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ABSTRACT

The intense competition has seen the higher education institutions adopt strategies to remain profitable and competitive in attracting students. Some of the activities done to this end include research, conference organization, offering career advice, financing startup companies, maintaining historic buildings and promoting sport. However, college branding has not been given much attention in the marketing of higher education institutions in Kenya and more so among private Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Therefore, the purpose of the study was to establish the effect of college branding on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. The study was guided by the AIDA Marketing model. The study employed descriptive survey design and involved members of the management of privately owned TVET colleges drawn from 25 counties across the country. The sample size was determined using the formula proposed by Kathuri and Pals, to select a sample size of 223 colleges for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data after being subjected to Cronbach test for reliability. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (mainly frequencies, percentages and Chi-squares) and inferential statistics, mainly Pearson product moment correlation and multiple linear regression analysis. The results revealed that there was a significant relationship between competition college branding ($\beta = 0.323$; $p < 0.05$) and market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. The study, therefore, recommended that the privately sponsored middle level TVET colleges need to rebrand themselves in order to be or remain competitive in the market.

Keywords: *Market performance, Mid-Level Colleges, Branding*

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INTRODUCTION

In the last one hundred years, the higher education sector at a global stage has been rapidly expanding, a phenomenon that education specialists call massification of education. This coupled with the growing demand for skilled labour for expanding economies has made higher education environment competitive with institutions increasingly competing for students in the recruitment market (James et al., 2009). For instance, over 300,000 students are enrolled in universities and other higher education institutions in Kenya in the current cohort. Approximately 20% or 60,000 of these students are enrolled in the private higher education sector (CHE, 2016). This places the private colleges in a position of intense competition with themselves and with the public institutions of higher learning. Consequently, the intense competition has seen the higher education institutions to adopt strategies to remain profitable and competitive in attracting students. Some of the activities done to this end include research, conference organization, offering career advice, financing startup companies, maintaining historic buildings and promoting sport (Katamei, 2015). However, college branding has not been given much attention in the marketing of higher education institutions in Kenya and more so among private Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges.

Branding and the brand experience is the process by which institutions differentiate themselves from other competing organizations. Institutions of higher education in the United States and worldwide use images and slogans to differentiate among one another and appeal to potential and current students, faculty, staff and donors—this is called branding. In the ever changing educational landscape, institutions seek to differentiate themselves from others through the process of branding. Prospective students and families use differentiated higher education brands to assist in the decision-making process of which institution to attend. The brand, thus, communicates both the intangible and tangible markers that students and other stakeholders may value such as perceived fit, prestige, quality, and affordability. The brand has become the single representation of the goods (a degree), services (academic and social life), and people (stakeholders) offered by an institution that distinguish it from other competitors. The basic purposes of a branding are "to make it easier for consumers to identify and remember a particular product," and "to strengthen the association of a product with one or more attributes of quality" (Wolpert, 1999). In the pursuit of reputation and prestige, colleges and universities increasingly rely on external feedback to provide a roadmap in how best to promote themselves in recruitment and retention of students and faculty, research and publishing, and the fostering and maintenance of community relationships.

Statement of the Problem

The Kenyan higher education sector has been rapidly expanding in terms of student enrolments and in the process becoming more competitive. In the process, however, private TVET colleges have become casualties as prospective students either join universities or other government owned tertiary institutions (Katamei, 2015). This has led to a decline in establishment of private mid-level colleges in the country and even those available are still contending with several challenges among them student retention. Student volatility in such institutions is high and in certain courses the net enrolment has dwindled to unsustainable levels. The increasing competition for students among higher education institutions has prompted them to seek marketing strategies mostly adopted from the corporate world in order to position themselves competitively in the market and consequently improve their market performance. Among these strategies is college branding. The brand, in and of itself, is the mechanism by which individuals can identify and choose to be a part of (consume) a university community or not. However, despite the efforts by private TVET Colleges by investing enormous resources to attract students, the level of enrolment and retention of students remains unsustainable. Previous studies in the country have focused explicitly on universities among them Ndilo (2016), Agumbi (2013), Katamei (2015) and Alando (2016), however, while these studedies provided insight into the characteristics of the private higher education sector, they could not provide significant insight into the workings and market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. Hence, the study investigated the determinants of market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of college branding on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya.

LITERATURE REVIEW

AIDA Model

The Attention, Interest, Desire (or, in some variations, Decision) and Action (AIDA) marketing model is a marketing, advertising and sales approach methodology designed to provide insight into the customer's mind and represent the steps needed to cultivate leads and generate sales. The AIDA model was introduced by businessman Elias St. Elmo Lewis in the late 19th century (Priyanka, 2013). The model talks about the different phases through which a consumer goes before going to buy a product or service (Ferrell & Hartline, 2005). According to him, most of the marketers follow this model to fetch more consumers for their product. Marketers use this model to attract customers to purchase a product. This model can be seen widely used in today's advertisements. As an acronym, AIDA breaks down into the steps required for successful marketing: Attention, Interest, and Desire (or, in some variations, Decision) and Action. The AIDA marketing model is a cornerstone of modern marketing, to the extent that missing one step is thought to almost guarantee an unsuccessful result (Priyanka, 2013).

The four stages of AIDA include: Attention - To make customers aware of offerings, a marketer needs to catch their attention and notice or take in visual media (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick, 2013). Various approaches are implemented to get the attention of potential customers, like the placement of an ad in an unusual but noticeable place. Personalized messages, like those used in one-to-one marketing, are harder to ignore than generic proposals. Shock value advertising, such as the use of graphic images, also garners attention by provoking sharp emotional reactions. Interest – Customer interest must be piqued and held long enough to gain information about the product (Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999). One approach to maintaining interest is presenting concise and well-paced information, delivered by an interesting character, voice actor or mascot. Desire (or Decision) – Desire is often built up by selling on a product's features, showing superiority over similar products and demonstrating versatility. Essentially, this is the presentation of a product or service's value proposition, the compelling benefits that induce a consumer to select this particular offering, leading to the decision to purchase (Huey, 1999).

Action – If the customer has come this far, there is interest. The final step is closing the sale and convincing the customer to act on interest, which may involve overcoming objections and making a call to action (CTA) (Wijaya, 2012). In the CTA, a product may start at a higher price that will be lowered, often to a third of the original. Products might be offered two-for-one and/or with free shipping. Improving the perceived value can motivate the undecided customer. However, if the other steps are performed well, the customer should be left with a lasting positive impression of the product even if they choose not to purchase (Howard, 1999).

The AIDA model was instrumental in shaping the discourse on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya from a college branding and student characteristics perspective based on the components of AIDA communication- Attention, Interest, Desire/Decision and Action.

College Branding and Market Performance

Brands have existed for thousands of years and have evolved into tools to market and promote a particular cause or identity. Branding is the process of labeling, and thus, "designating ownership" and is a process "we experience, evaluate, have feeling towards, and build associations with to perceive value (Brakus, Schmidt & Zarantonello, 2009; Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy & Pervan, 2011). The basic purposes of a branding are "to make it easier for consumers to identify and remember a particular product," and "to strengthen the association of a product with one or more attributes of quality" (Wolpert, 1999). Universities have advertised and branded themselves since the 1700s and installed offices dedicated to public relations beginning in the early twentieth century (Aronczyk & Powers, 2010). The evolution of the public relations offices into media relations, marketing and university brand centers is in response to colleges and universities adopting marketing strategies from the corporate world. Administrators dedicated to marketing institutions have well established professional associations, conferences, textbooks and an academic journal related to the field of university branding and promotion leading to the furtherance of a promotional culture among entities of higher education.

Colleges and universities, acting as corporations, continue to brand and re-brand themselves as necessary to remain competitive and differentiated and protect their brand through licensing and trademarking. Licensing is one of the most powerful tools in marketing and dissemination of the brand (Revoyr, 1995). By allowing vendors and outside entities to use the trademark, or visual representation, of the university, institutions receive a royalty fee for the guarantee that a vendor will accurately use the brand into various marketplaces. The brand becomes symbolic and protected once it is trademarked. In the realm of higher education, these branded items are educational service marks because education is deemed a service rather than a consumer product (Kaplin & Lee, 2013). With increased competition among higher educational entities, protection of the brand through trademark and licensing agreements has moved to greater importance and is a source of revenue for institutions in the selling and distribution of trademarked merchandise.

The brand of an institution and the reflection of the relative prestige as compared to other institutions is important as a recruitment tool through differentiation. For individuals that seek to identify and become purveyors of the brand identity, the brand must satisfy a personal or developmental need on the part of stakeholder groups, particularly students, who matriculate within these institutions. For students, the brand is beneficial for the institution through differentiation and the establishment of a niche but there are benefits for potential consumers as well. Wolpert (1999) noted that: Brands reduce the level of effort a consumer must put into assuring a specific, desired level of quality and reducing the perceived risk of making a costly mistake. Brands also provide psychological rewards to the consumer such as prestige or status. For students seeking top academic programs and opportunities, higher education brands assist in the decision-making process of which institution to attend, perceived fit, and recognition—all items that factor into a final decision alongside affordability, location and other personal and practical factors.

Although institutions garner revenue from their brand, the creation and maintenance of a "unique institutional identity" that stands out is an expensive and tedious process. The brand must be conveyed and maintained consistently in the "deployment of logo, motto, tone and look" according to Porter (2008). The goals of these branding campaigns are to recruit the best and brightest students, attract industry and research dollars, and to communicate effectively with local communities for a positive town and gown relationship (Hearn, 2010). Moreover, branding is a process that takes years to establish firmly in the public arena and requires a team of individuals working to find and test mottos, logos, and colors that work for an institution's long and short term goals and vision. Despite competition between colleges being a long-standing tradition in higher education, the brand of an institution has become central to the survival of the college.

According to Wernick (2006), the self-consciousness with which a university's corporate image has come to be managed, the administrative prominence the task assumes, and the objectification, and indeed monetization, of academic reputation itself is a brand. The implications of a branded university impact all facets of university life and also contribute to the growing promotional culture surrounding institutional brands and higher education. Hearn (2010) notes that students may feel that they are customers in control of their decisions and to be served in keeping with the qualities conveyed via a college or university brand while universities see students (and other stakeholders) as a market to be leveraged for resources that impact the long-term yield of an institution in growth, funding, and prestige. Thus, it is important to know how the brand of an institution is disseminated, used and understood by those impacted by the organization.

Sánchez (2012) examined factors influencing a student's decision to pursue a communications degree in Spain. The results depicted that the leading criteria for Spanish students interested in pursuing studies in communication sciences were a university's reputation and excellence and the quality of its educational programmes. In terms of sources of information related to universities and their degree programmes, Spanish communication sciences students placed the highest value on direct and experiential sources. Spanish students interested in pursuing degrees in communication sciences preferred public universities over private universities. A study by Ismail (2009) and also by Keling (2006) found that institutional image and reputation, tuition fees, and academic programmes had a high explanatory power on how students decide on which university to study at. The importance of quality, type and variety of academic programmes as well as the presence of distinguished teaching staff were factors raised in a study by Hsieh (2010) as having a moderating effect on students' decisions to choose a college to study.

Within the literature, studies address the issue of prestige, brand, and stakeholder involvement in the formation and maintenance of school prestige and image to both internal and external university communities. Gonzales and Pacheco (2012) refocus the idea of branding and stakeholders by examining the problems created by using slogans to catalyze organizational change. These slogans were appropriated from dominant logics about university prestige and success and within this transition period, Gonzales and Pacheco (2012) found that instead of a democratizing action that included all members of the university community, all critiques were silenced which led to dissonance within the community. When considering stakeholders and their buy-in to a university's marketing and promotion strategies, both short- and long-term goals should be considered since organizational change can occur at different paces at different levels of the institution and within various stakeholder groups. Antcil (2008) discusses strategic marketing plans for higher education that emphasize the importance of first identifying the strengths and weaknesses of an institution, which then informs what the college/university is, whom it serves, and who the competition is. Depending on the brand buy-in or marketing strategy, a university's change agents must be aware of the internal and external goals and the impact of what it takes to achieve those goals, and the impact thereafter once change becomes reality.

Common motivations for HEI branding include counteracting declining enrolments, reduced retention, and overall competition; enhancing image and prestige; increasing financial resources; honoring a philanthropic donor; mission alignment; or signifying a merger between institutions (Koku, 1997; Morphew et al., 2001; Nguyen & LeBlanc, 2001; Sevier, 2002; Toma, Dubrow, & Hartley, 2005). Consequently, when the results of an objective brand audit uncover an unhealthy brand, it is paramount from a financial and competitive viewpoint that the HEI determine why their brand is not working. Most institutions will be able to embark on a strategy to either revitalize or refocus to realign their existing brand to meet their goals and the needs of their customer base, while some may need more extreme strategies such as renaming or retiring a brand (Williams, 2012). Although HEI administrators increasingly recognize the need for brand management (Chapleo, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006, 2007; Lowrie, 2007) and brand building is becoming a strategic goal, the higher education industry lacks theoretical models of higher education marketing and branding (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Williams, 2012).

Higher education is focused on people; involves largely intangible actions; requires lengthy and formal relationship of continuous delivery with the customer; depends upon high levels of customization and judgment; maintains relatively narrow fluctuations of demand relative to supply; and operates within single or multiple sites of service delivery methods (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006; Mazzarol & Soutar, 1999). Lowrie (2007) purports that HEI branding must pay attention to the intangibility and inseparability aspects of HE services. The development of a clear brand principle may not be easy because of the complexity of HEI brands due to numerous factors: diverse stakeholders; internal structures; institutional resistance to change; the wide range of majors and programs; sub-branding by schools/majors/facilities; information gap between choice factors identified by students and HEI publications; and the need for support by institutional leadership and formal communication mechanisms (Birnbaum, 1983; Chapleo, 2007; Edmiston, 2008; Hankinson, 2001; Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2006).

Several middle level colleges have developed brands over time which is emblematic on their articles. However, the power of these brands to influence market performance of private middle level colleges in Kenya is still unknown. This makes it imperative to pay close research attention to the power of college branding on the market performance of these institutions. The 7Ps approach has been recognized and associated specifically to services marketing. By including additional three Ps– people, process and physical evidence, it is believed that HEIs could make use of a more comprehensive marketing strategy. (Ivy, 2008; Enache, 2011) All components within the 7Ps approach possess different outcomes, where one component has the possibility to alter the effect on one another (Ibid, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The study was grounded on a positivist philosophy and adopted the descriptive survey design. There were approximately 355 privately owned TVET registered private colleges in Kenya (MoE, 2017). Majority of these were located in the urban areas of the country. The study targeted TVET colleges in eight regions to make the sample inclusive. From these, the accessible population was one member of the management of each of the colleges bringing the entire target population to 355 persons. The sample size was 223 respondents. The study used primary data which was collected by use of questionnaires, data collection sheet and interview schedules. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

FINDINGS

The initial sample size was 266 respondents and as such 223 questionnaires were administered and returned indicating a response rate of 84%.

College Branding of Private TVET Colleges

The objective of the study was to examine the effect of college branding on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya as its second objective. This objective was examined using three constructs; Brand Image, Brand Experience and Institutional Identity. A 5 point Likert scale was used to rate responses of this variable and it ranged from; 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The findings were presented in Table 1.

Table 1: College Branding of private TVET colleges in Kenya

Statement	SA Freq (%)	A Freq (%)	N Freq(%)	D Freq(%)	SD Freq (%)	χ2	p-Value
We have successfully carried out a branding campaign to boost our image	62(27.8)	133(59.6)	23(10.3)	4(1.8)	1(0.4)	162.59	0.001
We have built our brand based on our clients' expectations	77(34.5)	122(54.7)	16(7.2)	8(3.6)	0	100.77	0.001
We have strategically positioned our brand among our peers so as to give it a good image	84(38)	107(48.4)	20(9)	10(4.5)	0	116.17	0.001
Our college brand is a registered trademark	91(41.2)	110(49.8)	14(6.3)	2(0.9)	4(1.8)	162.28	0.001
We have aligned our brand to the institutional practices	82(37.3)	120(54.5)	16(7.3)	2(0.9)	0	89.04	0.001
We insist on quality assurance during delivery to encourage clients to subscribe to our brand	109(49.1)	102(45.9)	11(5)	0	0	82.34	0.001
We use our alumni to promote our college	99(44.6)	92(41.4)	21(9.5)	9(4.1)	1(0.4)	123.06	0.001
We promote industry placement as a means of building our reputation	92(41.3)	99(44.4)	23(10.3)	5(2.20	4(1.8)	114.16	0.001

The results in Table 1 suggested that most of the privately owned TVET colleges had successfully carried out branding campaigns to boost their image as agreed by majority (87.4%) of the respondents. The colleges had built their brands based on their clients' expectations (89.2%). Also majority (86.4%) of the respondents agreed that their colleges had strategically positioned their brand among their peers so as to give them a good image. Most colleges had their college brands registered as a trademark (91%). The results also showed that most colleges had aligned their brand to the institutional practices (91.8%). Majority (95%) of the respondents also agreed that their college management insisted on quality assurance during delivery to encourage clients to subscribe to their brand. The findings also showed that most colleges used their alumni to promote their college (86%) and promote industry placement as a means of building their reputation (85.7%). The results, further, suggested that all the χ2 values for the reactions to the assertions were all significant ($p \leq 0.05$), therefore, implying that the results could be statistically inferred as representative of the entire population.

The findings emerging from the interview schedules revealed that some colleges anchored their competitiveness on their, "College brand name," "Reputation for excellence" and "Alumni" to attract students. However, most colleges branded themselves as offering "Highly marketable courses" "Having a [ready] job market to our graduates" "Offering market ready courses" and "Students will join or fail to join a college if there are/not facilities, if it is easily accessible and if the college is known". However, the brands were mostly leveraged on a secondary product, that is, the courses rather than the 'market ready students.' These findings support those of Hamann et al., (2007) who found that the brand of the higher education experience bestows a certain level of social status affording graduates a sense of identification and a way to define themselves, not merely as customers but as life-long organization members of a corporate 'brand community.' According to Balmer and Liao (2007), this brand status matters not just to students and alumni, but simultaneously to multiple internal and external HEI stakeholders. These findings also agree with Hsieh (2010) who also found that quality, type and variety of academic programmes as well as the presence of distinguished teaching staff were factors raised in a study by as having a moderating effect on students' decisions to choose a college to study.

Market Performance of Private TVET Colleges

The study also sought to evaluate the status of market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. This was the dependent variable and the constructs used to market performance included quantity, Retention, Course Subscription and Attraction of Students. The responses to this constructs were rated on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from; 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The results were as shown by Table 2.

Table 2: Market Performance of Private TVET Colleges

Statement	SA Freq(%)	A Freq(%)	N Freq(%)	D Freq(%)	SD Freq(%)	χ2	p-value
My college is able to attract a diverse range of students at undergraduate level compared to peers	54(24.8)	113(51.8)	34(15.6)	15(6.9)	2(0.9)	329.58	0.001
Of all applications we receive from prospective students, majority end up enrolling	70(31.4)	115(51.6)	25(11.2)	12(5.4)	1(0.4)	463.65	0.001
Our college has developed strategic partnerships with other institutions including potential employers	59(26.5)	120(53.8)	26(11.7)	16(7.2)	2(0.9)	281.93	0.001
Our college is able to recruit students across its different courses and programs	73(33)	122(55.2)	17(7.7)	9(4.1)	0	209.48	0.001
Majority of our courses get enough quorum throughout their cohort	51(23.3)	100(45.7)	46(21)	19(8.7)	3(1.4)	272.17	0.001
Our college is a market leader in this locality	75(34.1)	91(41.4)	38(17.3)	14(6.4)	2(0.9)	422.83	0.001
Finding industry placement for our graduates is not difficult due to our market position	86(38.7)	98(44.1)	27(12.2)	8(3.6)	3(1.4)	433.9	0.001
We have been able to expand our course portfolio in the last few years in order to satisfy market demand	86(38.6)	112(50.2)	15(6.7)	8(3.6)	2(0.9)	403.09	0.001

The results in Table 2 suggested that most of the respondents agreed that their college were able to attract a diverse range of students at undergraduate level compared to peers (76.6%). Majority (83%) of the respondents also agreed that of all applications their colleges received from prospective students, majority ended up enrolling. Most colleges had developed strategic partnerships with other institutions including potential employers (80.3%). The results also indicated that majority of the colleges were able to recruit students across their different courses and programs (88.2%). The respondents also showed that most of the respondents agreed that majority of their courses got enough quorum throughout their cohort (69%). The results also indicated that all the $\chi 2$ values for the reactions to the statements were significant ($p \leq 0.05$), therefore, implying that the results could be statistically inferred as representative of the entire population.

The results also indicated that most respondents agreed that their colleges were the market leaders in their area (75.5%). Most respondents also agreed that finding industry placements for their graduates was not difficult due to their market position (82.8%). Most had been able to expand their course portfolio in the last few years in order to satisfy market demand (88.8%). These results agreed with Mazzarol (2008) who found that the higher education had experienced an increasing competition among universities and higher education institutes to attract students both locally and internationally. James et al., (2009) also found that the higher education environment has become competitive and institutions increasingly have to compete for students in the recruitment market.

Inferential Statistics

Bivariate regression analysis was caried out to evaluate the relationships between the dependent and independent variable. The results were then used to test the corresponding hypothesis stated for the study. The decision rule was to accept the hypotheses if the corresponding p-values was greater than p > 0.05 and reject otherwise. The findings were summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Regression Analysis

Model Summary	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
	.433a	0.187	0.183	4.424		
ANOVAa		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	910.557	1	910.557	46.534	.000b
	Residual	3952.673	202	19.568		
	Total	4863.23	203			
Model Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
	(Constant)	12.638	2.893		4.369	0.000
	College Branding	0.578	0.085	0.433	6.822	0.000
	a Dependent Variable: Performance					

Table 3 showed that the overall model adjusted R^2 is 0.183 which suggested that the model could explain up to 18.3% (Adjusted R-Square) of the variations in the dependent variable the rest of the variation being explained by the variables not fitted in the model. The F-statistic in the ANOVA was 46.534 with a P value of 0.000 which implied that the explanatory variable is significant in explaining variations in the dependent variable. In addition, the findings on the model coefficients suggested that college branding had a significant and positive relationship with market performance of the private TVET colleges ($\beta = 0.433$; $p \leq 0.05$). This showed that a unit increase in college branding will lead to a + 0.433 increase in standard deviations in variations of market performance of the privately owned TVET colleges in the country.

The null hypothesis of the study was tested under;

H_{02}: College branding does not significantly affect market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya

The null hypothesis **H_{02}**: was rejected since its p-value 0.000 was less than the 0.05 confidence level. Hence, the study concluded that college branding has a significant effect on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. Therefore, this study adopted the view that college branding was an important factor of market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. These findings underscored the growing importance of leveraging the competitiveness of the higher educational institution on brands. These findings also agreed with Ismail (2009) and Keling (2006) who found that institutional image and reputation, tuition fees, and academic programmes had a high explanatory power on how students decide on which college to attend. They agreed with Kaplin and Lee (2013) who found that with increased competition among higher educational entities, protection of the brand has increased in importance and is a source of revenue for institutions in the selling and distribution of trademarked merchandise. Hearn (2010) also observed that despite competition between colleges being a long-standing tradition in higher education, the brand of an institution has become central to the survival of the college.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The results revealed that most of the privately owned TVET colleges had successfully carried branding campaigns to boost their images. The colleges had built their brands based on their clients' expectations and had strategically positioned their brand among their peers so as to give them a good image. Most colleges had their college brands were registered as trademarks. The results also revealed that most colleges had aligned their brand to the institutional practices with the college managements insisting on quality assurance during delivery to encourage clients to subscribe to their brand. The findings also revealed that most colleges used their alumni to promote their college and promote industry placement as a means of building their reputation. It was evident from the results that there was a significant relationship between college branding on market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya. Theoretically, the findings support the AIDA theory which among its stages of implementation posit that in order to make customers aware of offerings, a marketer needs to catch their attention and notice or take in visual media. Therefore, this study concluded that college branding was an important factor of market performance of privately owned TVET colleges in Kenya.

The privately sponsored middle level TVET colleges need to rebrand themselves in order to be or remain competitive in the market. Particularly, the rebranding campaign should involve all members of the college and be carried out over a protracted length of time so as to let the effect sink on their current and prospective clients.

Suggestions for Further Research

- The study recommended that future studies should be done on the effect of service quality on the market performance of the privately sponsored middle level TVET colleges
- Also future studies should be done on the effect of flexible learning programs on the market performance of privately sponsored middle level TVET colleges

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