**THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE MARKETING STRATEGIES OF USIU\_AFRICA**

# **Chapter One**

## **Introduction**

The marketing sector has witnessed considerable upheaval in recent years due to the introduction of new technology, evolving consumer behaviour, and the global COVID-19 pandemic. Marketing continually evolves, with fresh innovations altering how organizations communicate with clients. The pandemic has altered marketing plans and pressured the education sector to address issues never dreamed of before COVID-19. Owing to the pandemic, many institutions and schools have closed, requiring students to complete their education online (Chang & Chou, 2021). The pandemic has compelled the United States International University Africa (USIU-Africa) to alter its marketing strategies. The purpose of this study is to assess the effect that COVID-19 has on the marketing strategies used by USIU-Africa

Located in Nairobi, Kenya, USIU-Africa is a private, non-religious learning institute. USIU-Africa allows students to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in various disciplines, such as business, the humanities, and the social sciences. More than 70 countries are represented by USIU-Africa students (Njoroge, 2022).The COVID-19 pandemic has faced the university with additional hurdles, necessitating modifications to its marketing methods. The pandemic has significantly altered consumer behaviour, including an increase in the amount of time spent online and a reorganization of purchasing priorities. To adapt to the current context, USIU-Africa has had to change its marketing strategies (Njunguna & Yogo, n.d.). Sadly, it has yet to be evident how efficient these approaches are; consequently, it is vital to research their implications.

This study aims to analyze how COVID-19 has affected the marketing operations of USIU-Africa.This study aims to determine whether or not USIU-Africa changed its marketing approach in reaction to the pandemic and, if so, how successful those changes were. The purpose of the study is also to identify the difficulties that USIU-Africa will have in adapting to the changing environment and to provide viable solutions that might be put into practice. The value of this study is that it will add to the body of knowledge already available about the impact that COVID-19 has had on marketing strategies used in the education industry. In addition, it will cast light on the obstacles that institutions such as USIU-Africa have had to overcome to adjust to the new milieu and propose best marketing practices in the post-pandemic age. Understanding how COVID-19 affects marketing initiatives can assist USIU-Africa in creating successful marketing plans .

**Background of the Problem**

Businesses and organizations worldwide are working to adapt to the new environment brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has also significantly impacted the global economy. The pandemic has forced businesses in the marketing industry to change their strategies (Firang & Mensah, 2021). Due to the pandemic, some educational institutions have shut their doors, while others have changed their business models to focus on online learning. As a result, educational institutions have had to significantly alter their marketing strategies.The pandemic has forced USIU-Africa and many other organizations to change their marketing tactics. This has necessitated several things, including a shift to digital marketing, an improvement in online presence, and the introduction of virtual campus tours.

The challenges that USIU-Africa faced when responding to the new marketing climate are common. Other institutions worldwide deal with similar issues, and the marketing sector is rapidly shifting. For instance, a study by Hutahaean et al. (2022) discovered that Indonesian colleges had needed help luring and keeping students since the pandemic. Similarly, a study undertaken by Osei‐Kojo et al. (2022) showed the obstacles faced by universities in Ghana while seeking to adjust their marketing strategies to the altering circumstances. Effective marketing tactics for educational institutions can achieve higher enrolment and retention rates. The COVID-19 pandemic has presented educational institutions with new challenges that must be overcome to deploy conventional marketing methods successfully.

Recent literature has examined the effects of COVID-19 on the marketing industry and the difficulties academic institutions have encountered in their attempts to adjust to the new environment. For instance, the pandemic has shifted toward digital marketing methods, and institutions need to increase their online presence (Istrefi-Jahja & Zeqiri, 2021). Similarly, Agasisti & Soncin (2020) suggest that schools adopt a more student-centric marketing strategy based on the needs and preferences of students in the new environment. The literature also emphasises the need for institutions to develop effective communication methods that address the concerns of students and their families around the pandemic.

Given the substantial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational institutions' marketing efforts, it is vital to analyse the efficiency of the techniques utilised by USIU-Africa (Njoroge, 2022).

## **Statement of the Problem**

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the entire world, including the educational system. In response to the new reality of the pandemic, higher education institutions, particularly USIU-Africa, have had to significantly modify their marketing strategies (Rono & Waithera, 2021). The study aims to assess the effectiveness of the changes USIU-Africa made to its marketing activities in response to the pandemic. The study will evaluate the difficulties USIU-Africa encountered in adapting to the pandemic and how it overcame them. The study will also highlight the best practices adopted by USIU-Africa in response to the pandemic, which could serve as an example for other higher education institutions dealing with similar issues.

This study is critical because it will contribute to the literature on how COVID-19 affects marketing strategies in higher education institutions. The results of this study will provide information on the strategies used by USIU-Africa to combat the pandemic and how effective they have been. In light of the pandemic and beyond, these findings will help other higher education institutions develop effective marketing initiatives. The study's outcomes will aid in elucidating how educational institutions might adapt their marketing tactics to meet the evolving needs of their target consumers. The study's findings will also be helpful to policymakers and stakeholders in the education sector, who may use them to build policies that support institutions in adapting to the new normal. The study will also establish the basis for ongoing research into how the pandemic affects higher education institutions' marketing tactics and how these institutions may prepare for future crises.

## **Purpose of the Study/General Objective**

The general objective of the study is to examine the impact of covid19 on marketing strategies of USIU-Africa.

## **Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate how social distancing has affected the marketing strategies of USIU-Africa.

2.

3.

4.

**Research Questions**

This study will be based on the following research questions:

1.

These research questions are consistent with the study's objectives and will guide the data collection and analysis. The research questions are ideal for the study's purpose since they are specific, quantifiable, and manageable. The response to these study questions will provide insight into how COVID-19 has changed USIU-Africa’s Marketing efforts.

**Significance of the Study**

Higher education institutions all across the world are confronting a unique issue as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Because traditional campuses are being phased out in favour of online learning, educational institutions have been forced to rethink their marketing strategies for attracting and retaining students (Ali, 2020). Since students and their families face terrible economic circumstances and are concerned about the future, the pandemic has also added to the immense financial pressure that has been forced on educational institutions. In this context, it is of the utmost importance to comprehend how COVID-19 has impacted the marketing strategies used in higher education and to identify solutions to improve student recruitment and retention.

The proposed study intends to determine how COVID-19 has affected the marketing methods utilized by USIU-Africa to recruit and retain students. The study will shed light on the effectiveness of the university's safety procedures during the pandemic and identify areas for improvement. The study's results will significantly assist the university's marketing department as it works to adapt to shifting conditions and enhance student enrollment and retention. The study's conclusions may substantially impact the area of marketing as a whole. There is a need for a study that studies the COVID-19 pandemic's consequences on several industries because it has brought significant upheaval to the marketing industry. This study will contribute to the body of knowledge in this field by examining the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing methods employed in the higher education business. Also, the knowledge may be helpful to other businesses, assisting in developing marketing strategies in response to the pandemic.

The study's potential impact on student recruitment and retention cannot be overstated. The marketing operations of USIU-Africa, a prestigious university in East Africa, may impact many students' academic and professional futures. The institution may play a crucial role in fostering its students' academic and professional success by increasing student recruitment and retention. Hence, the university and its students will benefit substantially from the study's outcomes.

Overall, the suggested study is essential for marketing and higher education. By examining the impact of COVID-19 on USIU - Marketing Africa's approaches to student recruitment and retention, the study will provide valuable insights that can be used to improve the university's marketing efforts and to advise other institutions facing similar challenges. This research is significant and beneficial due to its potential contributions to the field of marketing as well as its implications for student recruitment and retention.

## **Scope of the Study**

The study population will include current and prospective USIU-Africa students and the institution's marketing staff and administration. A representative population sample will ensure the findings apply to the entire population. The sample size will be determined using probability sampling procedures. Due to time and resource constraints, the sample size may be small and need to reflect the spectrum of ideas in the community adequately.

On the other hand, it is crucial to identify any limitations or assumptions that could influence the study's findings. Self-reported data has several potential drawbacks, as survey respondents may need more accurate information. The study may also be affected by the pandemic's quick state change, as new legislation and technological improvements may affect how successfully USIU Africa's marketing efforts operate. Given these restrictions, the study will strive to provide a complete analysis of how COVID-19 has impacted USIU Africa's marketing efforts to attract and keep students.

## **Definition of Terms**

A few essential terms in this study must be defined for the reader to grasp the context in which they are employed. The terms include:

1. COVID-19: A highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, which emerged in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and has since spread worldwide. The pandemic caused by the spread of COVID-19 has considerably impacted enterprises and organizations worldwide, particularly in USIU-Africa.

2.. Marketing strategies: The marketing methods implemented by USIU Africa to lure in and retain students despite the limits brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic are critical to this study.

## **Chapter Summary**

This study aimed to investigate how COVID-19 affects the marketing strategies employed by USIU-Africa.

The chapter begins with a brief introduction of the topic, including the current situation of the marketing business and the challenges faced by organizations such as USIU Africa. A literature study was also conducted, looking at relevant studies concerning how COVID-19 affects marketing efforts. The influence of COVID-19 on USIU Africa's marketing strategies was identified as the research problem.

The study's purpose, rationale, and objectives were then explained. The study's specific objectives, which are intended to contribute to achieving the broader goal, were also outlined. A list of research questions and hypotheses directed the data collection and analysis. The reason and Significance of the study were then addressed in detail, underlining the worth of the study and its predicted contributions to the field of marketing and higher education. The study's duration, demographics, and sample size were also mentioned, along with any limitations or hypotheses that would influence its conclusions. The chapter concluded with a summary that emphasized the importance of the study and highlighted the key points made. This chapter is the foundation for the rest of the dissertation, providing a clear and short introduction to the study subject and its importance.

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