Part IV   Moving from research to practice

13   Marketing higher education in Africa

Moving from research to practice

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Much of the extant research has focused on Western higher education institutions' marketing to Western students, with remarkably less attention being paid to African emerging markets. Higher education holds particular importance in Africa, as it would be critical to regional socio-economic development. With the market expansion by international higher education institutions and the emergence of private higher education institutions, African higher education institutions, private or public, are facing and will soon have to adopt a marketing orientation. The chapter begins with a brief discussion about the new reality of marketing higher education in Africa, followed by a marketing orientation checklist for higher education marketing managers to keep to their hearts. A large part of the chapter discusses ideas drawn from emerging research and well-proven practices to build, integrate, and develop the brand for African higher education institutions.

Keywords: marketing, branding, advertising, practice, higher education, Africa

Introduction

The provision of higher education is becoming more competitive as the skill needs of increasingly knowledge-based and innovation-driven economies have spurred demand for tertiary education worldwide. Coupled with a growing middle class, the globalisation of education has stimulated the quest for quality education, often in the developed countries' wave of students studying abroad (OECD, 2018). There are many universities around the world aiming to attract prospective students, develop their network, increase their reputation and revenues, and promote cross-faculty fertilisation (Hénard et al., 2012).

Marketing of higher education is necessitated based on the need to deliver another service to the market – to those who can afford it (Mogaji & Yoon, 2019). In other words, education provides people with choices. Students can decide to leave their home countries and travel to another country because they have found the education worthwhile, based on the way it has been marketed. While effort has been made in understanding the motivation of students and the marketing strategies of universities around the world, studies on marketing higher education in Africa is scarce (Mogaji et al., 2017). Despite the enormous potentials of students and the increasing number of private universities, and more institutions creating off-shore satellite campuses, it is worthwhile to consider how higher education is being marketed in Africa.

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It is essential to highlight that this chapter is not presenting empirical research findings, but explicitly focusing on managerial implications of marketing higher education in Africa. They are presenting relatable action plans for university managers and proprietors on how to navigate and stand out in the competitive higher education market. This chapter presents consolidated yet multiple perspectives on practical implications for marketing managers of higher institutions in Africa. The focus of this chapter is to address marketing challenges for marketing managers. Firstly, managers who are trying to redevelop their university brand and reposition themselves for global domination; and secondly, managers and proprietors of new universities that are just starting up and looking to compete in the higher education market.

The African context is acknowledged here, as it comes with its challenges. Africa is a big continent with diverse cultures and forms of education. A significant challenge that colleges and universities in Africa face, apart from the state and standards of the campuses, is that they are not deemed to be competitive enough for consumers to perceive them as offering better products and services than their competitors. In addition, there are challenges which include the state of the external environment where these colleges and universities are located; that is the safety, security, and opportunities, and the macroeconomic stability of the external environment (country), in terms of living standards (Gross Domestic Product (GDP), GDP per capita, inflation, and unemployment rates) of the countries these colleges and universities are located.

Students are trooping to Western countries like Canada, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Australia, etc., not only from Africa but from other developing countries of the world. This is because they consider these countries to be both safe and secure and have many opportunities for them to benefit from. This is in addition to the fact that the colleges and universities in these countries boast of superior products and services compared to their African counterparts. Regardless of the standard of the colleges and universities in the developed countries, if these countries are not considered to be safe and secure with lots of opportunities, consumers (students) are not likely to patronise the products and services that are offered by those colleges and universities.

While recognising that these challenges are multifaceted, this chapter aims to address one of the many sectors involved in developing the capacity of universities in Africa. The chapter focuses on the marketing strategies for building, integrating, and developing higher education brands to appeal to prospective students and stakeholders. Researchers with an interest in marketing communication and also possess knowledge about the different Africa education systems, present this consolidated action plan to offer managerial recommendations and

extend knowledge on marketing higher education in Africa. The style of writing is specifically unique, as the chapter is speaking directly to the managers, and presenting actionable plans and ideas.

The chapter proceeds with the discussion about a marketing task checklist for managers responsible for marketing higher education and understating their challenges and expectations. This is followed by the action plans which are developed to cover the needs of the managers. Recommended action plans are covered in three sections. The first section discusses strategic aspects to be considered to build the brand, including repositioning and aligning it with the core values and objectives, new identities and philosophy. The second section presents ideas for integrating the new brand – making all the stakeholders aware of the brands' offering. At the core of this section is the integration of marketing communication strategies for reaching out to prospective students. The third section presents ideas for managing and developing the brand. This section also discusses building global reputation, enhancing student experiences and learning facilities. The chapter then ends with a concluding section.

The marketing orientation mind-set checklist

While it may be the case that public universities seldom have a marketing manager as they receive governments' funds, and administrative bureaucracy in implementing these strategies is recognised, countries are opening up to the world and the governments are cutting subsidies for or deregulating the higher education sector; for example, in Australia or South Africa (de Jager & Gbadamosi, 2013) or in Vietnam where the government is cutting subsidies, and public universities have to compete with private universities. Therefore, not only do existing private universities in Africa now need to be 'marketing-oriented', but also public universities need to also consider that as a possibility (Beneke, 2011).

Marketing managers of higher education institutions need to acknowledge the trends that have changed the landscape for higher education marketing (Maringe & Gibbs, 2008; Mogaji, 2019). Students are more empowered as they are more informed and even may voice their discontent (whether right or wrong) on online platforms. Nowadays, students have more alternative and more affordable ways to earn qualifications. Secondly, the internationalisation of the sector around the world has led to even more intensified competition as domestic universities right now compete with international institutions vying for local students, for off-shore and onshore programmes. Several institutions from the developed world have established campuses in developing countries (e.g. European universities in Africa such as

Lancaster University in Ghana, Henley Business School in South Africa, and Technische Universität Berlin in Egypt), competing for students who cannot afford to go to overseas and yet get the international certification and quality of teaching (Ndofirepi et al., 2020).

Indeed, African higher education is one of the most internationalised (Jowi, 2012). In the face of increasing competition, perhaps the biggest challenge for marketers of higher education in Africa is to implement a marketing-oriented approach to higher education, as previous research in South Africa shows institutions' hesitation to embrace relationship marketing (Beneke, 2011). Higher education institutions must be marketing-oriented, student-focused, and entrepreneurial. Particularly, marketing managers of higher education need to ask themselves how well they have performed on the following aspects.

Well though-out marketing strategy and organisation

First and foremost, marketing managers of higher education institutions need to have well thought-out, relationship-oriented marketing strategy that aims not only to attract and recruit students but also to retain current students as well as to build strong relationships with them during and after their time with the institution. There is a widely accepted view that students are consumers in higher education (Reddy, 2012; Mogaji, 2016). Theories of consumer relationships in the marketing literature suggest aspects that managers will need to attempt to build: customer trust, customer commitment, customer satisfaction, love of and identification with the institution, brand communities (Fournier et al., 2012). Higher education institutions need to win and retain students through engagement supported by content development, co-creation, and crowdsourcing (Kotler et al., 2010).

Bringing together the magic of marketing and the science of technology

Perhaps nothing other than technology has profoundly changed marketing around the world. Technology causes market disruptions across industries. In higher education, technology transforms the higher education marketing practices from the introduction of online or personalised courses to authentic approach underpinned by real-time conversations, taking students from awareness to advocacy (Mogaji, 2018; Ajjan & Hartshorne, 2008). The last step of advocacy in the consumer (student) journey is of relative importance in higher education because the opinions of our family, friends, and word of mouth have enormous impact on buying decisions. The modern marketing department needs to blend the creative and often intuitive marketing process – understanding consumer motivations and using these insights to create compelling integrated marketing – with the technology to gain data-driven

insights, creating real-time conversations with students, and engaging with them at every touchpoint – prior, during, and post-experience with the institutions.

Researching and finding opportunities

Many higher education institutions invest in academic research to build up their profile, but they need to also think of marketing research to understand the needs and wants of their 'special customers' and the influencing roles of parents. There are certain segments of prospective students with distinctive expectations at different ends of the market. Besides traditional research approaches, marketing managers can also use modern research techniques, such as marketing analytics and netnography, to research prospective students' expectations. Marketing managers need to research the reference or influence of others, such as family, friends, and acquaintances; e.g. students in some countries make decisions in conjunction with their parents (Garwe, 2016)

Innovating successfully

Upon selecting the target segment and identifying opportunities, managers have to ask themselves how they would innovate their products. While marketing managers of higher education institutions are typically involved in recruitment and communication efforts, they need to be get involved in the design of 'products' – courses and experiences offered to students. Just like a consumer product and service company may have different products meeting their customers, higher education institutions can design different courses to target different market segments. Examples of such could be Finance for Non-Finance Managers and Corporate Communications for Small and Medium Enterprises. Universities may consider courses as products, and as such marketers need to think of all product decisions – from positioning the product, giving it a brand name, to determining support services. Within an institution, the leaders may consider building their own 'international environment' (such as English-based environment of International School of Business at Woosong University, South Korea) as a star brand and also to attract the segment aspiring to international certification. Higher education institutions need to consider dual transformation design strategy to address different ends of the market (Gilbert et al., 2018): (1) optimise current operations and improve capacities to respond to market challenges, such as lowering cost or even exiting offerings that are not sufficiently differentiated; and (2) carefully design a capacity to take advantage of market opportunities (new models and separate student segments), e.g. online learning, distance education, MOOCs (massive open online courses)

and so on. Accreditation is essential and universities should make effort to get accreditations from regulatory bodies if needed.

Delivering services and managing student experiences with the right team

Like any service, marketing managers need to pay attention to extended marketing mix elements affecting student experience (Booms & Bitner, 1981), including people (academic and non-academic staff), process (course and support services delivery), and physical environment (brands and facilities). This is crucial to not only student recruitment, but also student retention. An established marketing team is also essential to achieve this objective. Trained and qualified human resources, who possess the sophisticated know-how that will determine where resources should be deployed immediately in the universities' marketing plans, are needed within the team. Because of the crucial nature of making such a decision, hiring professionals in the department should not be based on 'who knows you'(i.e. favouritism), but by considering the extent of compelling performances of staff who are able to deliver on the set objective of the department. Besides, a comprehensive higher education marketing policy with their mandatory implementation strategies or techniques put in place that will modify and bring more significant change into the current operations, might not be working as expected to be on par with other successful higher education institutions around the world.

Communicating and running recruitment team effectively

Marketing managers of higher education institutions (HEIs) may learn different communication practices ranging from traditional advertising and outdoor sponsorship to open-day events to in-school presentations, or career orientation to recruitment via alumni to database marketing (Beneke, 2011). Prior research has shown that promotional information and marketing are important factors affecting students' choice of private higher education institutions (Garwe, 2016). New media have to be blended with traditional media, in a mutually reinforcing way, to recruit and retain students. Managers need to have a well thought-out digital communication strategy to engage with and build relationships amongst students and alumni, and ultimately encourage student and alumni engagement in forms of co-creation, referral, and positive word of mouth. An important task for managers is to develop a 'selling', rather than 'information provider' mind-set for their recruitment force. Recruitment staff need to be trained with consultative selling skills to unravel the needs of the students and close the 'deal' (Farinloye et al., 2020).

Facilitating societal changes with insights from student (market) evaluation

Similarly, conducting regular surveys at the close of every fiscal period, to evaluate the system is an essential aspect of running HEIs in Africa. Data from these surveys and their professional interpretations might assist authorities to make informed decisions as to which aspects of the marketing policies and implementation are working for the betterment of the higher education sector. Perhaps artificial intelligence and learning analytics can play a prominent role in this data aggregation and processing for better understanding of the students' needs (Dwivedi et al., 2019).

Building the brand

Branding of an African university is still an evolving area of literature. Wayne et al. (forthcoming) analysed brand identities of the top 200 universities in Africa and concluded that there is still a lack of understanding with regards to the creative design of brand identities by African universities, suggesting that the thought process behind the brand identities are questionable. Likewise, Farinloye et al. (forthcoming) presented a typology of Africa universities, providing a strategic marketing and brand implication on brand identities of universities. Vasudeva and Mogaji (forthcoming) also analysed the mission and vision statement of top African universities, highlighting how African universities are making efforts towards world domination. These studies recognise the need for universities to take ownership of the brands. With the marketing team in place, it is essential to make effort in building the brands.

The task of building brand applies to both established universities which need to build their existing brands, and also new universities with new brands that need to be developed. Building brand is always mistaken with having a fancy logo. It is not the logo that makes a brand, but the other way round. Once the offerings satisfy the needs of the consumers, they will seek it out in order to be sure that they are purchasing the same good and services, and they will look out for any clue like a symbol (in this case the logo) that differentiates it from the others. So, before investing heavily in the design of a logo, one needs to ask questions: what am I offering? What attributes does my product have that are different from the rest in the industry? How can I make these attributes known to my target audience? How can all these be displayed (or captured) in my logo? Hence, strong brands are identified by their logos because of the offerings the brands make. While a new university needs to establish its presence in the industry, having a logo that displays its uniqueness is paramount. Whereas it is also true that new institutions or products need beautiful colours, catchy words, and

promises to attract prospective and curious customers. The success of this depends on keeping up to the promise explicitly or implicitly communicated through the logo.

The brand name

This is very important, especially for a new university. What should be the name of the university? The university needs to select the right name that will appeal to their market bases and all stakeholders. The availability of the name as a website domain name and social media profile names should also be considered.

The brand philosophy

This is crucial in developing the university's brand. The study by Vasudeva and Mogaji (2019) presents an analysis of the mission and vision statement of top African universities. It was suggested that the university must have a mission and vision, made publicly available for all stakeholders to know what the university is set to achieve. The frequency at which it is changed and modified is also essential; perhaps every five to ten years, provided the objectives are being achieved. This must align with the strategic direction of the university. This is considered a significant purpose of marketing, which has been shown as the critical success factor for winning companies (Kotler, 2015). For example, IBM's higher purpose is to 'build smarter planet'. Like winning companies, universities need to build their core values so that they can occupy the minds, hearts, and spirits (Kotler et al., 2010) of their students; and purpose marketing is probably concerned with the broadest boundary set in the vision and mission in the organisational strategy. That boundary is the limits within which marketing managers can take actions. Thus, university leaders need to embrace sustainability and corporate social responsibility as their guiding principles in order to build reputation for the institution.

The brand identity

The brand identity, which includes the logo and graphic elements of the university must be well thought of. The logo is considered a signpost or global positioning system (GPS) metaphor. Efforts should be made towards having a professional touch and conveying values of the university. The integration of the logo across different touchpoints should also be considered. A logo is not just an emblem to be associated with an institution or product. It is more than that. That is why we use the metaphor 'signpost versus GPS' to show the importance of creating a successful logo. A logo remains only a 'signpost' until the product's attributes transform it into GPS. A signpost will appeal to only those trying to locate where it is pointing them to or passing by that way. A signpost is, therefore, limited geographically.

On the other hand, GPS will locate whatever position as long as you give it the right coordinates (quality attributes), and hence it has unlimited potential, in terms of space and time. Therefore, the big question for any university trying to create its unique brand should be: how can we ensure that our logo is immutable and interminable? Answering that question requires considering three key elements: a) a logo should be able to transcend boundaries of time and space, b) a logo should be able to exhibit specificity of the brand's uniqueness at the same time capturing diverse demographics of the target audience, and c) a logo should be able to display hope by pointing to the future. We will discuss the three elements below.

Transcending time and space

Building a strong brand requires utilising all the available and relevant tools to harness both space and time. The best vehicle to achieving that is investing in technology. Therefore, a successful logo that defies geographical or time zone barriers must be created and conserved through technology. Also, it should be easily accessed by whomever, from wherever, and at whatever time it is sought after. The technology used to design and display the logo should be sophisticated enough to appeal to the young generation, at the same time user-friendly (accessibility, affordability and usability) to all that would desire to identify with it. Finally, a good logo needs to position its brand in such a way that it gains global recognition without losing its local relevance, mission, and vision.

Specificity and diversity

A logo should be able to exhibit distinctive qualities of the brand's uniqueness at the same time capturing varied demographics of the target audience. For example, a university logo ought to create an impression in the customer's mind of specific attributes like success, excellence, mastery, and knowledge, amongst others. It should be appealing to all categories of the populace – rich and poor, young and old, local and international. All the different stakeholders should be taken into consideration while designing a logo. The motto should also be in agreement with the emblem. Take for example an East African private university whose emblem is a giraffe reaching out to the skies. Even in silence, the motto screams out – *the sky is the limit*. Thus, the only space that specificity communicates with diversity in harmony is the logo.

The future in perspective

Building a recognisable brand takes a lot of effort and time. It is therefore imperative that a logo not only takes into consideration the complexities of building a great brand, but also one that will live on through generations. For example, referring to the previous example of the East African private university whose emblem is a giraffe, the logo shows a *greater goal and farther vision*. A good logo should be able to attract customers today because of displaying the best that lies ahead. No one wants to associate with a brand whose future is not clear.

Strategic co-branding

African universities would benefit tremendously from strategical co-branding with academic and non-academic institutions. The co-branding must be done strategically and carefully to ensure the brand image transferability between the African university and the co-branding entity. Both brands' core values, though not necessarily to be similar, need to complement each other to ensure a synergetic effect that leverages the unique proposition of each of the two brands. In other words, the co-branded African university needs to be able to achieve specific goals related to its unique positioning, while it also provides the co-branded entity with beneficial associations, transformations, reach, etc. The co-branding efforts should not be limited to academic endeavours, such as offering educational opportunities (e.g. workshops, trainings, seminars, degrees), rather African universities' co-branding activities should extended to shared sponsorships for community and sport events, fundraising events, supporting arts and music, and other opportunities that deem in line with the university brand proposition. Co-branding initiatives should also be diversified to include local and global, academic and non-academic institutions, and emerge with sustainable and impactful support to the national identity of the university hosting country, and the leading global issues related to the welfare of the people and the protection of the environment.

Integrating the brand

African universities must make an effort to integrate their marketing communications to reach prospective students and other stakeholders. There should be a narrative that appeals to everyone involved in the university. It is one thing to create a strong brand and another thing to make your brand known. Developing a communication system that drives the brand is multidimensional: 1) the leader must involve all the stakeholders in understanding and believing in the vision, 2) the internal customer (employees) must be given priority before emphasising the external customer, 3) channels of communication must be horizontal

regardless of the hierarchical structure, 4) and one should be able to identify your particular niche and plugin. The last dimension is very critical because, in this technology-driven age, it is easy to copy and paste without much thinking and creativity. While technology has fuelled less creativity than we are made to believe, it has also enabled information access. As customers get informed, their demands become more sophisticated, which calls for more creativity and innovation. It even gets more complicated when it concerns universities where the functions are meant to be similar (research, teach, and community). So, how does a university stand out amidst the sameness?

We use another East African private university which gave a pseudonym – Pathfinder University, which decided to identify its niche in sports and games. Its name became synonymous with university games long before its graduates could be celebrated in the workplace. Consequently, the nation went on to win sports' medals on the international scene because of the products of this university. Pathfinder University, however, started with one strategy of attracting bright sports students with studentships (attracting bright student was deliberate), so that not only would they excel in sports but also their academics. Another deliberate effort was maintaining discipline of both academic staff and students and standard of scholarship.

Consequently, the university became a household name – attracting students, guardians, sports' fans, and industry. When other private universities were beginning to integrate sports into their programmes, Pathfinder had already spread its wings into another sport from Asia. Not only did it engage seriously with the game, but was also given the franchise of manufacturing the tools for this game, and the African president for the game is an employee of Pathfinder University. Therefore, it is essential that universities identify or create particular areas that are uniquely their own, and through a well-developed marketing system that showcases that uniqueness.

The core messages should be amplified

Based on the comprehensive higher education marketing policies developed by these universities, the key message of the universities should be identified and effectively broadcasted. What are those things that make the university unique? A social media strategy should also be a part of the marketing strategy that is being developed. What is the goal and objective of the social media strategy? To engage with students and share updates about the university? How many social media profiles is the university going to manage? What are the achievable goals that have been set? The number of followers or engagement rate? Who are

those responsible for updating and managing social media? What is the content creating strategies in place?

Marketing communication strategies

As a means of integrating the brands, the website design and layout are also outstanding. Managers should be aware that different stakeholders (staff, students, parents, prospective staff, and funders) are accessing the website for information, and relevant information should be made available (Mogaji, 2016b; Olaleye et al., 2018). The layout and user interface should be appealing and inviting. Often the university's ICT team might be responsible for the website. If needs be, professional website developers can be employed to develop a website that can be managed by the university's marketing team. This could be building on a content management system that allows flexibility in updating the websites.

While printed prospectuses may be going out of fashion, universities can provide an online prospectus for prospective students. This can be made available as PDF on the university's website. This allows the university to tell their story in their way and engage with prospective students. Prospectus can be used to share insight into the university, share testimonies from current students and alumni, and also provide detailed information about the courses, to complement information on the website. Students can download this prospectus and engage with it in their own time. It should be noted that the prospectus should be colourful, with images and emotionally appealing messages.

Open Days as well could be used as an opportunity to explore the university, especially for those who have never visited the university before, they can be invited to have a tour of the university and see the facilities. It is important to note that the best foot should be put forward. Those who have the facilities, especially private universities, are encouraged to have open days and invite prospective students and parents. Tasters' Days as well can be organised to give students experience of what teaching is like in a university. This further primes the name of the university to the attention of prospective students and their parents.

For those who may not have been able to come in contact with the university brand, getting involved with school outer to feeder colleges can be an essential way to integrate the university's brand. This involves visiting secondary schools within the area, especially private universities (as the public universities are oversubscribed already). Universities should go into these schools, give lectures, present what the university is like, and create a form of association and integrate the brand. The perception of students about the university is

essential as choice decision linked to perceptions which are formed at a young age (Foskett et al., 2008). It is all about catching them young and making them stay with the university.

Focus on brand outreach

The visibility of the university brand among the regional and international community of scholars, potential students, and other stakeholders (businesses, NGOs, governmental institutions, etc.) is key to the global recognition of the university's brand. African universities should dedicate budgetary amounts and effort to conduct effective and strategic outreach that supports and enhances their brand propositions. The university's outreach should focus on the core brand values and the unique proposition of the specific university brand. For instance, student projects with local institutions, faculty consulting services, and university-offered workshops and training to the public, along with other outreach initiatives, need to strategically integrate the university's unique brand proposition, rather than only focusing on the recipient need. Brand outreach should also be conducted in ways that transform the perceptions about the university's brand, and portray the brand as an integral part of both the local and global community.

Additionally, the outreach should include all identified stakeholders in a meaningful way to increase engagement and ultimately build a brand community that serves the university brand in its future endeavours. Brand outreach should aim at achieving a high level of engagement with all stakeholders. This way, the outreach could create brand ambassadors that reciprocally advocate and benefit the university's brand in their circles of influence.

Build the brand around a unique concept

In many cases, African universities focus on what they lack instead of what makes them unique. For instance, due to the geographic location and its accompanying challenges (e.g. political systems, lack of economic recourses, etc.), the international academic community may perceive African universities as less developed. To cope with negative perceptions, the university's brand may revolve around the concept of how this admittedly challenging conditions create a set unique opportunity for students to learn and succeed in such a challenging environment, a skill that is transferable, and shall increase students' opportunities of success in a variety of working conditions in Africa and beyond. In other words, rather than focusing on arguing against the negative stigmas, university brands can use the stigmas to their advantage and flip the coin to show the advantageous side of what is perceived as a disadvantage.

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Create consistent brand synergies

Once the brand proposition is set, administrators at African universities would need to ensure consistency amongst the various offerings to support a unified brand image. Faculty research, curricula, public events, community engagements, and other strategic initiatives and activities, need to resonate with the brand proposition and ensure the creation of a synergetic effect that further supports the brand development. For instance, if a university found its competitive advantage in operating under tight economic conditions, then dealing with poverty should be an integrated element in faculty research, curricula of all programmes, community outreach initiatives, etc. This way, the brand will avoid possible dilution, and the odds of global recognition will be enhanced.

Developing the brand

Developing the university's brand requires building and communicating a unique proposition that ensures the sustainability of the brand identity and its implication of targeted outcomes (e.g. increasing enrolment, attracting high quality and diverse students, securing funds, etc.). African universities face some unique challenges related to building global recognition, meeting international accreditation standards, widening the students' experiences, and attracting grants. Many of these challenges are related to the unfavourable stigma that is associated with Africa and the preconceived notion that African universities lack a competitive proposition when compared with non-African universities.

Global recognition through research

No doubt, African universities are struggling to compete with universities across the world (Kiraka et al., 2020). According to the 2019 QS World University Rankings, there were only 17 universities from 4 African countries (out of 54) presented on the list. These are South Africa (9), Egypt (6), Kenya (1), and Morocco (1). Even Nigeria, which is the largest by population and education system, was not represented. The best university in Africa, according to the 2019 QS World University Rankings, is the University of Cape Town. Though with a very high research output, the university's QS Global World Ranking is at Number 198. While recognising the challenges of African universities, it is essential to make an effort towards building more global recognition. Not just universities from South Africa or Egypt doing great things, but other universities from other parts of the continent. It is crucial to have more representatives on the global scene (Kiraka et al., 2020). In that regard, it is essential to recognise the leap progress made by Covenant University, a private Pentecostal Christian university, which has been operating with official status since 2002 in Ota, Nigeria.

The Nigerian Universities Commission named it the best private university in Nigeria in its 2018 rankings, and it is ranked 601–800th in the Time Higher Education (THE) 2019 World University Rankings. The university has made progress in ranking based on the research activities, even though it was founded in 2002.

Global recognition through investment in resources

This highlight challenges for university managers to invest more resources in building the global recognition of an African university, primarily through a research grant, scholarship and support for publications. Efforts should be made in improving facilities and engage student experiences as an initiative to build the university brands and compete on a global scale. Traditional classrooms need to be replaced by integrated learning and web-enhanced hybrid classrooms. Higher education institutions need to invest in technology to ultimately maximise student educational and student life experience. African universities may partner with international institutions for franchising courses/programmes. The institutions may also partner with the industry to conduct field trips/field study as well as develop real-world assessments.

Higher education institutions need to monitor student satisfaction constantly, and perceptions of quality of teaching and learning, bridging the gap between students' perceived importance and experience, and ensure overt use of students' feedback (de Jager & Gbadamosi, 2013). While it is not possible to address all sentiments, the brand must meet international standards – in terms of general environment (safe and secure), facilities (use of up-to-date technology), skilled workforce who wholly embrace the institution's vision, active collaboration (network) profile, good governance, and community relationships (CSR).

African programs and initiatives

Also, African universities can better market themselves to promote African programmes/initiatives/activities globally in order to attract an international audience and competition. Why would an English/American student come to Africa to study English language, for example? However, these students can come to Africa to study Tropical Medicine, Yoruba language or Swahili, or any dominant African language that has been promoted globally, given the continent's population of about 1.2 billion, according to the United Nations (n.d.). Indeed, students come to a Nigerian university at Ibadan from the US to study Yoruba language as exchange students (Clement, 2013). African universities need to better develop their institutes of African Studies, History, Business, and probably Science, and Medical School, to develop workable African solutions to the challenges facing the

continent, which the solutions proffered by the World Bank/IMF and other global bodies have not been able to address in order to compete globally with their counterparts from the developed world.

International partnership

The best of Africa's universities, probably those in the top 500 in the world, can also form a consortium to develop campuses in other emerging markets of the world, such as China and India in Asia, Mexico in North America, Turkey in Europe, and Brazil in South America. This is a first step of registering their international presence with off-shore campuses. In addition to attracting international students from these countries, some developed countries, and several developing countries to learn about demonstrated and workable homegrown solutions from Africa to the global challenges confronting humankind today.

Conclusion

While recognising the multifaceted challenges of higher education in Africa, this chapter has focused on its marketing communication and branding strategies for higher education. The study brings together the collective insights from academic researchers and practitioners of marketing higher education across the continents, to recommend evidence-based and practically proven practices for African universities' marketing managers and leaders. At the core of marketing, African higher education institutions have to ensure a marketing orientation encapsulating their business strategies and implementation. This section highlights the role and expectations for marketing managers of African higher education institutions. Particularly, marketing managers of African universities have to ask themselves how well they are (1) on having market-based, relationship-oriented strategy and well-organised marketing structure; (2) on keeping with and utilising technological changes effectively; (3) on using market research to understand students' motivations and their contemporary 'consumer' journey; (4) on innovating their offerings successfully; (5) on delivering services – not just teaching, and managing student learning experiences through multiple and omnichannel; (6) on managing mass communications and personal selling efforts effectively; and (7) on monitoring student evaluation and facilitating changes for higher purpose marketing.

The rest of the chapter delves into actionable ideas for higher education branding for African universities. The section 'building the brand' sets out the need to understand what a higher education brand is – not just a name or logo as they are part of the brand identity, then moves

further to discuss considerations for setting brand spirit (brand philosophy), and brand tangibles (brand identity), as well as brand connections (brand co-branding). The section 'integrating the brand' presents practical thoughts on critical aspects of marketing communications for higher education. Rather than discussing every element like in any marketing communications textbook, the section focuses on the essential tips for managers – amplification of core messages, implementation of integrated marketing communications campaign around a unique concept, and ensuring brand outreach and synergies of marketing efforts. The last set of recommendations is concerned with managing and developing the higher education brand. This focuses on establishing a global stance, including building global recognition and international partnerships. These actions may help African universities not only to enhance their reputation through leveraging the secondary sources of brand equity, but also allow them to transform their offerings and marketing communications, and ultimately improve their competitive advantages in the global higher education market

In the era of globalisation, African universities need to take responsibility for their brand as they compete for prospective students. It must be acknowledged that these recommendations are based on empirical findings in the extant higher education marketing literature and observations of current practices in the industry. The chapter also recognises that there will be variations across different universities and different countries.

Notwithstanding, it offers insights that can be applied as deemed fit. The action plans may not necessarily be transferable and generalised across universities in Africa. The chapter is aimed at providing a toolkit for African higher education marketing managers. Just as marketing is creative and intuitive, managers have the discretion to the tool provided as deemed fit to their markets and circumstances.

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