view (Foss & Knudsen, 2003; Gottschalg & Zollo, 2007; in Ismail, Rose, Uli & Abdulla, 2012). The above studies show that capabilities and resources are important in an organization as they enhance sustainable competitive advantage. Peteraf (1993) in Khosrowpour (2006) has discussed the resource-based view model which brings about the achievement of a sustained competitive advantage. Sometimes firms look outside their firm's resources to enhance competitive advantages by using strategies like outsourcing (Khosrow-Pour, 2006). On dynamic capabilities, several theorists argue that dynamic capabilities are an important source of competitive advantage (Makadok, 2001; Teece et al., 1997; Verona & Ravasi, 2003); but theorists also note that dynamic capabilities may not be the source and cannot help to achieve sustainable competitive advantage (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).
Enders and Jongbloed (2007) have argued that universities can achieve competitive advantage if they have the right kind of resources base and that this competitive advantage is able to be sustained when the strategic resources are valuable, inimitable, immobile, and not substitutable. Hitt, Ireland, and Hoskisson (2001) added that the resource-based view leads to capabilities like core competencies which become the source of sustainable competitive advantage and as a result become the strategic competitiveness. The resource view that has newly emerged points to a firm's unique resources, core competence, and dynamics in a rapidly changing global market (Barney, 1991).
Competence-based strategy is part of strategy theory which is directed toward the organization's resources, capabilities, and competences (Drejer, 2002). Drejer (2002) argues that capabilities help a firm attain sustainable competitive advantage more than the resources; Barney (1991) clarified the same issue. Hamel and Prahalad (1994) define core competence as a number of skills and technologies that enable an organization to provide a unique benefit to customers. Core competencies are not product specific, but they contribute to a range of products or services that are competitive within the industry. Study of (Mooney, 2007 in Bani-Hani and Faleh, 2009) examine the core and distinctive competence, and also competitive advantage as the most important business concepts that managers, researchers, and educators rely on for decision making, pedagogy, and research. In addition to resources, capabilities, and core competences, institutions of higher learning need to create value to its customers (students).

1.3.2. Value Creation
Value is created by an organization to its customers. The customers get a value for the products, the price of the products, and the costs of creating the products. When customers are satisfied after consuming the products, it reflects utility. An institution can expand its market because of the value the students give to their programs (Hill & Jones, 2010). Institutions have competitive advantage and increase in profitability when they create more value for their students than what their rivals do (Hill & Jones, 2010). However, these institutions need to create structural capital which connects them for value-creation and also innovation (Daum, 2003).
Value refers to "economic rents that arise from internal resources or resource combinations that exploit opportunities and/or neutralize threats in a firm's environment" (Barney, 1991, p. 13). This is where firms and institutions engage in a search for new and unique ways to create value or provide unique products or services in competitive or changing environments (Ghoshal & Moran, 1999; in Al-Fattal, 2010).

1.3.3. Leadership and Conducive University Culture

The organization culture as a concept of leadership is one of the components that have been identified and that leaders use to grow their organizations. Organizational culture is defined as a "dynamic phenomenon that surrounds us at all times, being constantly enacted and created by our interactions with others and shaped by leadership behavior, and a set of structures, routines, rules, and norms that guide and constrain behavior" (Schein, 2004, p.1). According to Morris (2008), the institutions of higher learning must have administration that is able to provide insights. These insights should be unique and different to the institutions the administration serves. Private colleges and universities have unique qualities due to the fact that they are smaller than public institutions especially in student's enrollment, and the number of teaching and subordinates staff employed. The culture of these institutions is characterized by a family type atmosphere where every member of staff invests in each other; all of them feel involved and appreciated.

Structure – According to Khosrowpour (1992), new institutional structures and information technologies are likely to create competitive advantages. Khosrowpour (1992, p. 198) adds that "success and competitive advantage seem more likely when there is participative planning, extensive user involvement in development and implementation, and imaginative senior management leadership". On the other hand, Daniel (1999) advises the universities to consider the technological change that can affect and impact industry structure and bring impact in a number of areas: *entry barriers* – the production of course materials have resulted to low entry barriers it distance education and as a result there has been reduction on the advantages of operating on a large scale; *buyer power* – Well-equipped students are able to access online courses from home and from different educational institutions. However, Beamish and Ashford (2005, p. 2) further argue that it is important "to consider carefully the nature, structure and culture of any organization, in order that it can clearly meet the challenges to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage and to remain at the heart of the marketplace".

1.4. Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Hua (2011, p. 2082) argues that as competition intensifies, it is good for institutions of higher learning to ask, "What sustainable competitive advantage should the private higher education institutions (PHEIs) have to achieve a market leader in the education industry?" Studies by practitioners and academicians have shown that in many sectors most organizations are to realize that attaining competitive advantages is one of the challenging issues that firms are facing in the 21st century (Njuguna, 2009). There has been great concern and this has resulted to the theories like resource-based and knowledge-based that look keenly the relationship between important resources and capabilities; also sustainable competitive advantage and performance that is beyond normal (Njuguna, 2009). According to Barney (1991, p. 32) in Njuguna (2009) "a firm is said to have a sustainable competitive advantage when it is implementing a value creating strategy not simultaneously being implemented by any current or potential competitors and when these other firms are unable to duplicate the benefits of this strategy".

Williams (2007) observes that valuable resources allow companies to improve their efficiency and effectiveness while rare resources that competing firms do not possess or even control are very important in sustaining a competitive advantage. On the other hand, imperfectly imitable resources are sometimes impossible to acquire because they are extremely very expensive. These resources are also difficult to imitate. Consequently, non-substitutable resources are hard to substitute. These are resources whereby no other resources can be able to replace them to have competitive advantage that is sustainable. Williams (2007) further highlights four requirements for sustainable competitive advantage as illustrated in Figure 1 below:
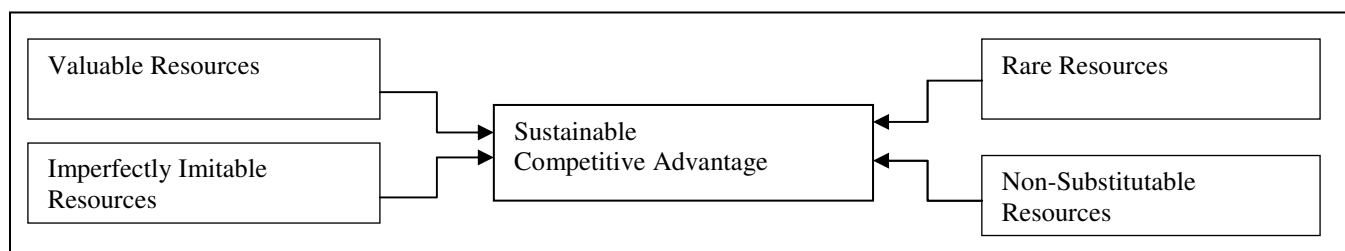

Figure 1: Sustainable Competitive Advantage. Adapted from Williams (2007, p. 169).

Hill and Jones (2012) assert that an organization that is able to maintain its profit above average is an organization that has sustained competitive advantage. Resources like capital resources are obtained through the learning in organizations and this is very important for sustaining competitive advantage in today's competitive environment (DeNisi, 2000). Further, Hill and Jones (2012) conclude that building and sustaining competitive advantage requires an institution to have superior efficiency, quality, innovation, and have a positive response to its students. This requires leadership of these institutions to develop and improve their acquiring of knowledge; improve on their distribution systems to be able to attain sustainable competitive advantage. This will improve on their performance (Njuguna, 2009). In addition, a firm that has the ability to give their customers value consistently, and where the competitors are unable to imitate, is a firm that has a sustainable competitive advantage (Collis & Montgomery, 1995).

1.4.1. Sources of Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Hua (2011) has given various researchers who have proposed and given their interpretations of what sustainable competitive advantage is in the education industry. The following are examples of these researchers:

The competitive forces view (Porter, 1985) believes the success of any organization's competitive strategy depends on how the organization has positioned itself within its environment, especially in its ability to influence the competitive forces in its favor or defend itself against these forces. The resource based view (Hamel & Prahalad, 1994) holds that an organization will perform or outperform its competitors by developing distinctive competencies.

An organization can identify specific ways in which it can differentiate its products or services and be able to promote the differences that appeal to its target market. Organizations should have a market focus and innovation; should be flexible and be ready to respond to changing markets or circumstances and have a global perspective (Baharun, 2002). Programs, information on careers, and physical facilities are critical issues that the university administration must keep in mind especially when educational institutions are trying to create sustainable competitive advantage in marketing strategies (Joseph & Joseph, 2000).

Davidson (1987) in Hua (2011) has identified eight sources of competitive advantage because for a winning strategy or for average growth and profits, more competitive advantages are needed. They include: a superior product benefit, a perceived advantage perhaps created through imagery and effective communication, low cost operations, legal advantage, because of patents, copyrights or a protected position, superior contacts, superior knowledge of customers, markets, science or technology, scale advantages, and offensive attitudes, competitive toughness and a determination to win (Hua, 2011, p. 2089).

1.4.2. Competitive Strategy
Competitive strategy is very important in achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (SCA) because it enhances the performance of a business (Bharadwaj, 1993). On the other hand, competitive strategy provides an advantage to a firm over its rivals in defending against competitive forces and also attracting its customers (Ansoff, 1985). Further, Porter (1998) argues that one of the goals in competitive strategy is to establish a position that is sustainable against the competitive forces and profitability that determine competition in the industry.

1.5. Importance of Strategies in Christian Universities
Martinez and Wolverton (2009) point out that colleges and universities have strategies to guide them in the future. Public colleges and universities started adopting strategic planning in the 1970s, a tool that help them to move toward the future. The chosen strategy in any institution must be flexible and adaptable according to the behavior of the competitors and the customers' requirements (Zahn, 1999). Day and Reibenstein (1997, p.2) add that "without a dynamic strategic manager, institutions run the risk to stick with strategies of the past, even if these have already proved as being unsuccessful". Fulford (2011) observes that the strategies in the universities that are applied have a gap that he calls "talking doing gap". Most of these universities talk about desired goals but do not implement them. Research done in universities in Lithuania (Daniunas & Radzeviciene, 2009) has showed that universities had their strategies more formal and general instead of seeing them as operational and detailed to the unit level. Majority of universities did not agree that the strategies developed are influenced by formal and external requirement to have a strategy. Other studies add that most universities have recognized the importance and need of having a strategic plan and applying it (Daniunas & Radzeviciene, 2009).

Ahlstrom and Bruton (2010) give three levels of strategy that organizations are supposed to develop. Each level of strategy is supposed to be the foundation of the other strategy. The basic level is the corporate level which determines the kind of industry mix that an organization should compete with and the result of this determination is high performance. The next level of strategy is the business level strategy that tells an organization how it will compete in the market with the product it has chosen. The last level of strategy is the functional level that implements change in different functional areas. Examples of these functional areas in a firm are marketing, finance, and operations. Applying the cited levels to Christian universities, the management would establish which universities are in competition with the said university, strategically plan on how the competition will take place so that the university gains competitive advantage, and implementation of formulated strategies. The universities can also use different types of strategies to create a sustainable competitive advantage which include "partnerships with overseas institutions, funding resources for international initiatives, intentional hiring of faculty with international expertise, and participation in internationally focused committees" (Childress, 2010, p. 78).

1.6. Strategies Adopted by Christian Universities to Gain Competitive Advantage
Fulford (2011) has observed that Alpha University has adopted a traditional strategy approach which deals with vision and mission statements. The university has not only adopted the traditional strategy approach, but it has also built the knowledge-based strategy. However, the university has adapted the formulation process of a new generation of strategy to avoid failing in 'talk-doing gap' and to add competencies that are new to gain a competitive advantage.

1.7. Traditional Strategy Approach
Donaldson and O'Toole (2007, p. 43) argue that traditional strategy approach is competitive when competing in a marketplace, and it is a "'survival of the fittest' philosophy". Drejer (2002) adds that strategic planning, strategic control, and financial control are three ways of formulating a strategy and they summarize the idea of strategy process in traditional strategy approach. Conrad, et al. say the "traditional strategy, with its tight hierarchy, focus on the structure, formal communication, rule-reward systems, and written policies and procedures, is still the dominant strategy used in the United States for governmental agencies, educational institutions, and many private firms" (Conrad & Pole, 2012, p.107).

Rothwell and Kazanas (2003) argue that strategic planning failed due to the slowness and the formality of the traditional approaches used in implementing it. Leibold, Probst, Gibbert (2005) on the other hand, point out that the purpose of using traditional approach is because it may be cheaper, faster, better, and more unique than the competition.

1.8. Knowledge-Based Strategy
According to Sveiby (2001), there has been rapid growth of knowledge-based services, and this type of strategy formulation start with the competence of people who are the primary intangible resources who are true agents in any business. Sveiby (2001) adds that the theory of knowledge-based of an organization brings about challenges of perceptions about the organization's boundaries. Further, Prasad, Vin, Sahni, Jaiswal, and Thipakorn (2010) argue that it is imperative that knowledge-based strategy be used especially where organizations are dealing with local and global competitors which helps the organizations overcome roadblocks that are multiple and that result to increase profitability. However, for knowledge-based strategy to achieve competitive advantage resulting to high financial performance, organizations should have an accumulation of knowledge storehouses and use that knowledge to steer innovation (Hunt, 2010).
Christian universities can adopt the above said strategies to ensure that they have achieved a sustainable competitive advantage. These universities can exploit different ways to gain competitive advantages, for example, through innovating, differentiating, and adding unique value creation for the students will ensure that the university has a competitive edge (Gordon, 2010).

1.9. Quality Teaching
According to Hunt and Chalmers (2013), over the last two decades, the quality of teaching especially in universities has received attention because the government has mandated accountability mechanisms like quality audits that have been used as important tools. On the other hand, quality of learning is impacted by the effectiveness of quality teaching which institutions of higher education fail to appraise (Fabrice, 2010). Quality teaching attracts more students and it attracts like-minded faculty and visiting faculty. Students join university because of quality teaching which results to effective graduates who are able to sell the university to others. Further, maintaining quality teaching must "meet increasing expectations from a range of stakeholders for the quality of the teaching and learning that they provide" (Fraser, 2005, p. 72).
The importance of this strategy is because more students are attracted and sustained. The faculty staff needs to set and maintain high standards of teaching and scholarship because the issue of the quality of teaching affects the increase in enrolment (Sawyer, 2004). Once quality teaching strategy is maintained this will give students a sense of pride for their University. Hill and Jones (2012) further argue that building and sustaining a competitive advantage requires an institution to have superior efficiency, quality, innovation, and have a positive response to its students.

1.10. Effects of Adopting Different Strategies to Gain Sustainable Competitive Advantage
Schuler and Jackson (1987) have come up with three different competitive advantage strategies that organizations can use to achieve competitive advantage which include innovation, quality enhancement and cost reduction. Further, Ehmke (2005) gives different strategies for competitive advantage which include: product features and benefits, location, capable and reliable staff, operating procedures, price (cost advantage when the competitors gain by reducing tuition), and quality (that use value-added strategies, such as having qualified teaching staff to provide excellent services to the students). In addition, Eckel (2007) gives some examples where the universities are pushed by competition to employ strategies that improve their high positions within the market education which include recruitment of highly experienced teaching staff, provision of cutting-edge information technology teachings aids, and student facilities. However, Abagi (2006) argues that a large number of students are attracted in private universities where market-friendly courses and employment-oriented courses are offered.

1.10.1. Growth Strategy
Kumar (2010) observes that the initiatives of growth strategy is driven by the initiatives of the competitors which force the development of strategies that are operations-oriented and they include the supply chain restructuring, outsourcing or process reengineering. According to Hill and Jones (2010), when an institution pursues strategies there is high and profit that is sustained and profit growth. Pursuing the right strategies enables the institution to achieve a competitive advantage and profitability that is superior and profit growth. Eckel (2007), on the other hand, believes that good strategies will enable institutions of higher learning to achieve good and positive returns on students that are better equipped and prepared, quality improvement in the institution, and the ability to leverage opportunities and additional resources. However, as the institutions compete, the results will be high quality of education (Agasisti & Catalano, 2006).
The above discussed strategies have been used by higher education institutions to maximize their effectiveness and contribute growth. According to Kimando, Njogu and Sakwa (2012), innovative strategies have been used by the private and Christian universities and have employed innovation and technology as competitive strategy that has resulted to growth. Kimando, et al., (2012) further note that these institutions have done this by employing differentiation which has given them a competitive advantage. On the other hand, private institutions in African countries need to have technology-based innovations which are vital for the institutions and for the growth of the institutions and economy (Mohamedbhai, 2008). However, it is possible for Christian universities to achieve competitive advantage through service and quality which is a source of competitive advantage. Samson (2010) argues that sustainable advantage can come from differentiation of products through innovation, which enhance quality.

Creation of competitive advantage calls for a convenient location of an institution other than products or services that an institution may consider. Studies show there is a connection between the nature of competition and the role that a location plays regarding competitive advantage (Porter, 2008). On the other hand, universities can gain competitive advantage if they have qualified workers that are sometimes scarce to find, and this is a major problem in private universities which were surveyed (Mwiria, et al., 2007).

2. Research Methodology
The study employed the use of research design where data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. The survey method was applied in the study due to the type of questions that were prepared. The questions in the questionnaire were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. The study was descriptive to assist in descriptive analysis which guided the researcher in evaluating the strategies adopted by PAC University, which helped it to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. The case study which is a descriptive research technique was used to give detailed information about the university.

The target population of this study included the students' leaders, staff, and University management which were 63 in number. Those who were selected were believed to give the relevant information for the study. The sampling frame used by the researcher in this study was a list of students' council members, and university staff. The sample size in this study was 9 students' who are members of students' council. One masters' student and 12 (supportive, and administrative staff) from all the departments including 7 faculty, 6 heads of department, and 6 members of University management. Out of the 12 members of staff that was selected include; maintenance officer, editorial manager, registrar, assistant registrar, librarian, assistant librarian, assistant dean, university counselor, IT director, IT personnel and two assistant accountants. The sample size consisted of 41 people which is more than 10% of the entire population. The sample size should be more than 10% of the entire, which is the minimum sample used for descriptive studies (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3. Discussion of the Study Findings

3.1. Awareness of Strategies Adopted to Gain a Sustainable Competitive Advantage
On awareness of strategies, the participants were asked: Are you aware of the strategies that Pan Africa Christian University has in place? Their responses are shown in the table below.

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	19	67.9
No	9	32.1
Total	28	100.0

Table 1: Awareness of the strategies

Based on the above summary table, 19 (67.9%) of the participants were aware of the existing strategies which the University used towards gaining sustainable competitive advantage in relation to its competitors. The participants (9, 32.1%) who expressed that they were not aware of strategies included students and few lecturers. This indicated that these participants needed to be made aware of the strategies that existed at PAC University. The participants who said yes identified the following strategies as:
1. Advertising and marketing through media, friendly churches and raising brand visibility in exhibitions (10, 35.7%).
2. Offering unique and market-driven programs to gain a portion of the niche market (10, 35.7%). Applying strategic planning to Makerere University, Olum (n. d.) contends that use of relevant strategies will help the university to use SWOT analysis as a guide to development, marketing and implementation of new programs in demand in their highly dynamic market.
3. Recruitment and acquisition of highly qualified and experienced staff for quality assurance in services provided which results to quality teaching and learning (6, 17.9%).
4. Integration of spirituality in learning, where there are chapel services for community building, and prayer meetings that enhance staff togetherness (4, 14.3%). Noseworthy (2001) observes that curricular religious activities are present on the campuses which include worship, fellowship, and study of God's Word, service, and other religious activities. The students are required to attend chapel and other Christian meetings weekly.
5. Low and affordable fees for the programs with incentives for bringing in a new student (3, 10.7%). Strategies like cost reduction in universities may not be maintained for a long time because infrastructure in the University has to be developed (Daniel, 1999).
6. ICT services and infrastructure development (1, 3.6%).

Some of the strategies that were identified by the participants above existed but others were in the process like offering unique programs to gain a portion of the niche market. The 9 (32.1%) of the participants who were not aware of the existing strategies called for need to be educated on the strategies by the management. The question that this study raised is whether the strategies are used or known by the stakeholders. Tavernier (2005) notes that appropriate use of strategies helps the universities to be accountable to governments and stakeholders. However, the 67.9% of the participants who indicated awareness did not indicate that the management had taught them. Wright (2008) observes that management can bring awareness of organizational strategies by facilitating education with its stakeholders.

On another question, the participants were asked to express their view in relation to strategies adopted by PAC University. The findings below indicated that participants had a divergence of opinions on distribution of three strategies, which is traditional-based strategy, knowledge-based strategy and quality teaching.

3.2. Traditional-Based Strategy
On a Likert scale of 1 to 5, the responses concerning traditional-based (realization of vision and mission) strategy were as follows: strongly agree 9 (32.1%), agree 8 (28.6%), neutral 7 (25.0%), disagree 4 (14.3%), and strongly disagree 0 (0%) as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	9	32.1
Agree	8	28.6
Neutral	7	25.0
Disagree	4	14.3
Total	28	100.0

Table 2: Traditional-based (Realization of vision and mission)

A majority of 60.7% expressed 'strongly agree' and 'agree' on the use of traditional-based strategy. This high percentage of the responses indicated that the participants understood the vision and mission of PAC University. It was also an indication that this type of strategy was adopted by PACU. Fulford (2011) has observed that Alpha University has adopted a traditional strategy approach which deals with vision and mission statements. Traditional-based strategy in this study is used as the realization of vision and mission of an organization. The uniqueness of Christian universities is their diverse Christian tradition, mission, vision, and their worldview; but case studies have given evidence of how Christian higher education struggles in articulating the vision and mission (Bourque, 1997).
The study indicated that the participants who were neutral (7, 25.0%) were either not sure about the traditional-based strategy or were not aware whether the strategy was adopted or not. This may also apply to the 4 (14.3%) participants who disagreed. Conrad & Poole (2012, p.107) observe that "The development of ICTs promises to enhance the effectiveness of the traditional strategy and has in a real sense revitalized it". The strategy is important because many employees spend their lives working in organizations that are in many ways 'traditional' (Conrad & Poole, 2012). In addition, Christian universities need to refocus on their mission; accountability and refining their strategies that will help them attract students and faculty (Okendu, 2008).

3.3. Knowledge-Based Strategy
Concerning Knowledge-based (competent staff) strategy, the diverging views expressed by the participants were as follows: strongly agree 5 (17.9%), agree 9 (32.1%), neutral 9 (32.1%), disagree 5 (17.9%), and strongly disagree 0 (0%) as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	5	17.9
Agree	9	32.1
Neutral	9	32.1
Disagree	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Table 3: Knowledge-based (competent staff)

The participants who strongly agreed and agreed were 50%. These findings indicated that the participants were importance of this strategy. This confirmed what Gottschalk (2005, p.56) observed that "knowledge-based competitive advantage is also sustainable because the more a firm already knows, the more it can learn". The responses of the participants indicated that they were ready to learn more until they were competent. The 9 (32.1%) participants who were neutral and the 5 (17.9%) who disagreed indicated either they did not understand what this strategy was all about or they did not see any competency applied in the University. These participants would like to see more workers who were knowledgeable in what they were doing. Based on the opinions of the participants, traditional-based strategy was more widely used than knowledge-based strategy in the University.

3.4. Quality Teaching
Opinions on quality teaching as a strategy used at PAC University were asked. The participants responded as follows: strongly agree 6 (21.4%), agree 11 (39.3%), neutral 5 (17.9%), disagree 5 (17.9%), and strongly disagree 1 (3.6%) as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	6	21.4
Agree	11	39.3
Neutral	5	17.9
Disagree	5	17.9
Strongly Disagree	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 4: Quality teaching

Concerning quality teaching strategy, a majority of 60.7% expressed 'strongly agree' and 'agree'. The opinions of the participants indicated that the extent of adoption of traditional-based strategy and quality teaching strategy were the same (60.7%). The findings indicated that the participants were positive about the quality teaching at PAC University. The expressions of 5 (17.9%) participants who disagreed and 1 (3.6%) who strongly disagreed may have indicated that these participants did not believe that there was quality teaching at PACU, hence, no adoption of this strategy. The faculty staff needs to set and maintain high standards of teaching and scholarship; and the issue of the quality of teaching affects the increase in enrolment (Sawyer, 2004). On the other hand, quality is also enhanced by the emphasis on subjects and teaching with a Christian testimony (Ledbetter, 2012).
The expression of neutrality may have indicated that some participants were not aware of any adopted strategies or were unable to express their opinions. The Management of the University needed to involve such participants in participatory leadership by educating them on various strategies the University adopted to gain sustainable competitive advantage. But Olum (n. d.) notes that use of strategies helps academic and administrative members, institutions and departments to cohere and conduct their daily operations more effectively.

3.5. Strategies to Promote the Process of Enrolment of Students
The participants were asked to express their opinion on how effectively PACU was using the following strategies to promote the process of enrolment of students.

3.6. Minimum Grade
The minimum expressions on minimum grade are indicated in the table below. The output on minimum grade as a strategy as the weakest view that was expressed by participants was as follows: 1 (3.6%) as 'somewhat effective' and 'not effective'. The strongest view expressed by participants was 11 (39.3%) as 'fairly effective'.

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	6	21.4
Effective	9	32.1
Fairly Effective	11	39.3
Somewhat Effective	1	3.6
Not effective	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 5: Minimum grade

This high percentage shown above indicated a high divergence of opinion concerning the minimum grade noted as a positive strategy towards achieving sustainable competitive advantage. The responses of the participants included the 9 students who participated in the research. This was a message to the top management that this strategy was not a high achiever in enrolment of students and therefore the Management needed to review it or discard it.

3.7. Credit Transfer
On the credit transfer, the strongest view expressed by participants was 12 (42.9%) as 'effective' on the implementation of this strategy in the University, and the second strongest view expressed by the participants was 'fairly effective' with 9 (32.1%). Other participants responded as follows: somewhat effective 4 (14.3%), and not effective 1 (3.6%).

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	2	7.1
Effective	12	42.9
Fairly Effective	9	32.1
Somewhat Effective	4	14.3
Not effective	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 6: Credit transfer

Based on the above findings, a total of 12 (42.9%) indicated that the participants were aware of the effectiveness and use of the credit transfer strategy in the University. The weakest view expressed by the participants of 'somewhat effective' 4 (14.3%) followed by 'not effective' 1 (3.6%). This latter category of participants may not have been aware of existence of this strategy and the Management needed to make the participants aware of this strategy. The high contribution on credit transfer that this is a good strategy towards achieving sustainable competitive advantage, especially towards increase in students' enrolment. Junor and Usher (2008, p. 1) pointed out that credit transfer systems in universities "provide the lubricant to ensure seamless academic mobility". The findings indicated that this is an important strategy to attract students to the University.

3.8. Pre-Registration Requirement
The strongest view expressed by participants on pre-registration requirement was 10 (35.7%) as 'fairly effective'. The next strongest expressed view was 8 (28.6%) as 'effective'. The weak view expressed by participants was 5 (17.9%) as 'somewhat effective' and 4 (14.3%) as 'not effective'. The participant who expressed a positive view was 1 (3.6%) as 'very effective'.

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	1	3.6
Effective	8	28.6
Fairly Effective	10	35.7
Somewhat Effective	5	17.9
Not effective	4	14.3
Total	28	100.0

Table 7: Pre-registration requirement

The findings above indicated that the strongest views (10, 35.7%) and (8, 28.6%) of the participants showed that they were aware of the pre-registration requirement. The low minority (5, 17.9% and 4, 14.3%) indicated that some stakeholders were aware of this strategy but did not realize the effectiveness of this strategy towards gaining sustainable competitive advantage. This percentage of participants may have indicated a need for the Management to improve on this strategy. The findings indicated that pre-registration was a vital strategy since institutions of higher learning that receive financial assistance require accurate data of the number of students enrolled in different courses. They also require the maximum of those students in such courses is important for planning purposes (United States Code, 2006).

3.9. Fees Payment Plan
The participants' strongest view on payment plan was 12 (42.9%) as 'fairly effective' and the lowest view was 1 (3.6%) as 'effective' and 2 (7.1%) as 'not effective'. Those who expressed their view on 'effective' were 7 (25.0%) and 'somewhat effective were 6 (21.4%).

	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	1	3.6
Effective	7	25.0
Fairly Effective	12	42.9
Somewhat Effective	6	21.4
Not effective	2	7.1
Total	28	100.0

Table 8: Fees payment plan

Based on the above findings, a majority (12, 42.9%) of the participants expressed the effectiveness of the fees payment plan strategy but it was fairly effective. Only 1 (3.6%) participant indicated that this strategy is very effective, and 7 (25.0%) indicated that the strategy is effective. The study showed that this strategy with improvement could help the University towards gaining sustainable competitive advantage. The percentage (70%) of the first installment that PAC University provides may be too high for many students who expressed that the strategy is somewhat effective and not effective at all.

Many universities offer their students short-term installment plans which is splits into monthly payments. Some of these plans do not have interests, but others have some extra financial charge (Ferguson career resource guide for women and minorities, 2006). Splitting the payment plan into monthly payments instead of splitting it into two would help PAC University to attract more students.

3.10. Effects of Using Various Strategies to Gain Competitive Advantage
The participants were asked to rate the effects of using various strategies towards gaining sustainable competitive advantage. The following strategies were rated as shown in the following tables.

3.11. Innovation
The participants who responded on innovation strategy are as follows: High 4 (14.3), Fair 15 (53.6%), and Low 9 (32.1%). The participants who rated the strategy high were 4 (14.3%), but a large number of participants who rated innovation low were 9 (32.1%).

	Frequency	Percent
High	4	14.3
Fair	15	53.6
Low	9	32.1
Total	28	100.0

Table 9: Innovation

The findings above indicated that most participants that expressed high (4, 14.3%) on innovation saw the need of using various strategies to gain competitive advantage. The largest group of participants (15, 53.6%) who expressed that innovation was fair may have indicated the necessity of adopting different strategies but it may be lacking at PAC University. The participants, who indicated low, expressed their opinions freely by indicating that very little innovation was in place at the University. Private universities are generally small and they emphasize on values such as morale, cohesion and the human element, and this affect the innovation strategies of these institutions (Morris, 2008). This might the case at PAC University because it is a small University.

3.12. Quality Enhancement
Concerning the quality enhancement strategy, the responses are shown in the table below as follows: High 8 (28.6%), Fair 15 (53.6%), and Low 5 (17.9%).

	Frequency	Percent
High	8	28.6
Fair	15	53.6
Low	5	17.9
Total	28	100.0

Table 10: Quality enhancement

The above findings showed that the participants who rated quality enhancement high (8, 28.6%) were in agreement that this strategy used with others would help PAC University to gain sustainable competitive advantage. The largest group of participants 15 (53.6%) who expressed that the strategy is fair indicated that it was good but it needed some improvement. The participants who rated the strategy low were 5 (17.9%) who may have indicated that the strategy is not in place at PAC University. Sawyer (2004) argued that the main contribution of any university to the society is the generation and impartation of the quality of the knowledge to people of its society (Sawyer, 2004). This strategy may need to be adopted or improved at PACU in helping the University to gain a sustainable competitive advantage because the findings indicated that quality enhancement strategy was the least.

3.13. Cost Reduction
Participants rated cost reduction as follows: High 6 (21.4%), Fair 14 (50.0%), and Low 8 (28.6%) as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
High	6	21.4
Fair	14	50.0
Low	8	28.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 11: Cost reduction

Based on the findings above, cost reduction was rated high by 6 (21.4%) participants who indicated that would be one of the strategies that would enhance sustainable competitive advantage. The biggest number of participants expressed their opinions on fair (14, 50.0%) which indicated that they appreciated if PAC University would reduce its cost on fees. The participants who rated the strategy

low were 8 (28.6%) who indicated that the cost reduction may not be in existence at PAC University. Though low-cost position is a good defense against the rivals (Hoskisson, 2008), cost reduction in universities may not be maintained for a long time because the infrastructures and other operations in the campus have to be paid (Daniel, 1999). This strategy is therefore not a strong strategy to help PAC University achieve a sustainable competitive advantage.

3.14. Strategies for Promotion of Students' Enrolment
The participants were asked to indicate whether the following strategies were used in PACU for the purpose of promoting students' enrolment. The specific responses from the participants were as follows:

3.15. Specific Markets for Students
The participants' who indicated that specific markets for students were used responded as follows as indicated in the table below. The participants who indicated that this strategy was used were the highest with 16 (57.1%). The other participants who indicated that this strategy was fairly used were 6 (21.4%), followed by somewhat used of 3 (10.7%) and not used of 3 (10.7%).

	Frequency	Percent
Used	16	57.1
Fairly used	6	21.4
Somewhat used	3	10.7
Not used	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Table 12: Specific markets for students

The findings indicated that the participants who expressed that specific market for students indicated that they were aware of the use of this strategy in the University. Specific markets for students were sought by the University. Participants who indicated fairly used may be aware of this strategy but may have concluded that it is fairly used by the University. The lowest response of somewhat used (10.7%) and not used (10.7%) had the same percentage while response on highly used had 0%. It is good for PACU to identify opportunities for establishing and sustaining competitive advantage which requires it to understand and be aware of the competition process in the specific markets for students (Grant, 2010).

3.16. Students' Pride for PAC University
The participants who strongly indicated that students' pride for PAC University as a strategy was fairly used were13 (46.4%). Other participants' responses included highly used 2 (7.1%), used 4 (14.3%), somewhat used 6 (21.4%), and not used 3 (10.7%) as indicated in Table 13 below.

	Frequency	Percent
Highly used	2	7.1
Used	4	14.3
Fairly used	13	46.4
Somewhat used	6	21.4
Not used	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Table 13: Students' pride for PACU

The findings indicated that this strategy may need to be improved by the University because only 2 (7.1%) participants expressed that the strategy was highly used, and 3 (10.7%) not used at all. However, the responses of 4 (14.3%) and 6 (21.4%) may have indicated that this strategy if used could promote the students' enrolment.

3.17. Markets for Graduates
On markets for graduates, the strongest indication was fairly used 8 (28.6%), followed by somewhat used 7 (25.0%), not used 6 (21.4%), 'used' 5 (17.9%), and the weakest indication as highly used 1 (3.6.) as shown in Table 14 below.

	Frequency	Percent
Highly used	1	3.6
Used	5	17.9
Fairly used	8	28.6
Somewhat used	7	25.0
Not used	6	21.4
No response	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 14: Markets for graduates

The above findings indicated that this strategy for promoting the students' enrolment is known by the participants but it is fairly used (28.6%). Marketing for its graduates is important for a university to remain at the edge and to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. The findings also indicated that the differences between the responses were very little apart from the response of highly used that had only 1 participant (3.6%). This participant who was positive may have heard that the University marketed for its graduates on few occasions. Paik (2008) notes that the job markets for workers who are experienced and for new graduates are separated. On the other hand, new graduates directly from school and are more preferred than those who have stayed outside one year or more years without employment. This strategy is needed to promote the student's enrolment which as result would increase revenue.

3.18. Impact of the Strategies Employed by PAC University
The research sought to establish the impact of the strategies employed by PAC University based on various variables as expressed by sampled students. To achieve this goal, participants were asked to respond to these strategies had contributed to the increase in the increase in profit, improved revenue and growth as shown in the table below.

Strategies	Frequency and Percentage			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	No Response
Increase in growth, and improved revenue	20 (71.4%)	5 (17.9%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)
Increase in students' enrolment	20 (71.4%)	5 (17.9%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)
Increase in market share	17 (60.7%)	8 (28.6%)	2 (7.1%)	1 (3.6%)
Customer satisfaction and loyalty	14 (50.0%)	12 (42.9%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)
Efficiency and quality	14 (50.0%)	12 (42.9%)	1 (3.6%)	1 (3.6%)
Innovation and creativity	14 (50.0%)	10 (35.7%)	3 (10.7%)	1 (3.6%)

Table 15: Impact of strategies employed by PAC University

According to the table shown above, the participants were in agreement that all strategies made a positive impact in the University. The following strategies were rated quite highly 20 (71.4%) for positive impact: increase in profit, improved revenue and growth; and increase in students' enrolment. The last four strategies were rated between 60% and 50%, an indication that all strategies were 50% and above on the positive. The participants who indicated that strategies did not have impact (neutral) ranged from 5 (17.9%) to 12 (42.9%), providing a range of 7. This high range indicated a great divergence among participants regarding their assessment of the impact of various strategies.
A relatively high percentage of this group of participants who could not recognize the impact of any strategy raised researcher's concern about their awareness of the strategies used in the University to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. The participants may not have been aware of the purpose of some of their observable activities in the University. Jones and Hill (2008) observe that when managers pursue strategies to achieve performance, there is increase in revenue and growth which provide a firm with a competitive advantage.
A considerably low percentage, ranging from 1 (3.6%) to 3 (10.7%), suggested that this group of participants contradicted themselves in that item 7 (Part B) in the questionnaire had asked all participants to list strategies which would have promoted students' enrolment. However, their response may have expressed their pessimistic attitude towards their University. The percentage of 3.6% noted for each strategy as 'no response' suggested that their creativity was low or they were in a hurry to complete the research instrument.

3.19. Attributes on the choice of working and studying at PAC University
The participants were asked to rate the influence of the following attributes on the choice of working and studying at PAC University as shown in the following tables below.

3.20. Resources
The participants who rated the resources high were 9 (32.1%), followed by 16 (57.1%) who rated it fair, and 3 (10.7%) participants who rated it the lowest.

	Frequency	Percent
High	9	32.1
Fair	16	57.1
Low	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Table 16: Resources

The findings of the above table indicated that the participants who rated resources as high agreed that resources would help them to make a choice of studying and working at PAC University. The other group of the participants that responded fair indicated that they would be willing to study and work at PAC University, but resources were not a priority to them to work and study at PAC University.

The 3 (10.7%) participants who rated resources low indicated that there may not be sufficient resources at the University. Past studies show that resources enhance achievement of competitive advantage (Ismail, Rose, Uli & Abdulla, 2012). Williams (2007) confirms this by point out that resources allow firms to improve their efficiency and effectiveness are very important in sustaining a competitive advantage. Further, (Foss, 1997) adds that an institution must have the right type of resource; unique physical resources, property rights, intangible values, intangible internal resources, and intangible capabilities.

3.21. Capabilities
The influence of capabilities to the choice of working and studying at PAC University was rated as follows: 11 (39.3%) participants rated capabilities high, 14 (50.0%) rated it fair and 3 (10.7%) rated it low as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
High	11	39.3
Fair	14	50.0
Low	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Table 17: Capabilities

The findings on the above table indicated that the participants who rated capabilities high agreed that these capabilities attributes on choice of studying and working at PAC University. The second largest group of participants who rated capabilities fair expressed the need of having capabilities at PAC University. The participants who rated capabilities the lowest indicated that they either the capabilities that were in place at PAC University but needed improvement. Companies need capabilities such as technology, marketing skills, good product development processes, and management capabilities. Resources are tangible assets while capabilities are intangible (Foss, 1997). Capabilities are needed at PAC University to enable the University decision-makers to function more effectively and efficiently (2011).

3.22. Value for the Programs
Concerning value for programs, the participants rated it 42.9% (12) for high and the second group of participants consisted of 16 (57.1%) rated it low value for the programs as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
High	12	42.9
Fair	16	57.1
Total	28	100.0

Table 18: Value for the programs

Concerning value for programs, the participants rated it 42.9% (12) and since one third of the participants were students, they showed willingness to study at PAC University if the programs were unique and market-driven. The high response of the participants that rated the value for programs fair indicated that they would also be influenced to work and study at PACU if the value for programs was fair. The 3 (10.7%) participants who rated value for the programs low either did not care about the value for the programs or they were not willing to express their opinions.
The above findings showed that value for programs as an attribute was necessary to have as a university for achievement of sustainable competitive advantage. Value can be created where there are great programs and services which make students to be attracted because of the delivery and design of those programs that are distinct (Hoffman & Summers, 2000).

3.23. Leadership and University Culture
The participants who rated high leadership and university culture as the choice of working and studying at PAC University were 14 (50.0%) and they were the majority. The second group of participants who rated leadership and culture fair was 13 (46.4%). These two groups were very close in their rating as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
High	14	50.0
Fair	13	46.4
Low	1	3.6
Total	28	100.0

Table 19: Leadership and university culture

The findings indicated that the above participants who participated in this research would be willing to study and work at PAC University if this attribute was in place. The only 1 participant who rated leadership and university culture low indicated that this participant may not have experienced positively the leadership and university culture. According to Morris (2008), the institutions of

higher learning must have administration that is able to provide insights. These insights should be unique and different to the institutions the administration serves.

3.24. Structure

The influence of structure to the choice of working and studying at PAC University was rated as follows: 8 (28.6%) participants rated capabilities high, 17 (60.7%) rated it fair and 3 (10.7%) rated it low as shown in the table below.

	Frequency	Percent
High	8	28.6
Fair	17	60.7
Low	3	10.7
Total	28	100.0

Table 20: Structure

The participants who rated structure high indicated that they saw the necessity of structure to the choice of working or studying at PAC University. The second group of participants who rated structure the highest as fair indicated that they also considered structure as one of the attribute that is likely to create competitive advantage. The last group that rated structure the lowest indicated that they never considered structure as a choice of studying and working at PAC University. According to Khosrowpour (1992), new structures in institutions and information technologies are likely to create competitive advantages. Beamish and Ashford (2005) conclude that it is important to carefully consider the structure, culture, and nature of any organization so that it can meet the challenges to attain a sustainable competitive advantage and to have a market edge.

3.25. Summary of the Findings

Strategies adopted by PAC University to gain a sustainable competitive advantage
The research found out that the PAC University has not only adopted the traditional strategy approach, but it has also built the knowledge-based strategy add competencies that are new to gain a competitive advantage. The school has also adopted quality teaching strategy.

3.26. Traditional-Based Strategy

The study revealed that 60.7% (17) of the questionnaire respondents observed that traditional-based strategy is one of the strategies used by PAC University to gain sustainable competitive advantage. The mission of PAC University is to develop godly leaders and it is solidly grounded in the vision and mission to do God's will which is to have a niche market and to provide unique programs that attracts students. Without fulfilling the mission, there will be a lot of contradiction because many people will leave the institution, and it will not achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. With the development of ICT, the effectiveness of traditional strategy is going to be enhanced and revitalized as well (Conrad & Poole, 2012).
The above view shows that traditional strategy has been used elsewhere by educational institutions because it is cheaper. The strategy has a hierarchy that is tight, and it focuses on "the structure, formal communication, rule-reward systems, and written policies and procedures, is still the dominant strategy used in the United States for governmental agencies, educational institutions, and many private firms" (Conrad & Poole, 2012, p. 107). The adoption and the understanding of this strategy are therefore important.

3.27. Knowledge-Based Strategy

For knowledge-based strategy to achieve competitive advantage resulting to high financial performance, organizations should have an accumulation of knowledge storehouses and use that knowledge to steer innovation (Hunt, 2010). PAC University has been recruiting highly qualified and experienced staff and faculty. This will add and create unique value to the students and will ensure that the university has a competitive edge (Gordon, 2010).

3.28. Quality Teaching

Quality teaching is a strategy that PAC University has focused on for what it provides. The University is working hard to improve the quality teaching and learning towards high education standard. Quality of learning is impacted by the effectiveness of quality teaching which institutions of higher education fail to appraise (Fabrice, 2010). Quality teaching attracts more students and it attracts like-minded faculty and visiting faculty. Students join university because of quality teaching which results to effective graduates who are able to sell the university to others. PAC University is expecting to have an increase of student numbers because of the introduction of new programs. It is working on maintaining quality teaching PACU must "meet increasing expectations from a range of stakeholders for the quality of the teaching and learning that they provide" (Fraser, 2005, p. 72).
The importance of this strategy is because more students are attracted and sustained. The faculty staff needs to set and maintain high standards of teaching and scholarship because the issue of the quality of teaching affects the increase in enrolment (Sawyer, 2004). On superior efficiency and quality, 50% of the participants recommended competent staff and quality teaching for the University to gain a sustainable competitive advantage. PAC University needs to enhance quality in teaching, faculty and facilities. Once quality teaching

strategy is maintained this will give students a sense of pride for their University. Hill and Jones (2012) argue that building and sustaining a competitive advantage requires an institution to have superior efficiency, quality, innovation, and have a positive response to its students.

Effects of using various strategies to gain sustainable competitive advantage

3.29. Innovation

The participants, who indicated low, expressed their opinions freely by indicating that very little innovation was in place at PAC University. Private universities are generally small and they emphasize on values such as morale, cohesion and the human element, and this affect the innovation strategies of these institutions (Morris, 2008). This might be the case at PAC University because it is a small University. With the increase of higher education, there is promotion of innovation which is a tool that brings about growth in universities. But the universities that are involved in innovation have realized that innovation is not a simple process. It requires commitment by HEIs to be able to participate in the innovation strategy processes (OECD, 2009).

3.30. Quality Enhancement

The largest group of participants 15 (53.6%) who expressed that the strategy is fair indicated that it was good but it needed some improvement. The participants who rated the strategy low were 5 (17.9%) who may have indicated that the strategy is not in place at PAC University. Sawyer (2004) argued that the main contribution of any university to the society is the generation and impartation of the quality of the knowledge to people of its society (Sawyer, 2004). Accreditation reviews that are formal have been used by universities to promote quality improvement and quality enhance in these universities. Quality assurance mandatory both in public and public universities and it emphasizes on accountability and quality enhancement (The World Bank & OECD, 2007). Enhancement of quality and development of the system in higher education is important; and also the need to "build links between the university and industry sectors to help spur innovation-led activities" (Marginson, Kaur & Sawir, 2011, p. 233).

3.31. Cost Reduction

The biggest number of participants who expressed their opinions on fair (14, 50.0%) indicated that they would appreciate if PAC University would reduce its cost on fees. The participants who rated the strategy low (8, 28.6%) indicated that the cost reduction may not be in existence at PAC University. Though low-cost position is a good defense against the rivals (Hoskisson, 2008), cost reduction in universities may not be maintained for a long time because the infrastructures and other operations in the campus have to be paid (Daniel, 1999).

4. Conclusions

The study has established that Christian universities can adopt relevant strategies to ensure that they have achieved a sustainable competitive advantage. Universities can exploit different ways to gain competitive advantages, for example, through innovating, differentiating, and adding unique value creation for the students will ensure that the university has a competitive edge (Gordon, 2010). For PAC University to keep its edge sharp, it needs to have significant effort for it to have a sustainable competitive advantage. As the market changes, the competitors duplicate a successful advantage. The University must establish the competitive edge, and at the same time maintain it. The programs offered need to be analyzed continually for them to stay current with the market situation.

Using different strategies help universities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage. Innovation strategy is a good strategy though the process is not a simplistic one. Cost reduction strategy is not a strong strategy and cannot be sustainable to helping PAC University achieve competitive advantage. Another strategy that came up clearly was the marketing strategy that PAC University has adopted. The University is aggressively marketing its programs and coming up with new ones.

5. Recommendations

The researcher strongly recommended adoption and timely implementation of strategies by PAC University. The University needs to prepare implementable strategic plan and maintain a continuous monitoring of the implementation and performance, and to have achievable targets. In adoption of strategies, PAC University needs to assign them to qualified personnel in each area who will be able to follow through the implementation process till the end. Also to have time-frame in every strategy and to identify key results areas. Continuous monitoring of the implementation, performance and follow-up of the implementation process is crucial. Strategy formulation and implementation needs to be participative. The University needs to involve all players in decision making. Collaboration between management and staff/faculty in strategizing; and prioritizing strategies for growth in budgetary matters, were highly recommended.

This study recommends PAC University to have good, visionary, and courageous leadership, a leadership that has a future for growth of the University. Top leadership teams need to make university a priority. This will ensure that relevant strategies are adopted. There is need for improvement of people's skills by the management, facilities, and ICT/automation.

The researcher recommends that University improves its customer service. Students need to be treated well and given quality services. They are the main marketers of the school through one-on-one and the University staff needs to satisfy the customers (students). Satisfaction of students has a positive economic effect. PAC University needs to attract students and retain competent staff because both students and staff are a marketing resource. One key advantage is the delivery service to the customers". Finally, the University

needs to do benchmark regularly in order to update its marketing status; and it requires external evaluation to point out areas of strengths and weaknesses.

6. Areas for further research
The area of strategies in Christian universities has been neglected especially in research and literature. The study has created more awareness of the need to research more on relevant strategies that help Christian universities gain market share and sustainable competitive advantage. A similar research on relevant and effective strategies that could be adopted by Christian universities to achieve sustainable competitive advantage is an area the researcher identified for further research. The researcher also identified a leadership gap between the management and the staff, and the students as well. Further studies can be carried out to bridge this gap.

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