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Growth Strategies and Performance of Faith Based Universities in Kenya: A Case of Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA)

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Abstract

Faith based universities in Kenya faces challenges of enrolling students and acquiring qualified teaching staff due to the coming up of many institutions of higher learning as well as the competition from companies and senior public positions which remunerate highly and offer better terms of service inconsideration to what the universities offer. The purpose of this study was to establish the effect of growth strategies on the performance of faith based universities in Kenya: A case of Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The study was anchored on Resource Based View Theory of Partnership, theory of new product development social cognitive theory and diversification theory. This study adopted a mixed methods research design in which both quantitative and qualitative approaches were combined. The study targeted top level, middle level and lower level staffs of CUEA categorized into 1 VC, 3 DVCs, 4 deans, 190 university teaching staffs, 10 administrative staffs and 117 support staffs made up of 108 cleaners and 9 supervisors. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain a sample of 30% of the university teaching staffs, while purposive sampling approach was used to obtain sample for VC, DVC and deans. The qualitative data collected using questionnaire was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study used a multiple regression model to show the relationship between the study variables. The findings revealed that partnership strategy had a positive and significant effect on the performance (β =.327, p=.012<.05), product development strategy had a positive and significant effect on the performance (β =.227, p=.045<.05), product proactive marketing strategy had a positive but insignificant effect on the performance (β =.211, p=.123>.05), while diversification strategy had a positive and significant effect on the performance (β =.283, p=.020<.05). Based on the findings, the study concluded that growth strategies adopted had positive and significant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, except for the variable on proactive marketing strategy that did not affect the performance significantly. The study thus recommended that the Catholic university of Eastern Africa should consider fully implementing growth strategies such as partnership, product development, proactive marketing and diversification strategies as ways of enhancing their performance.

Keywords: *Partnership, Product, Development, Proactive, Marketing, Diversification, Strategy, Growth, Performance.*

1.1 Background of the Study

Universities play a crucial role in generating new ideas, and in accumulating and transmitting knowledge, yet they have remained peripheral to development concerns (Munyambu & Ragui, 2018). In this regard government has been advancing institutional reforms in the education sector. Universities have continuously been challenged from various quarters on the quality of degrees being offered in tandem with shifting national, regional and global dynamics. Today learning institutions operate in a highly competitive environment. Matheng, Nthinguri and Chui (2018) remarked that competition has intensified dramatically over the last three decades in almost all domains including the arts, education, healthcare and philanthropy, therefore every organization needs a strategy in order to grow and increase its customers.

FBOs build social networks among people of different ages and cultures, offer therapy, language courses, meals, urgent financial assistance and help the homeless and prostitutes by guaranteeing absolute anonymity. FBOs provide social services to undocumented people, helping people to navigate through complex administrative systems, providing shelter for women and children who are under threat of violence or appealing government decisions. Research shows that when directly comparing FBOs with comparable secular organizations, the services provided by FBOs are equivalent or superior (Adams et al., 2018). Due to skyrocketing enrollments without corresponding growth in resources, Faith Based institutions in Kenya faces complex challenges that constrain their ability to fulfill state mandates (Fegher, Kimathi & Olouch-Suleh, 2020).

Faith based learning institutions in Kenya have over the years been faced with sustainability challenges because of the growth strategies practices used by the management. Due to these, there have been high rate of staff turnover, conflicts among employees, bad working habits and attitudes among the employees, poor service delivery, low quality products and services as well as high financial implications incurred as a result of numerous industrial court cases awards that has been awarded to the laid off employees and unpaid suppliers (Ahmad, Ismail, & Siraj, 2019). This can be attributed to poor growth strategies being adopted by the institutions that makes their projects and institutions unable to cope with the competitive environment they are operating in.

Growth strategies often play a vital role in an organization's management as it allows the organization to choose a direction of action and determine how to achieve its goals (Alaaraj, Mohamed & Bustamam, 2018). Growth strategies allow institutions to access new markets; expand geographically and obtain cutting-edge technology, complementary skills and core competencies relatively fast (Kinyuira, 2018). In doing so, they increase their shareholders' or investors' value. However, merging with firms in distressed situation has substantial implications for business survival. The growth strategy of an organization, as a part of change management, could be susceptible to financial and economic situations, such as a recession, in an economy. There is some empirical evidence suggesting that an organization's performance depends on whether the firm adopts internal or external growth strategies (Dugguh, 2018).

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On the global stage, a question of increasing importance for higher education (H.E.) Business Faculties is what strategies they should adopt faced by declining populations and their anticipated impact on the future numbers of students in Europe (Stepan, 2016). One the growth strategies being a adopted by higher education institutions in Europe and North America is to compensate any decline in local student numbers by expanding recruitment to students from other countries (Igwe, Hack-Polay, Mendy, Fuller & Lock, 2019). Examples of this are Universities in the U.S.A. and the U.K. which try to attract increasing numbers of students from (for instance) China or India.

In Nigeria, university education has become a major concern for so many reasons. Firstly, the concerns about poor learning in Nigerian universities amplify as many of the Nigerian youth found it increasingly difficult to gain employment in the formal sector or end up working in poor conditions in the informal economy. Secondly, ineffective learning becomes a prime suspect as research findings increasingly reveal that universities graduates in Nigeria acquire skills in discipline such as economics, law and medicine that are neither demanded by the labour market nor required by the economy especially in the growth sectors such as petroleum, gas, agriculture, manufacturing, solid minerals, tourism and ICT (Federal Ministry of Education, 2005).

In Kenya, a number of developments in the recent past both at policy and industry level have shaped the future growth and financial health of the banking sector (Machuka, 2018). First are interest rates; the implementation of financial sector reforms within the structural adjustment program framework in the early 2017 marked the end of controlled interest rate regime in Kenya. The governments' initial unwillingness to implement the program followed by high domestic debt precipitated unprecedented levels of interest rates reaching 50 percent per annum. Secondly there is the issue of profitability. As a consequence of high interest margins and a better performing economy in the recent past, the banks have consistently recorded comparatively higher profits than other companies in other sectors of the economy.

David (2005) observes that strategy evaluation is vital to organization’s wellbeing and involves three basic activities; examining the underlying bases of a firm’s strategy, comparing expected results with actual results and taking corrective actions to ensure that performance conforms to the plans. Singh, Tabassum, Darwish and Batsakis (2018) opine that, strategy evaluation is based on both quantitative and qualitative criteria depending on particular organizational size, industry and strategy and management philosophy. Quantitative criteria commonly used to evaluate strategies are financial ratios used to compare the firm’s performance over different time periods, comparing the firm’s performance to competitors and comparing the firm’s performance to industry averages. Some ratios include return on investment, return on equity, profit margin, market share, and debt to equity, earnings per share, sales growth and asset growth (Wan, Mao, Poan & Chen, 2018).

Faith-based colleges, universities and seminaries are concerned with more than mere academics, and seek to provide the student all the tools needed for a well-rounded disciplined life. Faith based universities work harder at regulating the morality of their student body. According to Sirajudeen, Wayne and Mogaji (2020), many faith based universities require students to sign lifestyle contracts; these contracts require the student to abstain from drinking, drug usage and sex while attending classes. Students caught violating the terms of the contract can be brought before a review committee that can administer punishment, which can range from a verbal slap on the wrist to dismissal from the university (Wothaya, 2016).

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1.2 Statement of the Problem

Faith based universities in Kenya faces challenges of enrolling students and acquiring qualified teaching staff due to the coming up of many institutions of higher learning as well as the competition from companies and senior public positions which remunerate highly and offer better terms of service inconsideration to what the universities offer (McCowan, 2018). Information from Commission for University Education (CUE) shows Kenya's 14 faith based universities are being crippled by an acute shortage of professors, as they are increasingly turning to part-time lecturers, who many of them have only attained masters' degrees; this results into low enrollment in these universities.

In a number of cases, the faith based universities in Kenya have experience labor conflicts with their staff; Kenya Methodist University (KEMU) experienced the challenges of how to deal with senior managers when Prof Mugambi left the institution, educationists had warned such kind of tussles could affect learning (Nderitu, Waiganjo & Orwa, 2021) Presbyterian University of East Africa (P.U.E.A) has also had its own challenges which ranges from numerous court cases, among them been wrongful termination of employees. Although the number of qualified lecturers has been growing, it lags far behind the student enrolment rate, forcing many universities to hire under-qualified staff for academic positions. As a result of poor conditions of service, some of these faith based universities have not been able to attract and retain academic staff. A study by Mwenda, Kiflemariam and Kimani (2019) indicated that 40% of academic staff would have retired from faith based institutions in Kenya within a period of ten years. Compounding this problem is the fact that the rate at which academic staff is being replicated through the training of postgraduates is extremely low and further hampered by the difficulties in recruiting experienced faculty internationally.

Several challenges are currently driving faith based universities in Kenya to examine the way they operate: ability to survive in the 21st Century and beyond, coping with new models in the provision of higher education, addressing the competitive issues spawned by the rise of private universities and a growing imperative to provide quality human resources to meet national developmental needs (Mutiso, 2013). In this regard, growth strategies can only make a difference when the intended purposes of the faith based universities are aligned to action and they can adequately respond to emerging internal and environmental issues (Kamau, 2013). This study therefore sought to establish the effect of growth strategies on the performance of faith based universities in Kenya: A case of Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

1.3 Research Objectives

i. To determine the effect of partnership strategy on the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
ii. To assess the effect of product development strategy on the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
iii. To establish the effect of proactive Marketing strategy on the performance of Catholic University of Eastern Africa.
iv. To evaluate the effect of Diversification strategy on the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

1.4 Research Questions

i. What is the effect of partnership strategy on the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa?

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ii. How does product development strategy affect the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa?
iii. To what extent does proactive marketing strategy affect the performance of The Catholic University of Eastern Africa?
iv. What is the effect of diversification strategy on the performance of Catholic University of Eastern Africa?

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework showing the relationship between the study variables.

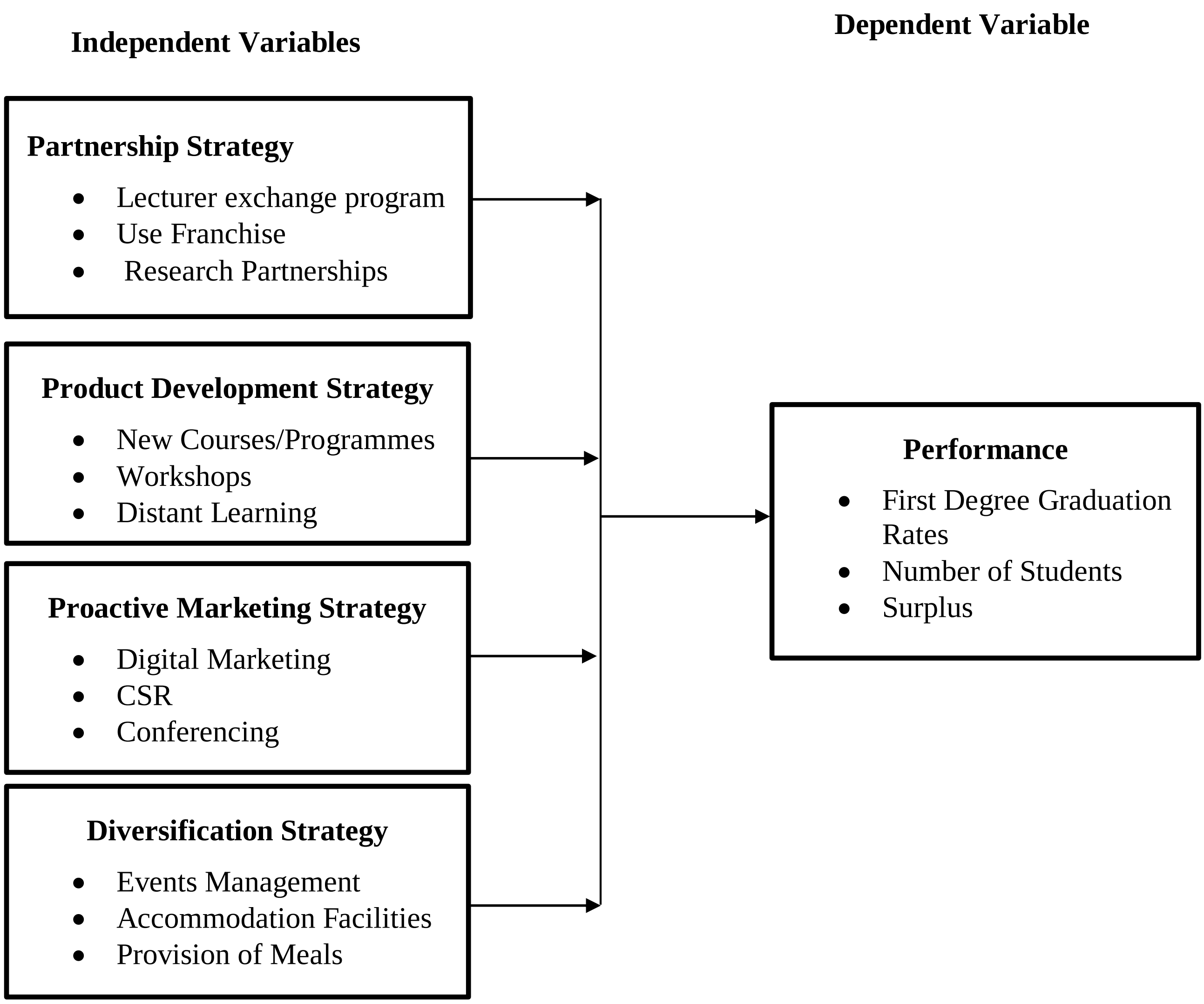

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

Source: *Researcher (2020)*

2.1 Review of Theories

2.1.1 Resource Based View Theory of Partnership

The theory was introduced by Werner felt (1984) with the idea of resource position barriers being roughly analogous to entry barriers in the positioning school. The resource-based view suggests that the rationale for alliances and partnerships is the value-creation potential of firm resources that are pooled together (Clarke & MacDonald, 2019). Barney (2001) noted that certain resource characteristics, such as imperfect mobility, imitability, and substitutability, promise accentuated value-creation, and thus facilitate partnership formation. As part of the theory, there is a typology of inter-partner resource alignment based on the two dimensions of resource similarity and resource utilization, yielding four types of alignment: supplementary, surplus, complementary, and wasteful. The theory explains how partner resource alignment directly affects collective strengths and inter-firm conflicts in alliances, which in turn contribute to partnership performance (Yarbrough & Powers, 2006).

This theory focuses on the economic rationale of the organizations in existence (Conner, 2015). It helps researchers to understand the organizations as value creators unlike focusing on value appropriative in traditional approaches. Resource based view theory has several related branches which have dynamic capabilities and core competencies. (Williamson, 2004). Resource Based view Theory argues that if every firm does the same analysis it would end up with the same conclusions. Barney (1986) then argues that the sustainable competitive advantage has to lie within the firm's resources and the way they employ them. This theory informed the variable on partnership strategy. The theory was considered important to this study because it explained how partner resource alignment directly affects collective strengths and inter-firm conflicts in partnership, which in turn contribute to partnership performance of faith based universities such the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

2.1.2 Theory of New Product Development

This theory was put forward by Booz (1982). The theory states that new product is the result of a creative and unique idea that is able to make consumers satisfied. Establishment of new product development (NPD) departments and their direct influence in the production process is crucial for businesses and they can determine demand and needs of consumers (Loch & Kavadias, 2008). According to Nambisan (2002), a product which can be a physical object or a service should be functional and emotional to satisfy the customer's need, and to offer value, be delivered as the way customer demanded and also has to include other specific elements like providing customer services. Accuracy of this view was questioned by Gurbuz (2018) and it was stated that NPD can result in new profit or loss. It is advised that various questions should be answered by the managers before new product decisions to determine whether NPD will bring profit or loss to the business.

Repositioned products are promoted in a new way to attract different kinds of customers; these are not new products, are not new formulations or are not new features, but they are positioned in a different way in the market for attracting different groups of customers (Parker & Brey, 2015). For example, Lucozade energy drink business changed the product's image from a drink for recovering people from an illness to a drink for people interested in sports. Even though these products may claim new features, benefits (which are what customers experience differently to the original product) will be limited. This kind of new product is usually chosen by small businesses which have limited resources to create an original product. Therefore, they use original product's existing market and sell with lower prices because of less costs for production of these products without product development costs (Caniato, Caridi, Moretto,

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Sianesi & Spina, 2014). This theory informs the variable on product development strategy. The theory was considered relevant to the current study in the sense that it explained how faith based universities in Kenya like The Catholic University of Eastern Africa can use product development strategy to improve their performance.

2.1.3 Social Cognitive Theory

The social cognitive theory by Bandura (1999), indicates how people are able to influence their own actions to yield results, they have the capacity to exercise control over their own thought processes, motivation, affect and action. The theory points out that people are agentic operators in their life course and not just onlookers of events that are created the environment (Harre & Gillet, 1994). The theory goes ahead to subscribe to a model of emergent interactive agency (Bandura, 1999). This indicates that people can make their own decisions due to the mental events and brain activities. The Agentic perspective of this theory relates to the act of being proactive by entrepreneurs as to be an agent is to intentionally make things happen by the actions taken. Agency embodies the endowments, belief systems, self-regulatory capabilities and allocates arrangements and roles in which personal influence is exercised. The features of agency enable people to play a role in their self-development, adaptation and self-renewal with changing times (Bandura, 1999).

Individuals set goals for themselves, anticipate the likely consequences of prospective actions, and select and create courses of action likely to produce desired outcomes and avoid detrimental ones (Bandura, 1999; Feather & Newton, 1982; Locke & Latham, 1990). Through the exercise of forethought, entrepreneurs motivate themselves and guide their actions in anticipation of future business. In entrepreneurship where the recognition and exploitation of opportunities is valuable for entrepreneurs' growth and relates to personal factors that influence entrepreneurial behaviour. This theory informed the variable on proactive marketing strategy. The theory explained how being proactive in marketing behaviours by the faith based universities can influence their performance.

2.1.4 Diversification Theory

The theory states that diversification strives to smooth out unsystematic risk events in a portfolio, so the positive performance of some investments neutralizes the negative performance of others. The theory points out that diversification strategies are used to expand firms' operations by adding markets, products, services, or stages of production to the existing business (Lane, Cannella Jr, & Lubatkin, 1998). Reddy (2014) believe that the purpose of diversification is to allow the company to enter lines of business that are different from current operations. When the new venture is strategically related to the existing lines of business, it is called concentric diversification. Amit and Livnat (1988) contend that conglomerate diversification occurs when there is no common thread of strategic fit or relationship between the new and old lines of business; the new and old businesses are unrelated.

According to Song (1982), one of the most common reasons for pursuing a conglomerate growth strategy is that opportunities in a firm's current line of business are limited. Finding an attractive investment opportunity requires the firm to consider alternatives in other types of business. A firm may elect to broaden its geographic base to include new customers, either within its home country or in international markets. A business could also pursue an internal diversification strategy by finding new users for its current product. Firms may attempt to change markets by increasing or decreasing the price of products to make them appeal to consumers of different income levels. Another form of internal diversification is to market new products in existing markets. The theory informs the variable on diversification strategy. The theory explained how universities can adopt diversification strategy to improve on their performance.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 Partnership Strategy and Performance

According to Manfreda and Štemberger (2019), strategic partnership is an alliance between the companies that combines the resources, capabilities and core competencies together to achieve common interests. Mustikaningsih, Cahyandito, Kaltum and Sarjana (2019) opine that the partnership strategy (Strategic relationship) can occur among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and customers, with the sole aim of: gaining access to markets, increasing the value of the products / services offered, Reducing the risk posed by environmental change, ensuring complementary in the field of expertise, acquiring new knowledge, building a sustainable cooperation with major customers and obtaining the resources that are not owned by the company. Mose, Primiana and Effendi (2020) echoed similar sentiments by asserting that for most compelling reason for inter-organizational cooperation, there are four basic categories, namely: the opportunity to increase the value obtained from the combination of two or more companies competence, a completely environment, competitive strategy and gaps skills and resources.

Vanags, Ābeltiņa and Zvirgzdiņa (2018) postulates that the most popular reason for entering into strategic partnerships is access to new markets and customers. By forming a strategic partnership, companies can service larger territories without investing in additional infrastructures or expanding their distribution network (Sarjana & Widokarti, 2020). Strategic partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships between two parties, typically businesses, who work together to grow and are usually are formalized by a contract (Sarjana & Widokarti, 2020). Not every partnership requires a legally binding agreement, though that is recommended if money is changing hands for referrals or revenue shares. Miftahuddin (2019) opine that a great strategic partnership could be formed by a marketing agency and a graphic design agency.

2.2.2 Product Development Strategy and Performance

Product development describes the entire process of bringing a product to the market, the process can include identifying a product concept, seeking market feedback about the idea, creating a prototype, preparing marketing and sales campaigns, building the product and releasing it to customers, and making adjustments based on market feedback (Lan, Massimino, Gray & Chandrasekaran, 2020). Maina, Mugambi and Waiganjo (2018) established weak positive relationship between strategic product development practices and competitiveness in a study which evaluated the effect of strategic product development practices on competitiveness of Kenyan tea in the global market. The study revealed that 1% change in Strategic product development practices decreased competitiveness of Kenyan in the global market by 0.089 units.

Yin, Li, Zhang and Zhang (2019) opine that a product development strategy is a strategy based on developing new products or modifying existing products so they appear new, and offering those products to current or new markets. These strategies according to Lan, Massimino, Gray and Chandrasekaran (2020) typically come about when there is little to no opportunity for new growth in a company's current market. At that point, a company has one of three choices: create an updated product for a current product in a current market, enhance an existing product for a new market, or simply move away from the product altogether, and cease growth (Tadic, Medved, Bojanic & Tasic, 2020). Most competitive companies won't opt for

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the third choice so a strategy is therefore designed to either evolve a product for its existing market, or enhance it to introduce into a new market.

Depending on the product a company offers, there may be little opportunity to introduce that product into new markets (Ibrahim & Mustapha, 2019). With that limitation, a company must instead look at updating an existing product for its current market which is known as product evolution. Product evolution is used by companies who have the vision to not only see a product idea, but how that product can evolve over time. It's the idea of mapping out, often before the first product is even manufactured, what future iterations of a product might be as it improves and grows (Wanjiru, Muathe & Kinyua-Njuguna, 2019). They believe postulate that for others, that vision may have not been initially in place, but a competitive marketplace has demanded it to happen in order to survive. Another term used for this is "product modification. Product modification strategies are generally aimed at existing markets, although a side benefit may be the capturing of new users for the new product.

2.2.3 Proactive Marketing Strategy and Performance

According to Chung (2016), for marketing purposes every product, whether tangible or intangible, should have an exchange value and should be capable of being exchanged between buyer and seller, based on mutually agreed considerations. This exchange is a function of product value and the asking price. If the buyer feels that the value he is receiving from the product is equal or even higher than the money he is giving out, he feels satisfied and contented. Otherwise, he feels cheated and shortchanged and will most likely not buy it again and may even de-market the product if he gets the chance. A good understanding of customer needs and wants, the competitive environment and continuous practices, and strategies to better satisfy the customer requirements and increase their market share regulate development of new products (Ramli, 2016).

A study conducted by Chaney (2014) postulated that market penetration is not only linked to sales growth but the financial performance of companies such as profitability and return on investment. It is further indicated that market penetration as a global marketing strategy positively affects the overall business performance. The study also established that market penetration strategy depends on predicting whether a business will be able to get a bigger market share in the existing market with its existing products; therefore when a company decides to enter a new market, it is essential to use a market penetration strategy. The study recommended that for a company to securely adapt to varying one markets, the marketing strategy should take into consideration the internal and external business environment that affects a company positively to revel in greater performance.

2.2.4 Diversification Strategy and Performance

Diversification has been a key strategy employed by organizations in an attempt to improve their attractiveness and performance. According to Mutie (2013), diversification helps organization build the urgency and the need of improving shareholders value by using existing resources. Ansoff (1965) argued that diversification is manifested through product development, market development and market penetration representing product market structure changes. Zheng-Feng and Lingyan (2012) indicated that organizations' decision to diversify depends on the interaction of two effects - economies of scale and agent problems where diversification get smaller once the organization engages in more than 3 industries.

Keng (2014) in a study revealed that companies with numerous portfolios have greater advantage over single industries, the same sentiments were echoed by Castaldi and Giarratana

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(2018) who studied diversification on the performance of professional service firms using US-based management consulting firms from 2000 to 2009 and found that diversification was advantageous to professional service firms while performance is positively related to the strategy used by specialized barrow brands. Zheng-Feng and Lingyan (2012) concluded that managers need to be courteous in pursuing diversification because the cost outweighs the benefits.

Ata, Zehir and Zehir (2018) postulate that the proficiency in new product development activities was the key to the conversion of a market-oriented culture into superior organizational performance through better new product performance. To examine the conjecture the study tested hypotheses on the mediating effects of the proficiency in new product development activities and new product performance on the relationship between market orientation and organizational performance. The results from a sample of 126 manufacturing firms presented evidence for the mediating roles of the proficiency in commercialization activities and new product performance. Based on the findings of the study, these mediating roles are consistent for three moderator variables: technological turbulence, market turbulence and innovation strategy. Together the findings provided a better understanding of how a market-oriented culture leads to superior organizational performance.

3.0 Research Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods design. Mixed methods research design is a type of research in which a researcher or team of researchers combine elements of qualitative and quantitative approaches (for instance use of qualitative and quantitative viewpoints, data collection, analysis, inference techniques) for the purpose of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration (Driscoll, Appiah-Yeboah, Salib & Rupert, 2007). This study targeted stop level, middle level and lower lever management staffs of Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). According to the university website, the university had one (1) vice chancellor, three (3) deputy vice chancellors, four (4) deans, and one hundred and ninety (190) university teaching staffs drawn from six faculties, one hundred and seventeen (117) support staffs out of which 108 are cleaners while 9 are supervisors. The administrative staffs and the support staffs were however not included in the study because they are not part of the implementation of the strategies in this study's research question and thus their opinion would not serve a purpose.

The study used a stratified random sampling technique to obtain the sample size for the university teaching staffs. The study used simple random sampling of 30% of teaching staffs from each faculty. According to Kothari (2004), a sample size of between 10%-30% is adequate for a descriptive study. The sample size was therefore made up of 62 respondents. Questionnaires was utilized on the grounds that they enable the respondents to give their reactions in a convenient manner. The quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics involved computation of mean scores, standard deviation, percentages, cross tabulation and frequency distributions. A combination of various inferential statistics was used to determine relationship between the dependent and independent variables of the study as well as testing the hypotheses. On the other hand, the qualitative data collected using the in-depth interview schedule was analyzed thematically using content analysis. The study also used regression analysis to show the relationship between the study variable. Thus, the study employed multiple linear regressions in the multivariate analysis. Further, ANOVA was determined whether the overall model is statistically significant. The multiple regression model will be;

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$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \varepsilon_i$
Where: -
Y= Performance
X_1= Partnership Strategy
X_2= Product Development Strategy
X_3= Proactive Marketing Strategy
X_4= Diversification Strategy
β_0 = Constant
β_1, β_2, β_3 & β_4= Coefficients
ε_i= Error term

4.0 Findings and Discussion

This study targeted stop level, middle level and lower lever management staffs of Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) in which the units of observation were the Vice chancellor (VC), deputy vice chancellors (DVCs), the deans and the university teaching staffs. Out of the 56 questionnaires administered to the university teaching staffs, fifty two (52) of them were dully filled and returned, translating into a response rate of 92.9 percent. Additionally, all the 4 deans took part in the study giving a response rate of 100 percent. The one VC and 1 DVC also took part in an interview hence, a response rate of 100 percent. Of these respondents, 80.80% were male, while the other 19.20% were female. Majority (51.90%) of the respondents were aged between 31-40 years, 32.65% were within the age bracket of 51-65 years, while 15.40% were aged between 41-50 years. Additionally, majority (51.90%) of the respondents had been in their designations for up to five years, 21.20% had been in their designations for more than 10 years, but up to 15 years, 19.20% indicated that they had served in their designations for a period of more than 5 years, but up to 10 years. Finally regarding level of education, majority (65.40%) of the respondents were PhD holders, compared to 34.60% that had master's degrees as their highest academic qualifications.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Partnership Strategy

Descriptive statistics results on partnership strategy revealed that most (53.90%) of the respondents agreed that their universities were partnering with other universities in organizing lecturers exchanges, 26.90% disagreed with the statement, while 19.20% were not sure what to say. The results had a mean and standard deviation of 3.504 and 1.034 respectively. This implies that most of the academic staffs were agreeing with the statement. The study found that most (43.10%) were in agreement with the statement that their universities had been engaged in realm of franchising as a way of ensuring speed of growth, motivated management and risk reduction. The responses had M= 3.555 and SD =1.230. Further, the study established that most (69.30%) of the respondents agreed that their universities had been engaging in research partnerships with other universities both locally and internationally, as was also affirmed by M= 3.827 and SD =1.061.

The study results additionally show that most (57.70%) of the respondents agreed that their universities were involved in a number of educational partnerships to create educational opportunities for university and industry participants for experiential learning, learning new skills and tools, and exposure to new problems and perspective (M= 3.681 and SD =1.146). It was also established that most of the respondents (40.40%) were in agreement with the statement that beyond partnerships, their universities and companies had been forming consortia that benefit from greater scale with increased depth and breadth of collaboration (M=

3.096 and SD =1.015). Finally, most (40.40%) of the respondents were undecided on the fact that their universities had been systematically involved in partnerships within innovation ecosystems (M= 3.058 and SD =0.916). Overall, the study responses had an average mean and standard deviation of 3.553 and 1.067respectively. This implies that most of the respondents agreed with the statements on partnership strategy and their responses did not vary so much from the mean response as indicated by a lower value of the standard deviation.

Product Development Strategy

Descriptive statistics on product development strategy showed that majority (80.8%) of respondents agreed that the university has been investing in developing new courses to cater for the needs of the industry, 13.5% of them disagreed while a further 5.8% were unsure. The results had a mean of 3.885 and a standard deviation of 0.9. This implies that a majority of staff agree with the statement. In addition, most (69.2%) of respondents were in agreement that at the time, university was currently working towards developing new services e.g. virtual programmes to the students apart from just on campus studies. 17.3% were undecided while 13.5% disagreed with the statement. With a mean and standard deviation of 3.712 and 0.893 respectively, it is clear that most of the respondents clearly agreed with the statement.

With regards to whether the university has been investing in research to come up with programmes that suit the current job market, 71.2% agreed while 15.4% disagreed and 13.5% were unsure. A mean of 3.673 and a standard deviation of 0.944 show that most of the staff questioned agreed with the statement. Additionally, the study results showed that most (84.7%) of the university staff agreed that the university has been incorporating elements of technology in its programmes (M=4.154 and SD=0.872) 7.7% of respondents disagreed and another 7.7% were undecided. The study also showed that a majority (75%) of respondents were in agreement that the university is currently working in collaboration with companies to offer industrial attachments for students (Mean=3.885 and SD=0.874). In addition, the results revealed that a majority of the staff (42.3%) disagreed with the statement that the university has introduced a new concept where students who score first class at undergraduate are offered a scholarship for masters (Mean=2.788 and Standard Deviation=1.160).

The study also showed that most (44.3%) of the university staff agreed that the Primary motivation for staff in our university to introduce new degree programmes and, to some extent new modules, came primarily from individual academics' desire to link teaching with areas of personal research (Mean=3.269 and SD=0.888). Finally, the results revealed that the majority of respondents (62.7%) agreed that the university invests time, resources and better organize the early new product activities within the university programmes (Mean=3.412, SD=1.080). Generally, the study results had a mean of 3.597 and a standard deviation of 0.940. This means that the university staff generally agree with the university's product development strategies. The low standard deviation shows that there was little variance from the mean response.

Proactive Marketing Strategy

Descriptive statistics results on proactive marketing strategy revealed that a majority (80.8%) of respondents agree that the university is actively involved in digital marketing to reach a greater audience. The responses had a Mean of 3.885 and a Standard deviation of 0.758. The results also revealed that most (50%) of the University academic staff were in agreement that the university has been expanding its horizon to venture in foreign markets. These results had a Mean and standard deviation of 3.019 and 1.213 respectively.

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Additionally, the study results showed that a large percentage (80.4%) of respondents agreed that the university has been working on improving existing courses it offers to meet the standards set by the higher education in the country. This data was supported by a mean of 3.941 and a standard deviation of 0.947. The data also showed that 40.4% of respondents agreed that the university is focusing on Profile of individual students, based on their age, gender, marital status, profession and schedule to create programmes that suit them (Mean=2.981 and SD=0.939).

The results established that most (59.6%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the university has been increasing the number of constituent colleges to cater for more students. These results had a mean of 2.462 and a standard deviation of 0.999. In addition, the study showed that a majority (40%) of the university staff were undecided on whether the university set its school fees slightly lower than that of other private universities in the Country (Mean=3.000 and Standard Deviation=1.107).

Additionally, the study revealed that a majority (51.9%) of the respondents agree that the university offers wide range of different supplementary services than its competitors such as sports centers, modern internet services as well as state of the art library (Mean=3.404 and Standard Deviation=1.089). Finally, the study revealed that most (39.2%) of the university staff agreed with the statement that the university uses Low-cost leadership, differentiation, as well as market focus strategies to enhance market development of the university. The results had a mean of 3.314 and a standard deviation of 1.049. Overall, the results had a mean of 3.251 and a standard deviation of 1.103. This shows that in general, the respondents agreed with their university's Proactive Marketing Strategy with the variance indicating that there was little variance from the mean response.

Diversification Strategy

Descriptive statistics on diversification strategy revealed that a majority (66.7%) of the respondents agree that their university is involved in event management as one way of income generation. The results had a mean of 3.549 and a standard deviation of 0.986. The study also revealed that most (46%) of the respondents were in agreement that their university is engaged in hiring of lecture halls to generate more income (Mean=3.080 and Standard deviation=1.122).

In addition, the study showed that a big percentage (62.8%) of the university staff disagreed that their university has been venturing in the provision of meals for students at subsidized price as income generating venture. The results had a mean of 2.725 and a standard deviation of 1.266. In addition, the study revealed that a majority (52.9%) of respondents disagreed with the statement that their university has been venturing in provision of student accommodation for students who have challenges with accommodation. (Mean=2.843 and Standard deviation=1.223).

The study also established that most (49%) of the respondents disagree that the university is using horizontal integration such as acquiring other colleges to ease competition (Mean=2.627 and SD=1.058). Additionally, the study revealed that most (54.9) of the respondents agreed with the statement that their university practices conglomerate diversification where new products or services are added that are significantly different from the university's present products or services such as hiring of grounds, and charging for its library usage to other universities. The study results had a mean of 3.216 and a Standard deviation of 0.945.

On whether their university has been actively involved in organizing tournaments with other universities within the institution as an income generating venture, most (45.1%) respondents agreed (Mean=3.098 and Standard Deviation=1.269). The results of the study established that most (62.7%) of the respondents disagreed that the university is venturing in horticulture farming as one way of generating more income to serve the students better. The results had a mean of 2.373 and a standard deviation of 1.264. Overall, the study had a mean of and a standard deviation of 2.939 and a standard deviation of 1.142. This means that most of the respondents were largely undecided regarding the university's diversification strategies.

Performance

Finally, descriptive statistics results on the dependent variable, performance indicated that, most (86.5%) of the respondents agree that their university produces highly qualified and marketable graduates that are fit for the market. The results had a mean of 4.135 and a standard deviation of 0.627. Additionally, the study revealed that a majority (71.2%) of the university staff agree with the statement that the graduation rate of first degree is growing at a faster rate in our university (Mean=3.692 and SD=0.940).

The study also established that a large percentage (61.2%) of respondents were in agreement with the statement that the staff publication and patent in our university is growing very fast. This was affirmed by a mean of 3.510 and a standard deviation of 1.082. In addition, the study showed that most (50%) of the university staff disagreed that their university has been attracting huge amounts in terms of research funds over the past five years (Mean=2.731 and SD=0.992).On whether the university has been recording constant increase in enrollment for the past five years, most (40.4%) of the respondents agreed, the results had a mean of 3.038 and a standard deviation of 1.028. In addition, the study results revealed that most (42.3%) of the respondents agree that the amount their university get as grants has increased over the past (Mean=3.058 and Standard Deviation= 1.056).

The study results showed that a majority (42.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that their university been among the best in research among private universities in Kenya (Mean=2.962 and SD=1.028). The study results also established that most (59.6%) of the university staff disagree with the statement that their university has grown over the past 5 years and now they have satellite campuses. The results had a mean of 2.481 and a standard deviation of 1.057. Finally, the Study revealed that most (67.3%) of the respondents agreed that their university is among the private universities with the highest number of government-sponsored students. The results had a mean of 3.712 and a Standard deviation of 0.915. Overall, the results of the study had a mean of 3.258 and a Standard deviation of 0.970. This reveals that most of the respondents agree with the university has had an increase in performance levels and that most responses did not vary greatly from the mean.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis results were as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix

		Performance	Partnership Strategy	Product Development Strategy	Proactive Marketing Strategy	Diversification Strategy
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Partnership Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.721**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Product Development Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.640**	.529**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Proactive Marketing Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.646**	.665**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Diversification Strategy	Pearson Correlation	.660**	.615**	.434**	.548**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	

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

The correlation analysis results in Table 1 show that there was a strong positive and significant association between partnership strategy and performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa ($r=0.721$, $p<0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that an improvement in partnership strategy by the university results into an improvement in the performance of the institution. The results are in agreement with the assertions by Mustikaningsih, Cahyandito, Kaltum and Sarjana (2019) that the partnership strategy (Strategic relationship) can occur among suppliers, manufacturers, distributors and customers, with the sole aim of: gaining access to markets, increasing the value of the products / services offered, Reducing the risk posed by environmental change, ensuring complementary in the field of expertise, acquiring new knowledge, building a sustainable cooperation with major customers and obtaining the resources that are not owned by the company.

The study also found a strong positive and significant association between product development strategy and performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa ($r=0.640$, $p<0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that an improvement in product development strategy by the university results into an improvement in the performance of the institution.

The results concurs with the findings of a study by Maina, Mugambi and Waiganjo (2018) which established a positive association between strategic product development practices and competitiveness in a study which evaluated the effect of strategic product development practices on competitiveness of Kenyan tea in the global market. The study revealed that 1% change in Strategic product development practices decreased competitiveness of Kenyan in the global market by 0.089 units.

In addition, the study found a strong positive and significant association between proactive marketing strategy and performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa ($r=0.696$, $p<0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that an improvement in proavctiveness in marketing strategy by the university results into an improvement in the performance of the institution. The results are consistent with the conclusion made by Hogart-Scot (2019) that, in business, retaining customers and gaining new ones is essential, marketing an organization is therefore an integral way to attract new customers and create ongoing awareness of the organization's offerings and differentiators.

Finally, the study found that there was a strong positive and significant association between diversification strategy and performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa ($r=0.660$, $p<0.05$) at 5% level of significance. This implies that an improvement in diversification strategy by the university results into an improvement in the performance of the institution. The results concurs with the assertions by Keng (2014) that companies with numerous portfolios have greater advantage over single industries.

4.3 Regression Analysis Results

Tables 2, 3 and 4 present the model summary, ANOVA, and regression of coefficient results respectively.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.826a	0.682	0.654	0.473987

a Predictors: (Constant), Diversification strategy, Product development strategy, Partnership strategy, Proactive marketing strategy

Source: Field Data, 2021

The results in Table 2 show that the coefficient of determination (R squared) is 0.682 and adjusted R squared of 0.654 at 95% significance level. The R squared of 0.682 implies that the growth strategies adopted in this study (partnership strategy, product development strategy, proactive marketing strategy and diversification strategy) jointly explains 68.2 percent of the variation in performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The remaining 31.8 percent of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by other factors which were not part of the current model.

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Table 3: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	22.6	4	5.65	25.149	.000[b]
1	Residual	10.559	47	0.225		
	Total	33.159	51			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), Diversification strategy, Product development strategy, Partnership strategy, Proactive marketing strategy

Source: Field Data, 2021

In Table 3, ANOVA results are shown. The results show that the model was statistically significant in explaining the influence of growth strategies on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and it is indicated by a p-value of 0.000<0.05.

Table 4: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
	(Constant)	-0.158	0.42		-0.375	0.709
	Partnership Strategy	0.327	0.126	0.31	2.598	0.012
1	Product Development Strategy	0.227	0.11	0.231	2.062	0.045
	Proactive Marketing Strategy	0.211	0.134	0.199	1.569	0.123
	Diversification Strategy	0.283	0.118	0.26	2.41	0.020

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Source: Field Data, 2021

The regression model therefore became;

$$\mathbf{Y = -0.158 + 0.327X_1+0.227X_2+0.211X_3+ 0.283X_4}$$

Where:
Y= Performance
X_1= Partnership Strategy
X_2= Product Development Strategy
X_3= Proactive Marketing Strategy
X_4= Diversification Strategy

Regression coefficients in Table 4 show that partnership strategy as an aspect of growth strategies had a positive and significant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (β =.327, p=.012<.05). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.598 that was greater than the critical t-statistic of 1.96 further confirming the significance. The result implies that, a unit improvement in partnership strategy results into an improvement in performance by 0.327 units. The results implies further that partnership strategy as an aspect of growth strategies significantly affects the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. This is in support of the conclusion by Purnomo, Suryana and Sari (2018) that the dimensions of partnerships with a supplier had the greatest effect on the improvement of business performance.

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The study also found that product development strategy as an aspect of growth strategies had a positive and significant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (β =.227, p=.045<.05). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.062 that was greater than the critical t-statistic of 1.96 further confirming the significance. The result implies that, a unit improvement in product development strategy results into an improvement in performance by 0.227 units. The results implies further that product development strategy as an aspect of growth strategies significantly affects the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. These results concurs with the assertions by Ndichu (2014) that there exists positive relationship between the strategy and performance of chartered private universities in Kenya which is clearly demonstrated by the recent growth of chartered private universities in terms of student enrolment, size and scope of these institutions and quality offering aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and performance.

However, the study found that product proactive marketing strategy as an aspect of growth strategies had a positive but insignificant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (β =.211, p=.123>.05). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 1.569 that was less than the critical t-statistic of 1.96 further confirming the insignificance. The result implies that, a unit improvement in proactive strategy results into an improvement in performance by 0.211 units, but the improvement is not significant. The results implies further that proactive marketing strategy as an aspect of growth strategies insignificantly affects the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The results are contrary to the findings of a study by Luvusi and Muthoni (2018) which revealed that market proactiveness strategy had a significant influence on the performance of Telkom Kenya Limited.

Finally, the study found that diversification strategy as an aspect of growth strategies had a positive and significant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (β =.283, p=.020<.05). This was supported by a calculated t-statistic of 2.41 that was greater than the critical t-statistic of 1.96 further confirming the significance. The result implies that, a unit improvement in diversification strategy results into an improvement in performance by 0.283 units. The results implies further that diversification strategy as an aspect of growth strategies significantly affects the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa. The results concurs with the assertions by Zheng-Feng and Lingyan (2012) that managers need to be courteous in pursuing diversification because the cost outweighs the benefits.

5.0 Conclusion

Growth strategies often play a vital role in an organization's management as it allows the organization to choose a direction of action and determine how to achieve its goals. Growth strategies allow institutions to access new markets; expand geographically and obtain cutting-edge technology, complementary skills and core competencies relatively fast. On the basis of the findings, this study concludes that the growth strategies adopted had positive and significant effect on the performance of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, except for the variable on proactive marketing strategy that did not affect the performance significantly.

The study also concludes that the same manner that supply and demand shape the markets for typical goods and determine the success of a market, these partnerships between universities and corporations influence the labour market, bringing together demand (i.e. the corporations seeking skilled employees) and supply (universities and education centres training the future workforce). There are numerous long-term benefits that such partnerships can bring to a country's education sector. The study further concludes that there exists positive relationship between growth strategies and performance of chartered private universities in Kenya which is

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clearly demonstrated by the recent growth of chartered private universities in terms of student enrolment, size and scope of these institutions and quality offering aimed at ensuring sustainable growth and performance. It is therefore important that universities such as the Catholic University of Eastern Africa should adopt growth strategies as one way of boosting their general performance.

The study also concludes that unlike updating a product for an existing marketing, creating or enhancing a product for a new market requires steps similar to designing a brand new product. Steps to create a new product (or enhance an existing one) for a new market may include all or some of the following steps: product design, product analysis, design documentation, prototyping, and of course product production. Staffing and staff development initiatives, reform of academic function-teaching, research and publication, funding and infrastructure development, generation of partnership with community, adapting to the era of Information Communication Technology, widening of access through open and distance learning, collaboration or partnership with local and international development partners as well as the democratization of higher education institutional administration.

6.0 Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions, this study recommends that the Catholic university of Eastern Africa should consider fully implementing growth strategies such as partnership, product development, proactive marketing and diversification strategies as ways of enhancing their performance. The study concluded that in the process of new product development, a business does not simply promote new products, but has to satisfy customer demands and cope with competitors' threats.

The study further recommends that the public policies to be advanced and then implemented by the authorities before diversity can be achieved have a number of available challenges to reach their objectives. Each of these challenges has its specific reasons and drawbacks and any efficient policy application must consider them in order to limit the range and impact of unintended adverse consequences. The study recommends that the Catholic University of Eastern Africa should implement a strong growth strategies because without an integrated growth strategies, the university may run the risk of losing mindshare or sending mixed messages.

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