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## ASSESSMENT OF INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF KENYAN PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

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### Abstract

*Organizations adopt integrated marketing communications as a strategy to remind, persuade and inform their customers of the products and services they offer; such firms become competitive to increase their performance. Private universities are not indifferent of the marketing strategies; they design their communications to inform their publics of the services they provide as they compete with public universities. The study assessed integrated marketing communications on the organization performance of Kenyan private universities. The study employed descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was employed to choose 4 private universities. The sample size involved 96 respondents. Primary data was gathered through a close ended questionnaire. The data was processed through SPSS software for analysis of both descriptive and inferential statistics and data was presented in means and standard deviations. On a 5-point Likert scale, the scores for direct marketing, advertising, and public relations were (Mean=4.32, SD=0.74; Mean=4.18, SD=0.83 and Mean=4.12, SD=0.81) respectively to imply that the respondents stated to a great extent the variables influenced organization performance. The score for personal selling was (Mean=3.00, SD=1.27) which was a moderate score. Correlation analysis was performed where direct marketing ( $p = 0.890$ , Sig. = 0.000), advertising ( $p = 0.850$ , Sig. = 0.000), personal selling ( $p = 0.873$ , Sig. = 0.000) and public relations ( $p = 0.819$ , Sig. = 0.000) had strong and significant relationship with students' enrolment. Further, direct marketing ( $p = 0.899$ , Sig. = 0.000), advertising ( $p = 0.857$ , Sig. = 0.000), personal selling ( $p = 0.870$ , Sig. = 0.000) and public relations ( $p = 0.823$ , Sig. = 0.000) also had strong and significant correlation with brand equity. This implied that any of the components of integrated marketing communications displayed a strong and positive correlation with organization performance in terms of student's enrolment and brand equity.*

**Key words:** Integrated Marketing Communications, Organization Performance and Private Universities.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The study was about assessment of integrated marketing communications on organization performance of Kenyan private universities. In the modern competitive marketing environment placing the customers at the heart of every activity is strategically important for business organizations. Thus, organizations adopt integrated marketing communications (IMCs) as a strategy to remind, persuade and inform their customers of the products and services they offer; such firms become competitive to increase their performance.

With its constant growth and fame, integrated marketing communications has been widely applied in different business practices (Luxton, Reid & Mavondo, 2015). The concept of IMCs has acquired significant attention amongst scholars and practitioners in the United States, European and Asian nations. Considerable studies on IMC have been carried out in the recent past. However, not much has been conducted on the influence of IMC on organization performance of private universities (Chaihanchai & Anantachart, 2017). In Kenya, integrated marketing communications has drawn the interest of performance of private universities, and it is becoming a popular area of scholarly research. Previous studies have focused on different sectors of the economy that are highly involved in business activities. By focusing more on these sectors, the researchers have not exploited the opportunity to research on the education sector to establish the influence of IMCs on organization performance of the Kenyan private universities.

Private universities are considered as one of the key icons of development particularly in the developing nations. It is also known that growth rates and high levels of population of different countries make it complicated for governments to make available public education without other players for its citizens; thus the need for inclusion of the private sector to fulfill the demand for university education (Messah and Immaculate, 2011). Private universities enter into the education sector with the principal motive to make profits. In this context, they employ the strategies that would be employed by any other business to manage their institutions including aggressive integrated marketing communications (Bamfo and Atara, 2013). Such communication is indeed necessary due to the powerful competition among the providers of university education.

For private institutions, IMCs is necessary for the fact that both students and prospective students are the beneficiaries and they would require adequate information to influence their decisions on the universities to join (Messah and Immaculate, 2011). Providers of education can effectively create academic programmes when they put into account what learners actually need to purchase; this is likely to be effective through establishment of resilient integrated communications avenues with the scholars (Al-Fatal, 2010). Private universities who effectively inform the public about the programmes and courses they offer increase their brand image, maintain their students (customers), increase student enrolment and remain competitive among the providers of private education; this is an indicator of positive organization performance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

Integrated marketing communications synchronizes different marketing tools to ensure that there is consistency, clarity as well as maximum communication effect. In other words, IMCs connotes a strategic harmonization of the entire marketing messages and the methods of providing information to the consumers. From a similar perspective, IMCs is a planning method that coordinates, consolidates and brings together the entire marketing

programmes, messages and other activities to influence the prospects and customers (Schultz, Patti and Kitchen, 2013).

Organization performance evolved as a strategy to maintain and monitor organizational efficiency; it connotes the process that ensures an institution implements its action plans to facilitate attainment of goals and objectives. Such goals and objectives are clear indication of the strategic and mission direction of the organization (Niven, 2010). According to Kaplan and Norton (2011) organization performance connotes the capacity of an organization to procure and exploit its scarce resources in an effective way to the realization of its operational objectives. Performance connotes the outcomes of operations of a firm within a certain span of time (Fletcher and Taplin, 2011).

The study applied Dagmar theory, the hierarchy of effects theory and marketing communication theory as discussed below.

### **2.1.1 DAGMAR THEORY**

Dagmar theory as quoted by Mahendra (2011) was coined by Russell Colley in 1961 as a tool to measure the outcomes of an advertising activity. The acronym DAGMAR implies Defining Advertising Goals for Measured Advertising Results. The theory attempts to move consumers through four levels referred to as ACCA (Awareness, Comprehension, Conviction and Action) concept. The theory seeks to identify specific as well as measurable goals to determine the success of an advertising campaign (Mathur, 2010). The theory consists of two basic principles. First is to design a communication task (activity) that will help to achieve the goals. Second is development of achievable goals with measurable outcomes for the communication activity. The goals of communication activity (task) are to create awareness of the goods and services (brands), boost consumer comprehension of the goods and services and their benefits, convince consumers that the goods provided are useful, and lastly to persuade the consumers to take an action and buy the product (Mahendra, 2011).

### **2.1.2 THE HIERARCHY OF EFFECTS THEORY**

Lavidge and Steiner as quoted by Woodside, Megehee & Ogle (2009) developed the hierarchy of effects model in 1961; it is a marketing communication theory consisting of six major stages from viewing the advertisement of a product to the point the product is purchased. These steps are awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction and lastly purchase. The task pertaining to a product promoter is to influence the consumer to move through the six stages and finally buy the product or service. The theory is a ladder of effects since the number of consumers decrease as a person moves from one position to the other; in this sense, it is the task of business organizations to acquire as many consumers from the very beginning to the last stages through creative and convincing marketing communication information that delivers exceptional value and benefits to the targeted customers (Lavidge and Steiner, 1961).

### **2.1.3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION THEORY**

From the perspective of Kotler and Keller (2013) the term communication entails a planned interchange of information between a sender and receiver; this takes place through predetermined communication approaches to produce some response and at the same time giving a feedback.

In line with the topic of this current research, it is important for private universities to study its publics and target markets to know the needs of each group, the response they expect to get from their audience and the effective marketing communication approaches

to employ. An integration of different marketing communication approaches is necessary for private universities to make them known as they inform their prospects of the courses and programmes they offer. Thus, effective use of IMCs tools can create brand equity and enhance students' enrollment in private universities (Bamfo and Atara, 2013).

## **2.2 MEASUREMENT OF ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

Measuring the performance of an organization involves comparison of expected outcomes to actual outcomes, establishing digressions from laid down plans, assessing one's own performance while evaluating the progress achieved on meeting the laid down goals. Organization performance dwells on qualitative and quantitative approaches while taking into account the management philosophy, organization size and industry (Fletcher and Taplin, 2011). Quantitative approaches generally employed to measure organization performance are monetary ratios which compare the performance of an organization against the competitors. The financial ratios employed are sales growth, asset growth, debt to equity, market share and profit growth. Financial performance indicators employ a subjective evaluation on how effective firm can utilize its scarce resources to bring revenues (Niven, 2010).

Some schools conceive financial figures having demerits as measures of organization performance; they observe that non-financial parameters may be applicable at forecasting outcomes but complicated to implement. Non-financial measures have long term organization performance and are concerned with progress in relation to the requirements of the customers as well as other non-financial goals deemed important in achievement of profitability, competitive advantage and long-term goals (Kaplan and Norton, 2015). The non-financial measures give emphasis on aspects such as customer satisfaction, waiting time, delivery time, employee turnover, brand awareness and customer referral rates. The importance of performance is creation of value. Thus, value creation is the most significant overall approach for an organization (Niven, 2010).

### **2.2.1 STUDENTS' ENROLMENT**

Students' enrollment involves a decision making process carried out by university applicants as they make choices of the institutions to enroll with. Models concerning the decision making process have been devised to denote the purchase behavior of the customers (Messah and Immaculate, 2011). Purchase behavior entails various stages such as arousal of the need, information search, and evaluation of choices, purchase decision and post purchase behavior. The buying behavior approach has been used in the education sector where in selecting a higher institution of learning; students as well as their parents undergo the stages of the model (Mwebi and Simatwa, 2013).

The pre-search behavior level entails early considerations concerning their future where the applicants will passively interact with the information about higher education to which they come across. Concerning the search behavior level, the students make a list of prospective providers and start using various bases of information to influence their choices (Al-Fattal, 2010). For the application level, the applicants give their applications to the preferred institutions. The period between the offers and registration is an important opportunity for the institution's marketing activities.

For the choice decision level, the student accepts the offer. Since acceptance is non-contractual in the education sector, the applicants evaluate various offers. As such, institutions that establish rapport with the applicants help to establish a psychological link between the student and the university (Messah and Immaculate, 2011). Lastly, the student comes for registration but some change their mind after few days or weeks in the university. This can be considered as early post-purchase experience the students undergo

as they commit themselves to the institutions. Most institutions come up with interesting fresher's weeks that have various support services to address the needs of the students (Al-Fattal, 2010).

### **2.2.2 BRAND EQUITY**

Brand equity connotes a marketing concept that describes the value of a brand. In this case, the value is determined through customer's perception and experiences in relation to the brand. As such, if consumers think high of a certain brand, then it possesses progressive brand equity (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012). On the other hand, if a brand persistently does not deliver and disappoints to the extent that customers do not recommend it to others, then it possesses negative brand equity. Brand equity provides value to the consumer or the organization in brand associations, brand loyalty, brand awareness and perceived quality (Schultz, Patti and Kitchen, 2013).

## **2.3 INTEGRATED MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

### **2.3.1 DIRECT MARKETING AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

Direct marketing (DM) connotes the application of direct approaches to get in touch and supply products to customers and not involving channel distributors (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012). The channels include telemarketing, direct mails, catalogs, websites, mobile devices and interactive television. DM entails direct communications with well-spotted customers to get immediate feedback in order to establish long term relations. A well planned and implemented direct marketing has the possibility to be highly cost advantageous compared to other marketing communication approaches due to the well-defined targets that the method reaches. Jansen and Brenn-White (2011) investigated the modern marketing approaches employed by universities in Europe and concluded that most universities make them known through online communications and email communications.

### **2.3.2 ADVERTISING AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

The concept advertising from the standpoint Kotler and Keller (2013) is a paid approach of non-personal selling and delivery of products/services by a certain promoter. Advertising is done through different approaches by organizations, non-profit making organizations and persons involved in the advertising process to inform, remind and persuade a certain audience. It is used by organizations to create awareness of goods or services to customers and prospective customers while at the same time building knowledge of those goods/services.

The key motive to advertise is to make the public aware of the products/services offered in order to influence awareness, attitude as well as purchasing behavior. In this context, private universities advertise to inform their prospective students (customers) about the academic courses they provide. From the standpoint of Bamfo and Atara (2013) radio and television advertising are to a great extent used to help universities reinforce their presence in different regions and to increase students' enrolment.

### **2.3.3 PERSONAL SELLING AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

Personal selling (PS) depicts a marketing promotional tool where a seller presents himself to a buyer; it is a person to person approach to create product awareness and inform a seller with the aim to close a sale. Kotler and Keller (2013) conceive it as personal presentation carried out by an organization's sales team to sell products while establishing customer relationships. Marketing personnel of universities use personal selling during face to face encounters, through telephone conversations, via modern technologies that enable



exchange of information through internet including Skype, chat rooms, video conferencing (Messah and Immaculate, 2011) as well as text messages to communicate with prospective students. The advantage of PS dwells on the premise that customers can have more attention compared to display and advertisement.

### **2.3.4 PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE**

Public relations (PR) involves various activities carried out by an organization and focused internally to the staffs of the organization or externally to the government, consumers, other firms, and media to protect or promote an organization's image or its own product communications (Kotler and Keller, 2013). The common communication means under this tool are press kits, annual reports, seminars, speeches, charitable donations, company magazine, publications and community relations.

Universities develop some images through the academic programmes and performance of students; such images are effective as a way to show the various PR tasks. Academic institutions have their publics they interact with and those who are more important are internal people (students and employees) who need to be informed to become good ambassadors of their campuses to other people (Bamfo and Atara 2013). Establishing good relationships with the existing students is an important approach to retain them.

## **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN**

From the perspective of Cooper and Schindler (2011) research design is the outline employed to find answers to the problem enquired. For this particular work, descriptive research design was applied. The research attempted to generalize the conclusions of the impact of IMCs and organization performance of Kenyan private universities (KPU's).

### **3.2 TARGET POPULATION**

The target population composed the students who enrolled for various programmes in the Schools of Business and Economics of the 4 purposive sampled private universities in 2018 academic year. It consisted of regular students, part time students, school based students and virtual students.

### **3.3 SAMPLE SIZE**

Proportional stratified random sampling was employed to incorporate interviewees for the study. A sample size of 96 respondents was involved from the 4 purposive sampled private universities in the Schools of Business and Economics who enrolled for various programmes in 2018 academic year.

### **3.4 CRITERIA FOR SELECTING SAMPLE SIZE**

The sample size was developed from Fisher's formula (Rosner, 2010) as indicated below:

$$n = \frac{Pqz^2}{d^2}$$

Where;

$P$  = Proportion of the target population expected to possess characteristics being measured (0.5)

$q = 1 - p$  (0.5)

$z$  = Standard normal deviate for  $\alpha$  at 95% confidence,  $Z_{1-\alpha/2} = 1.96$

$d$  = Level of precision; level of statistical significance desired (margin of error) at 5% (0.05).

$n$  = Sample size = 384

$$nf = \frac{n}{1 + \frac{n}{N}}$$

Where ***nf*** is the desired sample size (where the population is less than 10,000); ***n*** is the desired sample size (when the population is more than 10,000); and ***N*** is the estimate of the population size.

$$\begin{aligned} nf &= 384/1 + 384/128 \\ &= 96 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, the actual sample size for the study was 96.

### 3.5 CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The questionnaire contained a list of close-ended questions which addressed the four specific research objectives. A 5-point Likert scale with intervals of 5 to 1 was used to rank answers to the structured questions. The questionnaire contained four specific questions relating to IMCs and organization performance of the Kenyan private universities.

### 3.6 TESTING FOR VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Pilot testing was done on 8 students from the Schools of Business of the 4 selected Kenyan private universities who enrolled for various programmes in 2018. The participants were randomly selected to establish the questionnaires' validity. The results were critically evaluated towards the improvement of the questionnaire. Cooper and Schindler (2011) hold 5 percent to 10 percent of the target sample has to be involved in the pilot test. Reliability is about getting similar results once a similar test is repeated (Levy and Lemeshow, 2013). For the reliability test, IMCs on students' enrolment and brand equity were processed for the first test. To get a second score the process was once again performed to calculate the Cronbach's reliability scores. The Cronbach's reliability statistics are indicated in Table 1. The entire variables scored reliability statistics of more than 0.7 to indicate the variables' reliability for the research.

Table 1 Cronbach's Reliability Statistics

Variables	Cronbach's Reliability Statistics.
Students' Enrolment	0.956
Brand Equity	0.956
Direct Marketing	0.953
Advertising	0.951
Personal Selling	0.971
Public Relations	0.952

Source: Research Data, 2021

### 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

Data was processed through SPSS software for analysis of both inferential and descriptive statistics. The data was presented in means and standard deviations. Regression and correlation analysis were performed to find out the nexus between the independent and dependent variables.

### 4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The first section discusses the descriptive statistics then the subsequent part the inferential statistics. To facilitate data analysis, the responses to the questionnaires were entered on a 5-point Likert scale with intervals 5 to 1. The statistical values were assigned as follows: 5=very great extent, 4=great extent, 3=moderate extent, 2=little extent and 1=no extent.

#### **4.1 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON DIRECT MARKETING ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF KPUs**

On a 5-point Likert scale, the score for the variable was (Mean=4.32; SD= 0.74) indicating that to a great extent direct marketing influenced organization performance of Kenyan private universities. Further, the results reveal that the standard deviation was below the mean score to signify existence of stability and consistency of the variable on organization performance. These findings resemble the research conducted by Messah and Immaculate (2011) who established that direct marketing enhances students' enrolment. In the current marketing environment, direct marketing has been used by marketers to sell their products/services on online platforms. A well-organized direct communication is an effective strategy to influence students' decision on the choice of the private university to join. Such communication enables potential students to visit a university's website severally and interact with the marketing departments of the universities.

#### **4.2 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON ADVERTISING ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF KPUs**

On a 5-point Likert scale the score for the variable was (Mean=4.18; SD=0.83) demonstrating that to a great extent advertising influenced organization performance of Kenyan private universities. The findings indicate that advertising had a consistent and stable pattern to increase organization performance considering the dispersion (standard deviation) was below the mean value. The above finding concurs with a study performed in Ghana by Bamfo and Aliata (2013); they found that advertising is an effective marketing communication tool for reaching out the prospective students. In the same vein, a study conducted by Messah and Immaculate (2011) established that advertising is a major IMC component that positively enhances students' enrollment in private universities.

#### **4.3 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON PERSONAL SELLING ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF KPUs**

On a 5-point Likert scale, the score for the variable was (Mean=2.99 (approximately 3.0); SD=1.27) demonstrating that to a moderate extent personal selling influenced organization performance of Kenyan private universities. The results demonstrate that personal selling on organization performance had a consistent and stable pattern for the fact that the dispersion did not go beyond the mean score. Personal selling involving university visits by potential students; career days as well as high school visits by the marketing departments of the respective universities are intended to inform customers before they make decisions of the universities to join. Messah and Immaculate (2011) established that well-designed presentations and face-to-face communication to get students and strengthen the institutions relationship with customers is imperative to boost organization performance of the Kenyan private universities.

#### **4.4 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS ON PUBLIC RELATIONS ON ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE OF KPUs**

On a 5-point Likert scale, the score for the variable was (Mean=4.12; SD= 0.81) revealing that to a great extent public relations influence organization performance of Kenyan private universities. The findings match the study performed by Njuguna (2015) who established that public relations play a major role on influencing student enrolment in the Kenyan private universities. The findings also indicate that public relations on organization performance had a consistent and stable trend considering the dispersion (standard deviation) did not exceed the mean value.



#### 4.5 THE NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN IMCs AND ORGANIZATION PERFORMANCE

To find the nature of nexus between IMCs and organization performance a correlation analysis to relate the different IMCs components (direct marketing, advertising, personal selling and public relations) and the two organization performance indicators (students' enrolment and brand equity) was performed.

Table 2 shows that the correlation matrix between direct marketing, advertising, personal selling, public relations and students' enrolment was ( $p = 0.890$ , Sig. = 0.000), ( $p = 0.850$ , Sig. = 0.000), ( $p = 0.873$ , Sig. = 0.000) and ( $p = 0.819$ , Sig. = 0.000) respectively. The interpretation from the findings reveals that any of the IMC components displayed a significant correlation with students' enrolment.

Table 2 Correlation Matrix between Students' Enrolment and IMC Components

		Students' Enrolment	Direct Marketing	Advertising	Personal Selling	Public Relations
Students' Enrolment	Pearson correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.96				
	N					
Direct Marketing	Pearson correlation	.890	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	96	96			
Advertising	Pearson correlation	.850	.912	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	96	96	96		
Personal Selling	Pearson correlation	.873	.868	.867	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	96	96	96	96	
Public Relations	Pearson correlation	.819	.876	.932	.889	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	96	96	96	96	96

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2021

Table 3 shows that the correlation matrix between direct marketing, advertising, personal selling, public relations and brand equity was ( $p = 0.899$ , Sig. = 0.000), ( $p = 0.857$ , Sig. = 0.000), ( $p = 0.870$ , Sig. = 0.000) and ( $p = 0.823$ , Sig. = 0.000) respectively. The interpretation from the findings reveals that any of the IMC components displayed a significant correlation with brand equity.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix between Students' Enrolment and IMC Components

		Brand Equity	Direct Marketing	Advertising	Personal Selling	Public Relations
Brand Equity	Pearson correlation	1				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
	N	96				
Direct Marketing	Pearson correlation	.899	1			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000				
	N	96	96			
Advertising	Pearson correlation	.857	.912	1		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000			
	N	96	96	96		
Personal Selling	Pearson correlation	.870	.868	.867	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		
	N	96	96	96	96	
Public Relations	Pearson correlation	.823	.932	.932	.889	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	96	96	96	96	96

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Research Data, 2021

#### 4.6 THE IMPORTANCE OF IMCs IN KPUs IN EXPLAINING THEIR PERFORMANCE

With the motive to find the significance of the integrated marketing communications to explain the performance of Kenyan private universities, multiple regression equations that include performance (students' enrolment and brand equity) and the IMCs components were computed.

The regression equation relating students' enrolment and IMCs components used is:

$$Y_1 = 1.813 + 0.456x_1 + 0.136x_2 + 0.233x_3 + -0.147x_4$$

The coefficient of correlation (R) value was 0.915 indicating a strong relationship between independent variables and students' enrolment. The coefficient of determination (R square) was 0.837 for the regression model inferring that integrated marketing communications were important to explain 83.7% of the students' enrolment in Kenyan private universities. The other 16.3% of students' enrolment was explained by other factors such as recommendations by colleagues, friends, family members, current students, alumnae and proximity to work place.

The regression equation relating brand equity and IMCs components used is:

$$Y_2 = 1.758 + 0.475x_1 + 0.139x_2 + 0.203x_3 + -0.137x_4$$

The coefficient of correlation (R) value was 0.919 representing a strong association between independent variables and brand equity. The R square for the model was 0.845 deducing that integrated marketing communications were significant to explain 84.5% of brand equity in organization performance of Kenyan private universities. The other 15.5% of brand equity was explained by satisfied current students and alumnae who talk positive of their *alma mater*.

## 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 SUMMARY

On a 5-point Likert scale, the scores for direct marketing, advertising, and public relations were (Mean=4.32; SD=0.74), (Mean=4.18; SD=0.83) and (Mean=4.12; SD=0.81) respectively to imply that the respondents stated to a great extent the variables influenced organization performance. The score for personal selling was (Mean=3.00; SD=1.27) which was a moderate score to influence organization performance. Correlation analysis was performed where the independent variables namely: direct marketing ( $p = 0.890$ , Sig. = 0.000), advertising ( $p = 0.850$ , Sig. = 0.000), personal selling ( $p = 0.873$ , Sig. = 0.000) and public relations ( $p = 0.819$ , Sig. = 0.000) had strong and significant relationship with students' enrolment. Further, direct marketing ( $p = 0.899$ , Sig. = 0.000), advertising ( $p = 0.857$ , Sig. = 0.000), personal selling ( $p = 0.870$ , Sig. = 0.000) and public relations ( $p = 0.823$ , Sig. = 0.000) also had strong and significant correlation with brand equity.

### 5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Based on the mean scores as one of the measures of central tendency, it is evident that direct marketing is the most effective component of the integrated marketing communications that influence enrolment of students and brand equity. Personal selling was the least effective component. Further, all the IMCs variables had strong and positive correlation with students' enrolment and brand equity. This implied that any of the components of integrated marketing communications displayed a strong and positive correlation with organization performance in terms of student's enrolment and brand equity.

Therefore, an integration of the different marketing communications tools is necessary to influence students' enrolment and brand equity among Kenyan private universities.

### 5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The potential students are in the young generation category that has a general understanding of information communication and technology (ICT); it becomes easy for this generation to search any information from the internet. Private universities should adequately invest in integrated marketing communications.

Majority of the prospective students are technologically knowledgeable (millennials or Gen Y and Gen Z) who are frequently connected to WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Thus, it is important for private universities to embrace the modern ways of communication to inform the public of the value they deliver to the students (brand equity) and at the same time influence students' enrolment.

Universities should deliver value and empower its stakeholders: staff, alumnae/students so that they share their good experiences on behalf of the universities for the fact that a positive public image, satisfied customers and quality education motivates potential students to enroll in an institution.

### 5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The study was limited to 4 purposive sampled Kenyan private universities ranked among the best in terms of students' enrolment and brand equity. There are some private universities that used to perform well in terms of students' enrolment and brand equity but of late it is the contrary.

Even though they use the various elements of integrated marketing communications they still experience low students' enrolment. Therefore, it would be indispensable to analyze the reasons behind low brand equity and low students' enrolment in these private universities.

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