



ISSN 2278 – 0211 (Online)

## Influence of Product Strategy on Student Enrollment in Selected Universities in Kenya

**Dr. Kennedy Ntabo Otiso**

Senior Lecturer, Department of Business Administration,  
School of Business, Koitaleel Samoei University College, Kenya

**Dr. Rael Mandago**

Lecturer, Department of Business Administration,  
School of Business, Koitaleel Samoei University College, Kenya

### **Abstract:**

*The purpose of this study was to conduct an investigation into the influence of product strategies on student enrolment in private universities in Kenya. The theories that guided the study included Corporate Sustainability Theory, Resource-Based View Theory and Ansoff's Product-Market Growth Model. The study will adopt a descriptive cross-sectional study design. The target population for this study is senior administrative staff, heads of departments/faculties and marketing managers at the universities. The researcher considered these groups for the population since they have accurate information on market mix strategies used by universities and their performance. The target population comprises 58 senior personnel, including top administrative staff, heads of departments/faculties, and marketing managers at Mount Kenya University. Stratified sampling was adopted for this study; there were four strata, including senior personnel in private universities. The researcher adopted structured questionnaires to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics were applied to the analysis of the quantitative data using SPSS version 25.0. The data was presented using charts, tables, and graphs. A linear regression analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the study variables. The findings revealed that the university charges fees based on the technicalities of programmes offered and that it charges fees based on the demand for programmes offered. The findings also revealed that the university relies on social media advertising, and the internet uses outdoor advertising such as billboards, higher education exhibitions, and print media such as newspapers, journals and magazines to promote their programmes to increase student enrollment. Further, it was established that the university's main campus is strategically located in a major town and that it has established various satellite campuses across the country. The findings further revealed that the university offers unique programmes compared to other universities. There is also a variety of foundation programmes at the university for students who do not have minimum university entry requirements. It was concluded that the product strategy that was considered in the study would result in increased levels of student enrolment.*

**Keywords:** Marketing, marketing mix, product, strategies, market

### **1. Background to the Study**

The view of higher education institutions in developed economies such as the United Kingdom as profitable organizations shifted when leadership colleges and universities started considering academic programmes offered in the institutions as products and students as customers (Clagett, 2012). The term customer could, however, lead to the misunderstanding that degree programmes are products that are up for sale. However, scholars supporting this view argue that students or customers should pay for a service (academic programmes offered by a university), and the university should provide quality academic programmes for the payment made by students (Durkin, McKenna & Cummins, 2012). Since universities and other institutions of higher learning are focused on developing a strong academic culture and not a service culture, most scholars disagree with this perspective (Gibbs, 2011). In Germany, marketing mix strategies are now part of most institution's enrollment management planning (Clagett, 2012).

There are arguments on whether or not universities should market their services to prospective customers (Bartlet et al., 2012). The argument is based on whether or not the students are customers of the institutions of higher learning (Sharrock, 2010). In markets with forces that are not experienced in the educational sector, these arguments are more valid. This is applicable mostly in developing nations where the number of potential students exceeds the capacity of existing universities to enroll. In developed countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States, this is not applicable, especially where the intervention by a government is at a lower level, and the idea of marketing higher learning institutions has been normalized, especially as higher learning institutions have to compete for funds and more students' enrollment (Pugsley, 2014). In Sweden, free tuition is provided by universities; however, the country's universities are

competing for enrollment of students based on their capacities. This raises another important objection to the introduction of marketing, marketing forces, and 'business style' in higher learning institutions as it is contrary to its social justice objective (Kenway, Bigum & Fitzclarence, 2013)

In Nigeria, the competition between private universities is getting tougher. A study conducted by Filip (2012) established that competition between higher education institutions has increased dramatically, and there is saturation in the market currently. Due to this, managers in higher learning institutions are developing effective market strategies to attract students and increase enrollment levels. It is no longer news that private institutions of higher learning are scuttling for increased enrollment of students to meet their operational costs. To ensure competitiveness, various marketing departments in Nigeria's private universities have developed effective marketing mix strategies that encompass the 7ps. As student sourcing becomes very competitive, private universities in Nigeria are leaving no stone unturned to achieve a competitive advantage.

Over the last 20 years, higher education in Kenya has been the fastest-growing sector of the country's education system, with enrollments increasing on average by 6.2 per cent annually (Abagi, 1995). This has been exemplified by the rise in enrollments in both public and private universities and other middle-level colleges, the proliferation of more private universities and the inception of self-sponsored programmes in public universities (Sifuna, 1998). Currently, the trend in Kenyan universities, both public and private, is characterized by aggressive competition, especially with the establishment of satellite campuses in various parts of the country and the use of different marketing mix strategies to attract potential students. The private universities in Kenya are, for instance, using various marketing strategies to enable them to create an edge in the competitive market through the establishment of marketing/student recruitment departments. Acknowledging that no one marketing strategy will work with prospective students, recruitment practices initiated by private universities in Kenya seek to individualize the process and use and integrate all forms of marketing strategies. In Kenya, a total of 52 accredited private universities, of which 25 of them have their main campuses or branch campuses in Nairobi County. According to CHE (2015), private universities in Kenya account for up to 80,448 students, which is about 23.4% of the total student population in both public and private universities in the country. The oldest private university in Kenya is the University of East Africa Baraton, which was registered in 1991. Private universities were started as public universities cannot absorb all qualified students from high school every year. Some students are also unable to pursue their preferred courses in public universities because of competition and, therefore, enroll in private universities.

### *1.1. Statement of the Problem*

With increased globalization, universities are being driven to venture into innovative marketing mix strategies and sophisticated with the aim of attracting the enrollment of potential students (Armstrong, 2001). Despite the availability of information due to increased levels of technology and the marketing mix strategies used by universities, many potential students still have limited information about the programmes that most universities offer. Marketing mix strategies used by the universities in Kenya do not ensure that accurate and relevant information is provided to guide and attract student enrollment in the respective universities (Hawary & Batayneh, 2010). Acknowledging that there is no single marketing strategy is exclusively effective in enhancing student enrollment, private universities seek to individualize the process and use and integrate several marketing mix strategies (Kimmel, 2015). Still, there is the existence of a limited understanding of the role/use of effective marketing mix strategies that are effective in attracting and maintaining prospective students in private universities (Ngome, 2010). In Kenya, the operations of private universities ten years ago are totally different from how they currently operate. Currently, the overall marketing orientation and survival of private universities is determined by how well they reposition themselves as distinct academic institutions to increase student enrollment in the competitive academic environment created by globalization. Kenyan public universities have the upper hand in student enrollment through the government's student placement programme; this has resulted in stiff competition for student enrollment among all universities in Kenya (Koech, 2016). Ineffective marketing mix strategies by private universities in Kenya and lack of customer focus have resulted in poor adoption of marketing mix strategies that can optimally enhance student enrollment in private universities (Gray et al., 2003). This study endeavored to fill the study gaps by focusing on the effect of selected marketing mix strategies on student enrollment in universities in Kenya.

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Resource-based View Theory*

The resource-based view (RBV) conducts an analysis and interpretation of the resources that an organization has to understand how the resources are used by the organization to gain a competitive advantage. The theory emphasizes the concept of the complex-to-imitate attributes of an organization as sources of competitive advantage and superior organizational performance (Barney, 1986). The resources that firms have included employees, assets, financial capital, technologies and organizational processes (Barney & Wright, 2001). When it comes to marketing, resources usually comprise channel bonding capabilities, customer equity, brand equity, pricing, product development, marketing communication, and market information management capabilities, among others. The difference between the provision of short-term competitive advantage and that which can be sustained rests in the view that the resources are not perfectly mobile and heterogeneous in nature. According to the Resource-based View, there is no mobility in resources. However, they are given consideration for bundle, structure, and leveraging their valuable resources uniquely with the aim of maximizing their contribution to achieve sustainable advantage (Verhoef & Leeflang, 2009).

As argued by the Resource-based View, when the resources of a firm are non-sustainable and inimitable, then the sustainability of competitive advantage may be achieved (Barney, 1991). This indicates the advantage of ensuring that the resources of a firm are maintained, nurtured and renewed over time. Based on the perspective of RBV, initiatives linked to sustainability residing at the intersection of social/environmental concerns and market opportunities have the highest likelihood of being successful.

### 2.2. Corporate Sustainability Theory

Corporate sustainability aims to create long-term stakeholder value through the implementation of business strategies that are focused on the social, ethical, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions of carrying out business. The three dimensions of the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) are financial, social, and environmental. In conventional profit accounting, the "bottom line" is regarded as profit. Based on the TBL concept, two more "bottom lines" are added for corporate entities while reporting, i.e. the environmental and social bottom lines. This differs significantly from the conventional frameworks of reporting (Chang et al., 2017).

Based on the suggestion of Jamali (2006) for instance, movement towards sustainable development can be facilitated by an entity through the application of a management approach that effectively integrates The Triple Bottom Line (TBL). Chang et al. (2017) provide evidence supporting the idea that corporate entities enhance their competitive advantage by focusing on the Triple Bottom Line (TBL). Some scholars have, on the other hand, criticized the benefits of The Triple Bottom Line (TBL). For instance, Bocken, Short, Rana and Evans (2014) assert that TBL provides very limited usefulness when it comes to business sustainability, and it is not easy to link the need to improve the profitability and sustainability of a business entity. Besides the Triple Bottom Line (TBL), which involves operationalizing the concept of sustainability in the context of business, other important approaches to corporate sustainability are provided by sustainable business models. Corporate sustainability is mainly promoted by a business model, a description of the manner in which firms incorporate the Triple Bottom Line (TBL) approach, as well as giving consideration to the interests of various stakeholders (Bocken et al., 2014). Firms can use sustainable business models to gain a competitive advantage by promoting sustainability. With SBM, firms can embed sustainability into the purpose of their business processes to achieve a high level of competitive advantage while promoting sustainability.

### 2.3. Ansoff's Product-Market Growth Model

The Ansoff Product-Market Growth model is a tool that is used by firms to conduct an analysis of the business environment and plan the most effective strategies for growth. The model enables organizational managers to establish new avenues of business growth through both existing and new products in both new and existing markets. The matrix gives four possibilities of combinations for product/market (Ansoff, 1957). The matrix is helpful in making decisions on the most suitable course of action to be taken given the current performance. The matrix comprises four strategies, such as market penetration (existing products and existing markets): This usually occurs when new markets are penetrated by an organization using current products. The best approach to attain this is by snatching the customers of rival competitors in the market to achieve this (part of their market share). Other strategies a company might implement are attracting new users of their product or persuading current clients to increase their usage of the product/service through aggressive promotions and advertising and/or product development (introducing new products to an existing market).

Firms with existing market share for their products can embark on developing newer products targeted at the same market. Frequently, the creation of new products by a firm will attract new customers; hence, product development serves as a strategy to develop business firms to fight off competition. Market development (selling existing products in a new market) (Palmer, 2011): An already existing product can be modified or sold to a different customer category in order to cash in more revenues to the firm; diversification will enable the firm to expand its outreach to newer markets where there is no established presence. Newer skills, facilities and techniques are necessary for diversification to take place. The results of diversification in an organization are changes in the overall business structure that are distinct from past business experiences (Ansoff, 1957). The matrix further shows that as the elements of risk increase, the strategy becomes less predictable from existing products and markets.

### 2.4. Product Strategies

Pardey (1991) asserts that the description of a product can be based on its physical characteristics and what people actually think of as a product. It has been suggested by some previous researchers that education is a product. Kaye (2015), for instance, in the study argued that online or virtual education is a product rather than a tool for the distribution of education. According to Kaye (2015), to efficiently use resources, there should be an assessment of the needs of students who are considered consumers. By doing so, institutions can determine the needs of students and use the results in crafting marketing mix strategies that can enhance the levels of student enrollment while taking care of students' needs as well as ensuring that the services offered are improved for currently enrolled students (Yilmaz, 2005).

Frumkin et al. (2007), in their study on marketing strategies used by institutions of higher learning to increase student enrollment, established that higher learning institutions usually begin by undertaking the identification of services as well as programmes that exist in the market and the needs of students/customers. The study also established that higher learning institutions usually undertake market research to establish whether their programmes match students' needs and the needs of the job market or industry needs. The researchers noted that higher learning institutions with similar programmes will find their markets and public differentiating between them on the basis of the quality of educational services they offer.

Gibbs and Knap (2002) established a strong link between the courses or educational programmes offered and an institution, as these establish the identity of an institution of higher learning. Gibbs and Knap (2002) further assert that such identity positions the institutions of higher learning in the minds of prospective students or its potential customers and determines their response to what is being offered. Filip (2012), in their study to examine factors influencing student enrollment in private universities, established that up to 90% of prospective students tend to choose a university or a college based on the variety of programmes or courses that are available in the universities. According to Filip (2012), such programmes should not be historically developed, with the organization producing the programme concepts, but rather researching customer requests to meet the specific needs of students and the job market. However, this cannot be without its demerits as the programmes may meet the expectations of students at the expense of their needs, and that may be one of the reasons why academic programmes or courses offered by many universities in developing nations are widely criticized for lacking content of self-sustainability but inclined towards white collar jobs.

In a study conducted by Sarwar (2012) in Malaysia to determine the factors that influence students' choices of courses in private universities, it was established that the quality of teaching in a university is the major factor that influences student enrollment in private universities, this was followed by the facilities in the private universities then structure and accreditation of programmes offered at the private universities. Sia (2013) examined the factors that influence students' choices for private universities and the implications for educational managers and marketers in private universities. The findings of the study revealed that prospective students consider the courses offered at a university, the accreditation of the courses, availability of competent faculty, location of the university, and cost of the programmes offered at a university, availability of financial aid or scholarships and the availability of extra-curricular programmes were important in influencing prospective students' enrollment decisions.

Most universities have not considered students as customers and the academic programmes as services. Advocating for significant spending on marketing activities during an economic recession has forced corporations to link marketing efforts to performance. However, most universities have not done this (Morgan, 2012). As has been established by leaders in corporations, what works for one particular firm or organization may not necessarily work for all industries or fields, and this is similar for institutions of higher learning. Similarly, universities could consider marketing mix strategies and processes as best practices in business and transferable to higher education marketing practices to increase enrollment. While the empirical studies reviewed in this chapter have examined student enrollment in private universities based on the various aspects of marketing strategies, most of the studies have mainly focused on one particular higher learning institution, which is either a public or private university. This study aims to bridge the existing research gap since no conclusive study has been conducted in this area.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted for this study. It enabled the researcher to investigate the variables in the study without manipulating and tampering with the findings. Additionally, the study was a systematic inquiry, whereby the researcher was not able to directly influence the variables (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2012). The use of a descriptive research design effectively enhanced the process of analyzing the data that was obtained during the study.

#### 3.2. Target Population

This study targeted senior administrative staff, heads of departments/faculties and marketing managers at Mount Kenya University's main campus. The researcher considered these groups for the population since they have accurate information on Market mix strategies used by the university to increase student enrollment. The target population comprises 149 senior personnel, including top administrative staff, heads of departments/faculties, and marketing managers at Mount Kenya University.

Strata	Population of top Managers/Staff	Percentage (%)
Senior Administrative staff	22	15
Senior Lecturers	76	53
Heads of Departments	34	24
Marketing Managers	17	8
Total	149	100

Table 1: Target Population  
Source: Author (2021)

#### 3.3. Sample Design

Sampling is the systematic procedure used to select research participants from a target population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Sampling is therefore important in research as it minimizes the challenges associated with considering a whole population of research or using a portion of the population that is not representative (Easwaran & Singh, 2010). A sample size, on the other hand, is a subset of the population - targeted for a study that is used to represent the entire population of the study (Kumar, Talib & Ramayah, 2013). Stratified sampling was adopted for this study. There were four strata, including Senior Administrative staff, Senior Lecturers, Heads of Departments and Marketing Managers. 30% of the population in each stratum was sampled for the study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2012), a minimum of 10% of

a population is a representative sample in a research study and would suffice if the population units had similar characteristics. Thus, 44 respondents were sampled for the study. This is presented in the table below.

Strata	Population of Top Managers/Staff	Sample %	Sample Size
Senior Administrative staff	22	30	6
Senior Lecturers	76	30	23
Heads of Departments	34	30	10
Marketing Managers	17	30	5
Total	149		44

Table 2: Sample Size  
Source: Author (2021)

#### 4. Data Collection Methods and Instruments

##### 4.1. Primary Data

The researcher adopted structured questionnaires to collect data for the study. A structured questionnaire has been preferred by the researcher since it makes the collection of data and coding of the raw data easy, saving time during research. The questionnaire captured not only every objective of the study but also the demographic characteristics of the study. A five-point Likert Scale was used for the statement that was provided for the respondents in the questionnaires.

##### 4.2. Secondary Data

The study also used secondary data related to the number of students enrolling for each programme at the university annually. This data was obtained from the university's registry/register's office.

##### 4.3. Validity of Data

The researcher undertook a pilot study in two universities to pre-test the questionnaires. Validity is the degree to which a research instrument accurately assesses the specific concept being measured by the researcher (Bhattacharjee, 2012). To determine the validity of the research instruments, the opinions of experts in this research field were obtained.

##### 4.4. Reliability of Data

Internal Consistency Reliability was used for reliability. This measure of reliability was described using Cronbach's alpha; an ideal Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.7 is ideal.

##### 4.5. Administration of the Questionnaires

The researcher obtained a letter of authorization from the university and a permit from NACOSTI to undertake the study. Further, permission was obtained from the management of the universities whose personnel participated in the study. The researcher was assisted by two research assistants who helped administer the questionnaires to the respondents.

##### 4.6. Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality was held by the researcher at all times while undertaking the study. The respondents' consent was obtained before participating in the study, and any respondents unwilling to give detailed information were not coerced to do so.

#### 5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

##### 5.1. Response Rate

A total of 44 research questionnaires were distributed to the sampled respondents. All the respondents completely filled out and returned the questionnaires, which was a 100% response rate.

### 5.2. Background Information

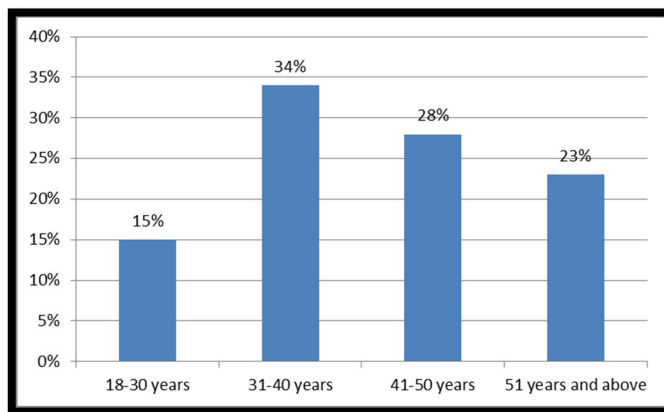


Figure 1: Age Distribution of the Respondents  
Source: Author (2021)

The study sought to establish the age distribution of the respondents. Based on the data presented above, a greater proportion of the respondents (34%) were aged between 31 and 40, 28% were aged between 41 and 50, 15% were aged between 18 and 30, and 23% were aged above 51.

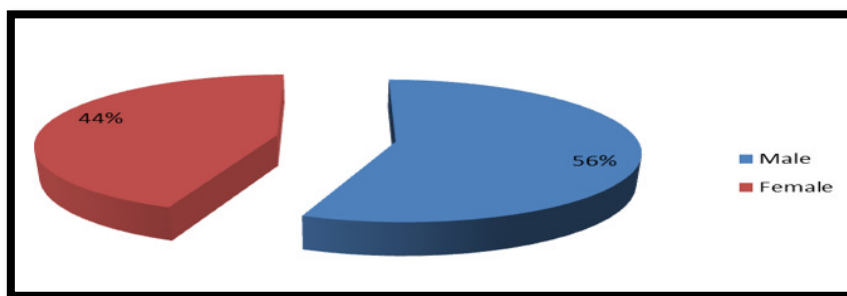


Figure 2: Gender Distribution of Respondents  
Source: Author (2021)

Figure 2 presents the gender distribution of the respondents. Based on the data, 56% were male and 44% were female.

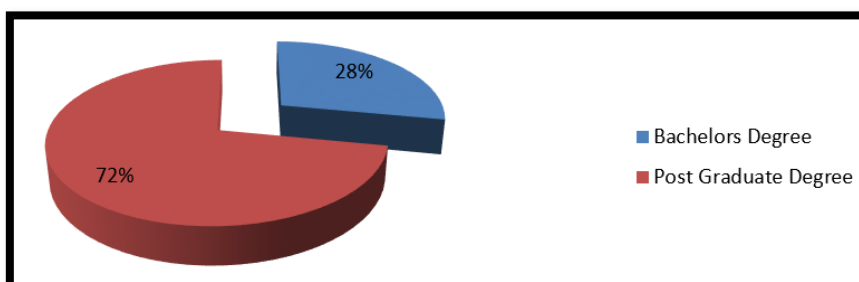


Figure 3: Education Levels of Respondents  
Source: Author (2021)

The study sought to establish the highest education levels attained by the respondents. Based on the data presented in figure 3, 72% of the respondents had postgraduate degrees while 28% had bachelor's degrees. The findings imply that the researcher obtained accurate data from the respondents since a greater proportion were knowledgeable about marketing strategies used by universities.

Duration	Frequency	%
Less than 3 years	4	6
3-7 years	10	23
8-11 years	18	43
More than 11 years	12	28
Total	44	100

Table 3: Respondents' Work Experience  
Source: Author (2021)

The study sought to establish the number of years the respondents had worked at the university. Based on the data, 43% had worked at the university for 8-11 years, 28% had worked for more than 11 years, 23% had worked for 3-7 years, and 6% had worked for less than 3 years. The findings imply that the respondents provided relevant and accurate data on marketing mix strategies at the university since a greater proportion had worked at the university for more than 8 years.

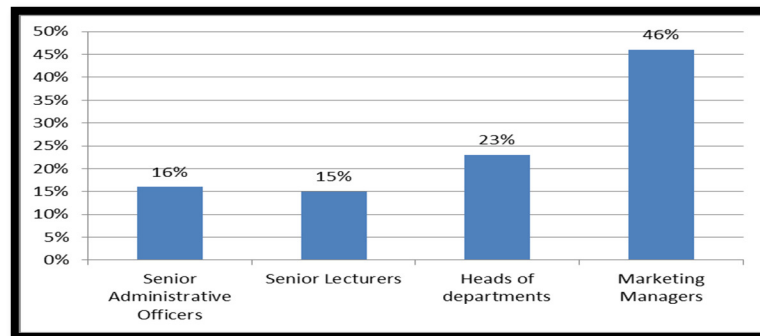


Figure 4: Respondents' Positions  
Source: Author (2021)

The study sought to establish the positions held by the respondents at the university; based on the data presented in figure 4, 46% of the respondents were marketing managers, 23% were heads of departments, 15% were senior lecturers, and 16% were senior administrative officers. The findings imply that accurate data was obtained for the study since the majority of the respondents had adequate knowledge of the marketing strategies used by private universities.

### 5.3. Marketing Strategies Used by Private Universities

Product Strategies	Max	Min	Mean	Std. Deviation
The university offers unique programmes compared to other universities	4	5	4.73	0.959
The university has a variety of programmes/courses for students to choose from	3	5	4.87	0.898
The university has foundation programmes for student who do not have minimum university entry requirements	4	5	4.74	0.766
The university offers executive programmes for experienced individuals who do not have certain academic qualifications	4	5	4.50	1.003
The university offers short courses for individuals or teams requiring capacity-building	4	5	4.56	0.811
The university offers short-term professional development courses to attract specific professionals	4	5	4.52	1.070

Table 4: Product Strategies  
Source: Author (2021)

The table above presents data on Product strategies used by the university. Based on the findings, the respondents strongly agreed with the following statements:

- The university offers unique programmes compared to other universities (Mean=4.73; SD=0.959);
- The university has a variety of programmes/courses for students to choose from (Mean=4.87; SD=0.898), and
- The university has foundation programmes for students who do not have minimum university entry requirements (Mean=4.74; SD=0.766).

- The respondents, on the other hand, agreed that the university offers executive programmes for experienced individuals who do not have certain academic qualifications (Mean=4.50; SD=1.003);
- The university offers short courses for individuals or teams requiring capacity-building (Mean=4.56; SD=0.811) and
- The university offers short-term professional development courses to attract specific professionals (Mean=4.52; SD=1.070).

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.500 <sup>a</sup>	.250	.173	.22147
a. Predictors: (Constant), Price Strategies, Promotion Strategies, Place Strategies and Product Strategies.				

Table 5: Regression Analysis  
Source: Author (2020)

Table 5 presents data on the model summary for the regression model. The adjusted R Square from the model summary is 0.250, which indicates that 25.0% of enrollment in private universities in Kenya can be explained by the independent variables (i.e., Price Strategies, Promotion Strategies, Place Strategies, and Product Strategies).

5.4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicates that the combined effect of the marketing strategies used by private universities significantly explained the enrollment of students in private universities. The results are presented in the table below.

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.637	4	.159	3.245	.022 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1.913	39	.049		
	Total	2.550	43			
a. Dependent Variable: enrollment in private universities						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Price Strategies, Promotion Strategies, Place Strategies and Product Strategies.						

Table 6: ANOVA<sup>a</sup>  
Source: Author (2021)

The data in the table above present the statistics computed on the analysis of variance and show a significance level of 0.022, which implies that the data ultimately draws conclusions based on the population parameter. As the significance value (p-value) is below 5%, this implies that the model was statistically significant.

5.5. Regression Coefficients

A linear regression analysis was conducted with the aim of establishing the relationship between the marketing mix strategies used by universities and the enrollment of students in private universities. The coefficient of determination in the study describes the extent to which variations among the independent variables explain changes in the dependent variable (i.e. the enrollment of students in private universities), which is explained by all four predictor variables (i.e. Price Strategies, Promotion Strategies, Place Strategies and Product Strategies).

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.403	.965		1.454	.154
	Price Strategies	.135	.284	.074	.475	.637
	Promotion strategies	.143	.155	.043	.276	.784
	Place Strategies	.519	.169	.461	3.062	.004
	Product Strategies	.240	.201	.178	1.190	.241
a. Dependent Variable: enrolment in private universities						

Table 7: Regression Coefficients  
Source: Author (2021)

Based on the regression coefficients presented in table 7, the overall equation model can be presented as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + E$$

Where: Y (Enrollment of students in private universities) = 1.403+ 0.135X<sub>1</sub> + 0.143 X<sub>2</sub> + 0.519 X<sub>3</sub> + 0.240X<sub>4</sub> + ε

The above regression equation implies that when Price Strategies, Promotion Strategies, Place Strategies and Product Strategies are zero, the enrollment of students in private universities will stand at 1.403. A unit increase in price



strategies would lead to an increase in student enrollment in private universities by 0.135 or 13.5%, and a unit increase in promotion strategies will lead to an increase in student enrollment in private universities by 0.143 or 14.3%. Similarly, a unit increase in place strategies and product strategies would lead to an overall improvement in student enrollment in private universities by 0.519 (51.9%) and 0.240 (24.0%), respectively. From the regression coefficient table, it can be deduced that all the predictor variables were significant at a 5% level of significance, implying that the predictor variables have an influence on the enrollment of students in private universities.

## 5.6. Qualitative Analysis

### 5.6.1. Product Strategies

A greater proportion of the respondents agreed that product strategies influence student enrollment in private universities. They argued that when a university has unique programmes and courses that various groups of prospective students can pursue regardless of their academic qualifications, then a university can achieve a high enrollment level. They noted that besides the undergraduate and postgraduate degrees and diplomas offered by private universities, there is a need to focus on offering professional courses as well as short-term courses that target individuals interested in improving their professional skills.

## 6. Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 6.1. What Is The Influence of Product Strategies on Student Enrollment in Private Universities in Kenya?

The findings of the study established that 41% of the respondents believed that product strategies had the greatest effect on student enrollment in private universities, 29% believed product strategies had great effects, and 30% believed product strategies had the least effect on student enrollment. The findings also revealed that the university offers unique programmes compared to other universities, has a variety of programmes/courses for students to choose from, and has foundation programmes at the university for students lacking minimum university entry requirements. Additionally, the university offers executive programmes for experienced individuals who do not have certain academic qualifications, as well as short courses and professional development courses for individuals or teams requiring capacity building. The service delivery by lecturers influences students' enrollment in private universities.

### 6.2. Conclusion

The study revealed that the level of adoption of specific marketing mix strategies significantly determined the level of student enrolment in private universities. It can, therefore, be concluded that the adoption of marketing mix strategies by private universities significantly improves the levels of student enrolment in Kenyan private universities.

#### 6.2.1. Product Strategies

It can be concluded that unique programmes, compared to other universities, offer a variety of programmes/courses for students to choose from. There are foundation programmes at the university for students who do not have minimum university entry requirements. The service delivery by lecturers influences students' enrollment in private universities.

### 6.3. Recommendations

#### 6.3.1. Product Strategies

Based on the findings, Universities should focus on developing unique academic programmes that are market-driven. This can be achieved through consultation and partnerships with the private sector to ensure that relevant skills are provided to graduates.

#### 6.3.2. Suggested Areas for Future Research

A related study should be conducted in other private institutions of higher learning, such as Technical and Vocational Training Institutes, to determine whether the same conclusions can be held.

A survey should be done for middle-level colleges in Kenya because generalizing the results of a case study is limited. A survey will act as a better pointer to the adoption of marketing mix strategies to increase student enrollment and the challenges of adopting the strategies, thereby enabling the generalization of the results of such a study.

## 7. References

- i. Ansoff, I. (1957). *Corporate strategy*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- ii. Barney, J., & Wright, M. D. (2001). The resource-based view of the firm: Ten years after 1991. *Journal of Management*, 27(6), 625–641.
- iii. Bocken, N., Short, S., Rana, P., & Evans, S. A. (2014). A literature and practice review to develop sustainable business model archetypes. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 65(1), 42–56.
- iv. Chang, R., Zuo, J., Zhao, Z., Zillante, G., Gan, X., & Soebartoa, V. (2017). Evolving theories of sustainability and firms: History, future directions, and implications for renewable energy research. *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews*, 69, 48–56.

- v. Jamali, D. (2006). Insights into triple bottom-line integration from a learning organization perspective. *Business Process Management Journal*, 12(1), 809–821.
- vi. Kombo, D. K., & Tromp, D. L. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing: An introduction*. Nairobi, Kenya: Paulines Publications.
- vii. Kumar, M., Talib, S. A., & Ramayah, T. (2013). *Business research methods*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- viii. Muchiri, M. N. (2016). *The effectiveness of marketing mix strategies on performance of Kenol Kobil Limited* (Master's thesis). University of Nairobi.
- ix. Mugenda, A. G., & Mugenda, O. M. (2012). *Research methods dictionary*.
- x. Ngunjiri, J. (2018). *Influence of marketing strategies on performance of Strathmore University, Kenya* (Master's thesis). Strathmore University.
- xi. Olaleke, O. O., Borishade, T. T., Adeniyi, S., & Omolade, O. O. (2014). Empirical analysis of marketing mix strategy and student loyalty in education marketing. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(23), 616–625.
- xii. Palmer, E. (2011). *Successful marketing strategy for high-tech firms*. Boston: Artech House.
- xiii. Salvioni, D. M., Franzoni, S., & Cassano, R. (2017). Sustainability in the higher education system: An opportunity to improve quality and image. *Sustainability*, 9(914), 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su9060914>
- xiv. Starck, K., & Zadeh, S. H. (2013). *Marketing within higher education institutions: A case study of two private Thai universities*. Mälardalen University, Västerås, Sweden.
- xv. Verhoef, P. C., & Leeflang, P. S. (2009). Understanding the marketing department's influence within the firm. *Journal of Marketing*, 73(2), 14–37.