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Chapter 13

Marketing mix in a heterogenous Higher Education Market: A Case of Africa

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The chapter recognises that the higher education market in Africa is heterogeneous with different players across different countries on the continent. There are different expectations and marketing challenges, and with that understanding, this chapter does not provide a generalizable insight but is positioned as a theoretical paper which provides a foundation for future studies into understanding the higher education market in Africa. Recognising the increasingly important role that marketing is playing in student recruitment and brand awareness, this chapter provides a holistic understanding of the higher education market in Africa from a marketing perspective using the 7Ps of marketing, identifies key challenges within the market which presents strategic marketing implications and provides recommendation for managers and policymakers, which addresses the raised strategic marketing implications

Keywords: African, higher education market, marketing mix, branding, position, competition

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1.   Introduction

Universities in Africa are continually advancing towards providing a better quality education that is meant to address the ills of the continent. The real job of African universities is to fulfil the student need in the nation and assume an essential role in the improvement of society as a whole. Inside Africa, both state and open organisations are noted as key for the development of society and its procedure for a free economy. The advanced education given in the African universities symbolises national pride, sense of dignity, and independence (Gibbs et al., 2008).

As education becomes an essential factor for economic development in the 21st century (Saint, Hartnett, & Strassner, 2003), an instrument for national development and social change vital for the promotion of a progressive country (NERDC, 2013), challenges arise. African universities are struggling with meeting the needs of prospective students who crave for education, especially at the tertiary level (Adeleye, Ukpadi & Mogaji, 2019). Also, the government is struggling to meet financial commitments to sustain the universities. The facilities are depreciating, staff and student protest the inadequate facilities, and yet many more still need to be educated. This has also opened the market for private universities and international branch campuses to meet these growing demands, thus challenging the position of the flagship government universities.

Teferra (2017) edited an in-depth, comprehensive analysis of flagship universities in Africa which includes the largest, most selective, and most prestigious universities on the continent. The edited book explored higher education in Africa from the points of view of curriculum development, education management, and student experience or access to education. This chapter, however, focuses on the marketing implications of the unique challenges of African universities without particularly focusing on a specific university. The chapter recognises that the higher education market in Africa is heterogeneous with different players across different countries on the continent. There are different expectations and marketing challenges, and with that understanding, this chapter does not provide a generalizable insight but is positioned as a theoretical paper which provides a foundation for future studies into understanding the higher education market in Africa.

Recognising the increasingly important role that marketing is playing in student recruitment and brand awareness, this chapter has explicitly three aims:

   a)   To provide a holistic understanding of the higher education market in Africa from a marketing perspective using the 7Ps of marketing.
   b)   To identify key challenges within the market which presents strategic marketing implications.
   c)   To provide recommendation for managers and policymakers, which addresses the raised strategic marketing implications.

Before looking into these issues, this chapter first discusses the growth of university education in this continent as a way of contextualising the debate.

2.   Context of University Education on the African continent

Higher Education in Africa is unique. It underwent different metamorphosis following the liberation of most of the African countries, which were formerly colonised by some European countries, and the civil wars that ensued within some countries after their attainment of independence. The origin of universities in Africa is based on the colonisers of each country. Universities started as a resemblance and status of universities of the coloniser. This replication marked the differences in the growth of university education across regions in Africa and gave birth to some of the peculiarities of the universities of the African continent. After the attainment of independence, university education increased in most African countries due to the need to open doors to the majority of the previously disadvantaged people. A case in point is that of South Africa – a country in Sub-Saharan Africa. Its higher education (HE) sector has a legacy of colonialism and unique discriminatory apartheid education system to the effect that pre-1994 the remnants were visible through the division between universities marked by class, race, gender, and ethnicity – "…apartheid institutionalised inequities which translated into a 'system' of institutions characterised by educational, financial, material and geographical advantage and disadvantage" (Badat, 2010, p. 10). However, post-1994 dispensation, the new government has since transformed it from an elite system to becoming a mass-based system (Soudien, 2016). South Africa alone has a total of 26 public universities (Council on Higher Education (CHE), 2016a). According to existing literature, this makes the South African HE system not unique, but the most diverse and differentiated on the African continent (Cloete, 2016, p. 1), owing to its effort to try and redress and transform its historical past.

This chapter recognises Africa as a place offering higher education as a service within a physical environment and requires human resources. The promotion of higher education and the price of acquiring education are considered as part of the 7Ps. This study offers both theoretical and managerial implications for academic researchers and university managers. The study follows the research agenda for higher education marketing in Africa and likewise offering managers insight with regards to their marketing strategies and communication with their stakeholders. The chapter continues with the 7Ps and concludes with a theoretical and managerial contribution.

2.   The Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is an essential tool that adds to the success of products or services in the market. It has been used by many businesses for over decades and discusses many aspects of the product or service. Recently, it has been seen that the present advertising blend including the 4Ps, is never again adequate with regards to showcasing in the forever evolving marketplace. In the higher education marketing context, the marketing mix is the set of 'controllable' marketing tools that an institution uses to produce the response it wants from its various target markets. It consists of everything that the university can do to influence the demand for the services that it offers (Ivy, 2008, p. 289). The 4Ps marketing mix has often been considered too product-centred as it often does not consider the unique conditions that regularly

apply when promoting services. This has called for more Ps to be added to the recipe, to satisfy the more extensive need for service marketing (Sawyarr, 2004b).

For the holistic overview of the higher education market in Africa, this chapter adopts the 7Ps approach: place, product, price, processes, physical facilities, people and promotion. It is essential to note that while 'tertiary education' refers to the sector that covers all post-secondary education (Acquah & Budu, 2017), 'higher education' in the context of this chapter denotes universities, which is a sector of the tertiary institutions that offers degree level program, both at the undergraduate and postgraduate level. The following subsection explores the product as the education to be acquired in these institutions which are situated in Africa (referring to the place aspect of the 7Ps). The people responsible for the effective delivery of the product, the process of delivery and the physical environment where it is being delivered, are discussed in details.

2.1. Africa as a Place

Africa is a continent with different countries; each country has different education markets. Srikatanyoo & Gnoth (2002) recognises country image effects on international tertiary education, as education services were found to be different within different countries. Due to the prestige image of individual countries in higher education, students tend to believe that higher education offered in these countries is of high quality (Bourke, 2000). For instance, South Africa now has many and far more developed universities in the southern region of Africa comparable to some countries in the north of Africa. After 2001, institutional restructuring through mergers and incorporations created 'a new differentiated and diverse landscape' for South African higher education to cater to its diverse community and the world at large. This was augmented by the "negotiation of academic offerings", in the form of which institutions are limited to particular approved different levels of university qualifications and programmes. To date, there are eight comprehensive universities, eleven traditional universities, one health science university, six universities of technology - totalling 26 public HE institutions (CHE, 2016a). The result was the creation of new identities for the universities so that they are in sync with and "more suited to the needs of a developing democracy" (Badat, 2010, p. 10-11). This, coupled with political stability, has made South Africa one of the leading regional, continental and global destinations of choice (Lee and Schoole, 2015) especially for students from other African countries. For example, in 2013, South African public HE had a total of 73,859 international students, which constituted 5.5 per cent of its total enrolment, with

a majority of 74.3 per cent coming from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Lee and Schoole, 2015; Mohamedbhai, 2018).

Besides, parts of North Africa also have far more developed institutions, making them more attractive places to study. Egypt has long been considered the "cradle of civilisation". Ancient Egypt was one of the first nations to pioneer modern examples of building, politics, agriculture and writing (THE, 2019). Nineteen of their universities are represented in the Best Universities in the world ranking, and 33 of the Top 200 Universities on the 2019 African University Ranking were from Egypt (UniRank, 2019). While South Africa and Egypt may have a much more developed education system, Nigeria has the most extensive education system in Africa with 174 approved universities - comprises of 43 federal universities, 52 state universities, and 79 private universities (Farinloye et al.,2020).

The continent represents the environment in which the service will be produced and consumed. Since the education service is a complex jointly produced one with a broad group of services, the physical environment of the country is essential. The country constitutes an essential element in the decision-making process as the students' perception about the destination city will influence the decision process as well as the country image (María Cubillo, Sánchez, & Cerviño, 2006).

The decision of acquiring a product or a service can be positively influenced by the country's image, and this is an essential feature in differentiating a product or service (María Cubillo, Sánchez, & Cerviño, 2006), and with regards to higher education, prospective students tend to choose first the country and then the institution (Bourke, 2000; Srikatanyoo and Gnoth, 2002). The perception of a country has been found to influence the selection decision of students for international students (María Cubillo, Sánchez, & Cerviño, 2006; Srikatanyoo & Gnoth, 2002).

There are many universities in Africa, with different entry requirements and different challenges. However, their quality and reputation is often a concern for debate. The oldest existing and continually operating educational institution in the world is in Africa such as the University of Karueein, founded in 859 AD in Fez, Morocco (GWR, 2019; UNESCO, 2019). Universities in Africa were initially created by the colonists and were exclusively staffed by expatriates who introduced their language as a medium of instruction and influenced the education system and philosophy (Ayalew, 2017; Acquah & Budu, 2017). This setup, as we alluded to in the preceding sections of this chapter, defined the identity and image of each university.

African countries have, however, taken responsibility for the education of their citizen, as mentioned earlier, creating their universities and allowing private investment in the education market with private universities. Times Higher Education World University Rankings available at THE (2018) has 47 universities. These universities were across nine different countries.

Egypt has the highest number with 19 Universities, while Ghana, Kenya and Uganda have one each. These are the best universities in the continent according to that league table. These rankings are widely known and generally accepted as the benchmarks for numerous comparisons of schools and universities. According to the ranking, the University of Cape Town situated in South Africa was ranked amongst the leading 200 universities of the world and is considered as one of the top universities in Africa. Stellenbosch University, University of Witwatersrand, University of KwaZulu-Natal and Makerere University, are considered as the best universities in Africa as well. While African countries have their challenges, there are opportunities for growth and development which can be effectively marketed.

2.2. Education as a Product

Despite having the oldest university in the world, the quality of education in Africa is often questioned. The universities are offering education which is often considered not to be the standard in Europe and North America. The demand for higher education far outstrips supply in Africa's long-neglected public universities (Spaull, 2015). However, there are efforts from the private sectors and partnerships with universities in developed countries to improve the quality and augment the supply of education being offered in Africa. With the public universities run-down, private ones have emerged to fill the void.

Private Universities

The private sector aims to provide more opportunities for higher education across the continent. They have increased chances of collaboration with international partners in higher education. This has helped in enabling the students to acquire knowledge that enhances their knowledge base. In Nigeria, the number of private universities has exceeded government universities. In South Africa, there were 124 registered private HEIs by 2015 (Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), 2017, p. 2), and there are plans to accommodate more than half a million students in private universities to create more opportunities. This will significantly raise the participation rate of higher learning in the continent and also open avenues for more competition to improve students experience and research activities.

International Branch campuses

In addition to the private sector founding universities, international branch campuses are being opened in Africa to attract students from across the continent and meet the growing demands for quality higher education. These international branch campuses are an entity that is owned, at least in part, by a foreign higher education provider - operated in the name of the foreign education provider - and provide an entire academic program, substantially on-site, leading to a degree awarded by the foreign education provider (Cbert, 2019). Webster University is an American university based in St. Louis, Missouri with international campuses in Ghana (Webster, 2019). In 2009, Middlesex University in the United Kingdom opened a second overseas campus in Mauritius, providing world-class teaching to around 1,000 students every day (Middlesex, 2019). Toulouse Business School based in France has a campus in Casablanca, Morocco (TBS, 2019). Business School Netherlands has international branch campuses in Algeria, Ghana and Egypt (BSN, 2019). Stenden South Africa is an international branch

campus of Stenden University of Applied Sciences, a state-funded professional university in the north of the Netherlands (Stenden, 2019). Paris-Dauphine University opened its international campuses in Tunis, intending to become a regional centre of excellence (Dauphine, 2019). Often students attending these international branch campuses are guaranteed that the programs offered at the campuses are identical to programs offered at the home country and they have the option to study abroad and transfer to any of host university campuses. As Universities outside the continent are opening international branch campuses, in like manners, there is a growing possibility of universities within the continent, opening campuses in other countries with the aim of staff and student exchange, and capacity building.

Challenges of International Branch campuses

While the advantages of having an established name, with history and a sound infrastructure back home, as well as high-calibre faculty, hardly needs to be spelt out. Branch campuses have often been viewed warily, as this is not always a guaranteed success for the universities (Iqbal, 2019) since many universities have closed their campus less than five years after opening. The University of Wolverhampton closed its Mauritius campus, less than four years after it opened in March 2012 (Morgan, 2015). Aberystwyth University overseas campus on the island of Mauritius will no longer enrol further intakes of students at the branch campus from March 2018. It was built to accommodate 2,000 students, but just 106 enrolled in its second year and making a loss of £1 million (BBC, 2017). Bond South Africa and De Montfort University, in South Africa, closed in 2004. Australia's biggest university, Monash, pulled out of South Africa after 18 years. Listed education group Advtech paid around R340 million and rebranded IIE MSA (The Independent Institute of Education Monash South Africa) (de Wet, 2018). Africa is not as famous in this regard, as more lucrative East Asian or Middle Eastern locations (Iqbal, 2019). The curriculum is key.

Curriculum Development

There is often the debate about the curriculum of higher education in Africa, especially with regards to the suitability of the graduates to match the skills and level of knowledge demanded in the workplace. In addition, there has been a call to decolonise the curriculum (Luckett, 2016), to recognise the impact of the local context in which the programme resides, while developing curriculum (Case, Fraser, Kumar, & Itika, 2016) and to develop degree programmes that are relevant to the workplace (Mogaji, 2019). This calls for a responsive curriculum to ensure the successful delivery of quality education. Fomunyam & Teferra (2017) argued that the responsive curriculum, to present-day demands, is a function of who shapes the discussion and what their vision for such a curriculum is. They identified four aspects of a responsive curriculum which contributes to improved higher education. Economic responsiveness goes beyond satisfying the job market at present but creating sustainable solutions to future challenges as well as the growth of the economy. Cultural responsiveness recognises the diversity that exists in the classroom, providing access and respecting the cultural dissonance in the classroom. Disciplinary responsiveness is the ability of the curriculum to provide and produce new knowledge through research and innovation, and lastly, pedagogical responsiveness recognises the ability to respond to the needs of the student. This recognises

the need for co-creation of an inclusive, responsive, research-led and industry-ready curriculum which is effectively communicated to prospective students and other stakeholders. Thus, a call for a curriculum that responds to the realities, aspirations and developmental needs of the students, the society and the economy at large. *However, education becomes a product through appropriate processes.*

2.3. The Process of Education

Higher Education is instrumental in fostering growth. It remains the bedrock of development, reducing poverty and boosting shared prosperity and should, therefore, be rigorously pursued. It benefits not just the individual, but the entire educational system (World Bank, 2017). However, the demand for higher education far outstrips supply in Africa's long-neglected public universities, as these universities have wrestled with the pressure to expand capacity without sacrificing quality, and not always successful as their efforts are not adequate (Fischer, 2019; Spaull, 2015). In some instances, some degrees are being offered online to off-set supply constraints.

Online Universities

There is also a growing demand for online classes as the rate of internet penetration improves on the continent. The impact of technology on education cannot be overemphasised. While it is being used in the classroom, it is also widening participation, driving down the cost of education, and providing alternative access for prospective students through online education. An example is UNICAF, who through its bespoke partnership model, is aiming to be the catalyst in online education in emerging markets such as sub-Saharan Africa (UNICAF, 2019). The University of Africa (UoA), a Zambian university, was established in 2008 as a private distance-learning university, registered and audited by the Zambian Higher Education Authority (UoA, 2019). Nineteen African governments signed the Charter establishing the African Virtual University (AVU) is an intergovernmental organisation with the mandate of significantly increasing access to quality higher education and training, through the innovative use of information communication technologies (AVU, 2019). 'Brick and mortar' universities are also coming on board to provide these online classes. The Ahmadu Bello University distance learning is offered by the Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. Kenyetta Digital School of Learning is an initiation of Kenyatta University in Kenya. These online universities offer certificate/diploma, undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in selected fields. Furthermore, this still this does not guarantee access to higher education to all who need it.

Access to Education

A key challenge facing African nations is access to quality education (Iqbal, 2019). Of all regions, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between the ages of about 6 and 11 are out of school, followed by one-third of youth

between the ages of about 12 and 14. According to UIS data, almost 60% of youth between the ages of about 15 and 17 are not in school (UNESCO, 2019). As the youth population continues to swell and graduation rates in elementary and secondary education have increased dramatically in recent years, especially in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa, there is an intense demand for expanded access to tertiary education. Such increases are necessitated by the change in the form of development, reconstruction, reform, and transformation in the higher education sector of previously colonised African countries. For example, in South African Higher Education context, Badat (2009) asserts that:

…under colonialism and apartheid, social, political and economic discrimination and inequalities of class, race and gender profoundly shaped South African higher education, establishing patterns of systemic inclusion and marginalisation of particular social classes and group (p. 457).

At the dawn of democracy, the South African universities were mandated by the ruling government to open doors to students from previously disadvantages communities. This saw large numbers of high school graduates seeking places in universities. Technical and vocational education and training can provide students with skills and knowledge relevant to the labour market. The challenge raised by a more significant number of qualified students looking to enrol in higher education is that they need somewhere to study (Iqbal, 2019). This massive growth is expected to continue, making higher education a critical public policy issue (World Bank, 2017). According to the World Bank, with data from UNESCO Institute for Statistics, the current tertiary enrolment rate across Africa stands at 9% – well below the global average of 38%. Of course, there is a great deal of variety across this vast continent. In Egypt, tertiary enrolment stands at 34%. In South Africa, the equivalent figure is 20%. In Nigeria, it is 10%. In Kenya, it is 12%, in Tanzania it is only 4% and in Malawi, 1% (World Bank, 2017). Another challenge emanating from this is the increase in enrolments and less student retention and graduation. What is achieved is increased formal access which entails mere physical entry into university and not much about epistemological access, which is about a student becoming a member of the academic community (Morrow, 2009). This puts a strain on universities as they grapple with funding intervention programmes aimed at curbing the high drop-out rates and increasing the graduation rates. These issues matter to prospective students as well as the language of instruction used in universities.

Linguistic mismatch

The linguistic mismatch is another challenge in the process of education. Students travel far and wide for education. However, in some regions of Tunisia and Algeria, students are taught in Arabic, while some books are written in French instead of English (which is a universal language). In the South of Africa, the constitution recognises 11 official languages. South Africa is a multi-lingual society that has some unique linguistic problems because of its policy of apartheid. On one level, there are tensions between its two official language groups, Afrikaans and English (Cultural Survival, 1982). As Afrikaans language policy has historically been used to exclude black learners in a country where racism remains deeply embedded 25 years after white-minority rule ended, (BBC, 2019). South Africa's Stellenbosch University in 2015, dropped Afrikaans as its official language in favour of English after protests (BBC, 2015). Likewise, in 2019, University of Pretoria also dropped Afrikaans as its official language

in favour of English (BBC, 2019). South Africa has become a hub for international students especially from the South African Development Community) SADC due to the use of the English language as a medium of instruction in most of its universities. However, physical space matters, too (see Ndofirepi, 2015) when marketing higher education.

2.4. Physical Environment for Learning

The large numbers of prospective students are putting a strain on publicly-funded institutions of higher learning, and many countries with limited resources are struggling to finance the growing needs of a larger student body without compromising the quality of their educational offerings (World Bank, 2017). The physical environment of learning presents an implication for marketing higher education. Price et al. (2003) recognises the impact of facilities on student choice of university, as prospective students are interested in university that has the facilities to improve their learning environment. The presence of these facilities offers a unique selling point for the university. The physical environment also includes the geographical location, the physical features and environment of the university, which can be visually appealing. Abu-Ghazzer (1999) suggested at least three distinct kinds of knowledge that constitute the perception of place or its meaning:

- *Knowledge about the place's objective attributes - their understanding of the purpose of the place,*
- *knowledge about the place's affective qualities – understanding of its emotional features and,*
- *Knowledge about the behaviours that occur in that place – understanding of actions, conduct and activities of the students (Abu-Ghazzeh (1999, p. 764).*

These different types of knowledge are significant in gaining an understanding of the choices students make about what to do and where to go.

Learning and teaching facilities

These are facilities that enhance the teaching and learning of the students, such as lecture theatres, laboratory and studios, library, access to books, and internet facilities. Accommodation can also be considered as a learning facility - availability of university-owned accommodation or self-catering accommodation with IT facilities in the bedroom. These facilities are essential to attract key research personnel and to provide environments for faster knowledge creation (Price, Matzdorf, Smith, & Agahi, 2003). The shortage of funds often denies public universities access to these facilities as they may be able to afford it, or it is not enough. It is not surprising there is overcrowding in the classroom and research is carried out with outdated equipment, and students are reading old books in the library (UNESCO, 2019).

Campus Facilities

These are the physical facilities present on the campus, often to enhance the experience of the students and staff (Ndofirepi, 2015). This includes the topography and presence of natural

elements like lake or river bodies, well-lawned and landscaped grass, architecture and campus layout, making the campus appealing (Moogan, Baron, & Bainbridge, 2001). The security, recreation facilities and social activities also contribute to the campus facilities. The universities have got control over how they present their campus facilities to prospective students, and they can showcase their layout and beautiful campus on the prospectus and invite prospective students to come and explore the facilities. They can flaunt their award-winning facilities in a perfect suburb location, perfect for student life, a place to inspire (Mogaji & Yoon, 2019). To improve student experiences on campus, the universities have to turn the inhospitable spaces into inclusive and safe spaces including the provision of university accommodation (Ndofirepi, 2015) which is much needed by international students coming to learn in a foreign land.

Campus Location

This is the geographical location of the university in the country. Universities often do not have control over the narrative about their location, especially if there is more than one university in the city. The perception about the country and the city can also influence student's perception of the university. The campus location also presents the challenge of proximity to home, for both home and international students, as they question how far they want to travel. However, it can still be used as an effective means of differentiation (Winter & Thompson-Whiteside, 2017). The economic situation, political situation and crime rate can also affect the decision of prospective students and staff thinking of attending or working in the university. This may however not be applicable for online universities.

2.5. The Human Resources

Higher education is a characterised by a greater amount of interpersonal contact. Recruitment of staff provides information for students seeking admission, while lecturers support them with teaching and even after graduation, they are still supported (Mogaji, 2019). Thus, the human resources required in delivering quality education as a product cannot be overemphasised. Recruiting and retaining the resources is, however, a growing concern, as universities are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain adequate teaching staff.

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Academic Staff

The quality of education ultimately depends on academic staff. This is why Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) calls explicitly on countries and donors to significantly increase their recruitment and training as the sub-Saharan African region is facing the most significant shortage of teachers (UNESCO, 2019b); and without urgent and sustained action, the situation will deteriorate in the face of rising demand for education, as the region has the fastest-growing school-age population (UNESCO, 2016). In Northern Africa, 0.7 million – 0.8 million teachers are needed to replace teachers who have left, and 0.2 million to fill new positions to achieve universal primary education by 2030. (UNESCO, 2016).

Professional services

Professional services are offered by non-academic staff who are responsible for the day to day running and administration of the university. They include the marketing communications team, which creates awareness about the university through the marketing of the courses. The facilities department make sure that the facilities on campus are well maintained. There is a quality control team as well to ensure good quality of the education that is being produced. Engaging with the stakeholders is very important, and the administrative team has got an important role to play in attracting students and staff to the university.

Brain Drain

What is problematic is the presence of brain drain, which disrupts higher education and innovation in Africa. With the inadequate facilities and poor working conditions, coupled with political unrest in some cases, talented individuals who should have contributed towards the developments of the universities, moved away to the well-funded, high-calibre institutions and research-intensive universities in the developed world. While the demands for higher education in Africa is increasing and entitlements are increasing, there is a shortage of competent staff to teach and support the students as the intellectual talent has looked elsewhere for opportunities – damaging, of course, the economies of Africa as well as academia (Iqbal, 2019).

2.6. Promoting Higher Education Institutions

Africa has some world-class universities. South Africa's universities, and other academic, and technical tertiary institutions are some of the best on the continent and in the world. According to the Times Higher Education(THE) World University Rankings 2019 placed four South African universities in the top 500 as follows: University of Cape Town (UCT) in position 156, University of Witwatersrand(Wits) in the 201-250 range, Stellenbosch University in the 301-350 range and University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) in the 401-500 range (THE 2019). Universities have something to offer which should be marketed. While previous studies have explored the choice-making process of students (Ivy, 2008; Maringe, 2006),marketing communications from the universities are seldom researched.

Perhaps as demands for higher education exceeds the supply, public universities may not be motivated to market themselves. With no form of advertisements or marketing communications, these universities are always bound to have students who are willing to attend. The lower fees compared to private universities, is often their unique selling point. Private universities, on the other hand, have a different challenge as they need to have the student numbers to remain financially sustainable. Likewise, international branch campuses must be strategic with the marketing of their education offerings. They are taking on board the brand values and identity of the home country as they reach out to prospective students in their host countries (Mogaji, 2019)

The integrated marketing communications strategies of reaching out and engaging with stakeholders are also considered necessary. This includes the design and content on websites, social media communication, Open Day visits, and publication of the prospectus. Olaleye et al. (2018) explored Nigerian Universities' websites and identified challenges with ease of use, processing speed, aesthetic design, and interactive responsiveness of the websites. Vasudeva & Mogaji (2019) analysed the mission statement of top 40 universities in Africa to identify how universities are communicating their values and objectives, while Farinloye & Mogaji (2019) identified the poor design of African universities brand identity after analysing top 200 African universities. This highlight the need for a strategic direction with regards to promoting higher education. This may not necessarily be about recruiting prospective students but improving the brand reputation of the university, engagement with stakeholders, and communicating the values of the university.

2.7. Price for being Educated

The main challenge, in this case, is being funding. Most of the public universities in Africa lack enough government funding. The deficits leave significant gaps for students to fill up in fees. In the long term, this hinders some students from accessing higher education altogether, regardless of them having capabilities, as universities have been increasing tuition fees to mitigate shortfalls and related vulnerabilities (Langa, Wangenge-Ouma, Jungblut, & Cloete, 2016).

Many countries that once offered free higher education such as China, Australia, Mozambique, Kenya and England, have since implemented cost-sharing policies and models of one form or another (Langa, Wangenge-Ouma, Jungblut, & Cloete, 2016). However, this has not been well received in some African countries. In South Africa, there was a student-led protest with the hashtag #FeesMustFall which began in October 2015, as students protest against increases in student fees, as well as to demand more government funding of universities. The government had to provide additional funds for the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) to fund bursaries for poor and missing middle students. Likewise, in Uganda in 2018, students of Makerere University, one of the oldest University in Africa, protested the university council's approved 41-91 % wholesome increment. The student leaders recommended a 15 % yearly tuition fee increment across all courses offered at the institution for the next five years (Observer, 2018).

The protest has not always been from the student perspective. In 2016, Makerere University was closed down for two months as there was strike action by academic staff demanding better pay and conditions. Likewise, strike action has become a recurring theme in the Nigerian tertiary educational system by the teaching staff in public universities, under the aegis of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (Ajewole, 2014). The union has often gone on strike to protest against the inadequate funding of the universities, which is known to impact job satisfaction and causes burnout for employees of a Nigerian university, and also delays the

completion of the student's program as academic calendars are disrupted (Ineme & Ineme, 2016).

This disruption in the academic calendar has been one of the unique selling points of private universities, at least in Nigeria. The universities take pride in the fact that the students will finish their degrees in the stipulated time. While the timing is appealing, the high fees, compared to the public universities, are often a challenge. While there is the argument that fees need to be affordable to allow for greater access to the poor, working-class and even middle-class families, private universities can argue for the need to cover their expenditure and be financially sustainable while still providing quality education, and therefore justifying the high fees.

Recognising the high cost of providing quality education is essential for policymakers to identify how to manage the funding gaps effectively. While students want to acquire the education, someone has to pay the price - either the government through funding of public universities which is often not enough or the parents funding of the private education at the private universities. This highlights a need for universities to provide financial supports and scholarships to students who need support. Endowments and funds from Alumni can also be provided. The government should also continually provide support through Student Financial Aid Scheme and student loans.

3. Recommendations

As earlier indicated, this chapter recognises the diversity in Africa as a continent, with different countries and different challenges with their higher education market. Notwithstanding, there is still a shared interest in the marketing of higher education, and this is what this chapter has aimed to address. This section presents recommendations for university managers and policymakers with regards to the heterogeneous nature of the market and focusing on its marketing strategies. Not solely for student recruitment, but to ensure brand reputation through engagement with stakeholders. A summary is presented in Table 1.

The Purpose of an African University

African universities need to identify their purpose, their mission and objective. A strategic direction must be put in place to critically appraise where they are and where they want to go. Due to the growing competence in international education, institutions need to maintain and develop a distinctive image to reach a competitive advantage (Foroudi & Nguyen, 2019). Universities must ensure that their values, objectives, mission and visions are well communicated and adhered to. This should include the development of a unique identity for the African university education system, which reflects the diversity of the continent.

Integrated Marketing Communications

It is recognised that marketing to attract prospective students may not be top of the agenda for some universities, as the demand for a place is greater than the supply. However, efforts should be made towards an integrated strategy to communicate the universities' brand values, research activities, and contribution to society. A brand identity should be modern and refreshed. Websites should be well designed and contain relevant information for prospective students and stakeholders. Social media content strategy should also be put in place to create a unique narrative about the African university effectively. These narratives can show the student experience, research output, and unique African natural settings.

Student Offerings

Universities will be expected to put measures in places to enhance the experience of the students. This can include offering internship, exchange program, scholarship and financial aids, accommodation, teaching and learning facilities. Public universities might be challenged with these facilities, but notwithstanding, they can build on their alumni network, seek endowments and grants to complement the government funding, as they make an effort to improve the facilities and enhance students' experience. Students and their parents should be invited and encouraged to visit and explore the facilities. The availability of these facilities and support should also be communicated to prospective students and other stakeholders, including staff who might want to relocate based on the knowledge about the facilities.

Human Resources

The mobilisation of faculty and students, through innovation and invention to promote problem-solving skills and innovations which are essential for enhancing economic growth and development, is necessary. This involves collaboration with other researchers from other universities, which will also improve the reputation of African universities. Reverse brain drain should be encouraged to deal, as this allows lecturers and researchers who have left the continent to the developed countries to come back and share the benefits of the skills and resources they have acquired while living and working abroad. This can be in the form of sabbatical for teaching, research grants and collaboration. The enumeration should also be comparative to where they are coming from. It will not be surprising if these talented and highly skilled individuals are reluctant to come back home if they are worse off financially.

Players within the Market

There are opportunities for other players in the higher education market, including community colleges, polytechnic institutions, and online institutions—to enter the field and compete for resources which will give students more options while generating healthy competition between providers (World Bank, 2017). The quality, however, should not be compromised. There are recommendations that small institutions of higher learning should merge as such merging will enable the institution to have a large pull of resources and facilities to help students become more productive and meet the skills needed for the labour market. Since larger institutions of

higher learning have more capabilities of serving each student, merging will help students afford the education hence reducing the issue of inequity in higher learning. With many international branch campuses closing down, it is paramount for policymakers to explore what is causing these challenges and see how best to support these universities.

Collaboration

African universities should be responsive to the various development as they are laden with the responsibility of revitalising the continent. They are to nurture individuals to become highly skilled to meet the people, and to meet Africa's research and innovation needs. It is therefore essential for universities to build capacity, develop research and innovations, and improve quality by building working relationship with various agencies in the continent; such as the Association of African Universities (AAU), Southern Africa Regional Universities Association (SARUA), Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), Southern African Regional Universities Association Curriculum Network, Inter-University Council for East Africa (IUCEA), the Middle East and North Africa Association for Institutional Research (MENA-AIR), Conseil Africainet Malgache Pour L'enseignement Superieur (CAMES)-African and Malagasy Council for Higher Education, Association of West Africa Universities (AWAU), and other similar agencies. This collaboration creates an effective platform for dialogue, bilateral, and multilateral linkages to support the universities on a continental level.

Table 1 presents a summary of the marketing recommendations based on the 7Ps. It is acknowledged that the list is inexhaustible and may not necessarily be generalised, but offers practical implication for policymakers and university managers as they attempt to improve the quality and market the higher education.

Table 1 - Summary of the marketing recommendations based on the 7P

	Marketing Mix	HEI Implications	Marketing Recommendation
1	Place	Africa as a Place	• Marketing the location. Africa is a continent and not a country • Invitation for School Visit • Content created to raise awareness about the location and features on campus • Events like academic conferences
2	Product	Education as a Product	• Raising awareness about HEI in Africa • Cross country collaboration • International collaboration • Hosting Conference and Events - THE Africa Universities Forum.

			• Marketing unique features of International Branch Campuses. • Awareness about research activities and collaboration through the press release and on social media.
3	Process	The Process of Education	• Highlight the facilities, including ICT. • Highlighting to Tutors and Faculties • Improving Student Experiences • Understand student choice-making process. • Create opportunities for diversified classroom • Widening participation to improve access. Working with unrepresented groups. • Developing and marketing programs that are relevant to the industry.
4	Physical Environment	Physical Environment for Learning	• Awareness about facilities, library and accommodation. Graphical illustration on social media is crucial. • Hosting Conference and Events • Enhanced student experience through facilities and social activities.
5	People	The Human Resources	• The leadership taking responsible • The Student Unions • The Staff taking pleasure in the University • International collaboration and Research Partnership • Reverse brain drains to allows skilled people to contribute towards the development.
6	Promoting	Promoting Higher Education Institutions	• Integrated marketing communications • A website with relevant information about the University and the courses. • Social media strategy • Ranking and League Table • Public relations • Trained and experienced communications team to shape the narratives of the University. • Corporate social responsibility. • Data analytics and student insights.
7	Price	Price for being Educated	• Financial Aid and Scholarship • Widening participation to encourage underrepresented groups. • Affordable Fees

			• Alumni Support, Endowments and Donations to the University to support students.
			• Online classes to reduce fees
			• Cross country collaboration

4. Conclusion

Higher Education marketing in Africa is considered a different market as there are many universities within the continent with different marketing challenges, notwithstanding the shared interest that necessitates a holistic exploration of the industry. There is a shortage of research on the higher education market in Africa, and this study aims to contribute to this research agenda. Specifically, the study provides an overview of the higher education market in Africa from a marketing perspective using the 7Ps of Marketing.

Also, the chapter highlights crucial challenges within the market which presents strategic marketing implications. The access to higher education which limits the size of the market and prospective students, the facilities which shape student's perception, and the challenges of international branch campuses as they play to create a learning hub in Nigeria. Subsequently, recommendations were provided for managers and policymakers, which addresses the raised strategic marketing implications.

There are opportunities for universities and international partners to tap emerging markets in Africa. However, it is crucial to recognise the implications of these 7Ps and how it affects their marketing strategies. Several universities have ceased to operate in the continent which highlights how challenging the landscape can be, but an understanding of the market and stakeholders is essential.

There is still a shortage of research on the higher education market in Africa, which suggest the need for more empirical insight into this emerging market. A better understanding of the student choice-making process is essential, likewise the marketing communication strategies of the Universities to reach prospective students. The variations between different countries should be considered. South Africa has more quality education, while Nigeria has more quantity. Understanding their approaches to reach a prospective student is essential. Regions are also important. The closure of international branch campuses, which does not say well of the African market, needs to be researched to understand students' attitude towards this kind of arrangement better. This will save the students and the home university both physical and financial stress. A summary of crucial marketing implications and recommendations are presented for policy and managers.

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