

Exploring the Justification and Efficacy of Marketing Strategies Adapted in Tanzania's Private Primary and Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This study was conducted in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to explore education marketing strategies that private primary and secondary schools use and the extent of their efficacy. The study employed the marketing-mix theory to describe the marketing areas that are of interest to the schools under review. Data were collected through documentary reviews, school observations, and interviews with the heads of selected schools. Thematic and descriptive analyses were used. The study found that inter-school competition emanated from the reintroduction and increase of private schools. The marketing strategies that education managers use under the current education marketing in Tanzania include improving and maintaining the quality of services. Even though the managers were generally satisfied with the output of their strategies, a working strategy for marketing in education must be mindful of what clients consider to be important. It is recommended that school heads should employ strategies that do not compromise education quality.

Keywords: *educational marketing, educational management, basic education, school competition*

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, many low-income countries have experienced unprecedented growth in the participation of the private sector in education provision (Lassibille et al., 2000). This rapid increase in private sector participation has ushered in a period of competition that has inevitably necessitated marketisation practices in education (Greaves et al., 2023). In the context of Tanzania, the once socialist country has experienced a shift from state monopoly in education provision to diversified participation of governmental and non-governmental organisations as well as the private sector, in general (John, 2010). During colonial times, religious institutions, private entities, and the colonial government had been providing such education in the then Tanganyika and the Zanzibar archipelago until 1967, when the state became esse-

ntially the domineering sole provider of what it had called Education for Self-reliance. By then, Tanganyika (now Mainland Tanzania) had attained independence in 1961 and Zanzibar in 1964, when the two sovereign states forged a union to create the United Republic of Tanzania. The shift in education policy followed the Arusha Declaration in 1967 when the country embarked on the African brand of socialist system of governance known as *Ujamaa*. As a result, the government not only dominated the education provision landscape but also nationalised most of the previously non-governmental schools and colleges (Babygeya, 2000). However, the economic downturn and doldrums of the 1980s, coupled with the fallout of the war which Tanzania had fought with Uganda from 1978 to 1979, necessitated changes even in the education sector. In the mid-1980s, the Breton Woods institutions, particularly the International Monetary Fund (IMF), intervened with the infamous structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) or austerity measures (Wobst, 2001). These SAPs insisted on strict and frugal economic policies, including Tanzania reopening social service sectors to cut public spending and bringing in private and other non-governmental entities to reinvigorate the education sector without bloated public spending.

Nevertheless, the Tanzania government remains the dominant player in education, going by the gigantic numerical advantage of its public schools over those run by private and non-governmental institutions. By 2023, there were 17,419 government and 2,364 non-government pre-primary streams. Government primary schools numbered 17,463, and non-government ones were 2,270. For secondary education, government schools amounted to 4,578 and non-government ones to 1,348 (President's Office Regional Administration and Local Government, 2023). Though schools follow the same curricula (with the exception of a few international schools), public and private ones attract students on different grounds. For instance, affluent parents, as well as those with the means in the country, have for many years been sending their children to non-government schools and not government ones mainly because of better national examination results of the former institutions (John, 2010). Such parental preference upped the tempo among non-government schools whose marketing strategies aimed not only to upstage government-run schools but also their rivals in the private sector (Sayi et al., 2013).

The concept of marketing presents varied meanings in different fields, such as industry, business, and agriculture. In fact, the term 'marketing' depends on the perspectives held in a particular field. In the context of education, Chattopadhyay (2012) defines marketing as acts of an educational organisation aimed to facilitate the exchange and provision of educational services for beneficiaries of different backgrounds and with varied interests. Broadly, markets foster the exchange of goods, services, and values. Nevertheless, a market circle needs a set of actors, mainly producers and consumers, for it to be completed. In the education sector,

these producers are educational institutions/service providers. In contrast, consumers include students and their parents, on the one hand, and employers of school graduates on the other (Briges & Jonathan, 2003, cited in Chattopadhyay, 2012).

Basically, education provision has profitable returns for both service providers and recipients (Galabawa, 2005). Though the primary aim of providers is to generate income out of the service, education markets dictate that they should be considerate of equality and equity even if, finally, the definitive factor is the customers' capacity to afford the educational cost based on their purchasing power. Yet, this marketing has also significantly raised the education costs in terms of tuition fees, stationery, books, school uniforms and food. Nevertheless, according to Platis and Baban (2010), markets allow educational institutions to improve the quality of education they provide, their institutional buildings, laboratories, classrooms, and administrative structures, as well as teaching and learning processes. For schools and other educational institutions, service improvement often results from market forces, with those with the most outstanding education quality delivery having a competitive edge over others in market share. In this dichotomous existence, the rivalry has mainly been between private and public institutions at one level and among private schools and public ones as separate entities at another (Sabarwal et al., 2020).

Jongbloed (2003), cited in Chattopadhyay (2012), contends that educational markets depend on both the producers' and consumers' scope of freedom to decide and act. Consumers can choose providers (Waslander et al., 2010) from the pool of numerous institutions in the education sector market. The customers can also select a programme and/or course offered at a particular school, college, or university. As such, they need adequate information on associated prices and quality (Saumen, 2012). Such information may be provided as part of marketing through the school's promotion, public relations, and other publicity means to make the consumer aware of where to get the best and most affordable value-for-money educational services (Tillack, 2008).

By contrast, service providers control entry (Tillack, 2008) depending on the policies guiding them on what inputs can yield the best results and maintain the status of their respective brands. Some private schools usually have higher entry qualifications than public schools (Onai & Ligembe, 2022). Even though private institutions operate in the public domain, they can decide which subjects they would offer from commercial, arts, science, technical, or all of these disciplines. Moreover, education providers can determine the cost of their services and products in terms of tuition fees and other associated expenses.

Platis and Baban (2010) delineate four roles characterising a practitioner in educational marketing. Firstly, education marketing personnel must investigate the markets available before educational institutions can provide educational services. Such investigation includes researching to understand the market needs essential to excelling in the existing competition. Secondly, the personnel and the institution must provide appropriate products and/or services to the clients, hence the need to deliver what the market wants. In response to market demands, most educational institutions provide services that are responsive to the client's needs and wishes by providing boarding facilities and/or transport for day-schoolers. Thirdly, a market-oriented service provider tends to meet the customer with optimal quality services by considering the scope of quality teaching, learning conditions, quality of teachers and other school-related activities. Fourthly, education marketing must target and accommodate these specific needs and align them with institutional objectives to attract consumers. Thus, the school management can use materials available to enhance the production and disseminate information to promote optimal and efficient management. With a marketing orientation, dissemination assumes the form of advertisement and promotion activities to achieve set organisational goals.

Furthermore, previous studies (Amzat, 2016; Beneke, 2011; Sujchaphong & Nguyen, 2017) have shown that educational institutions market their services through branding to attract fees. However, these studies dealt with higher education in countries other than Tanzania. Favaloro's (2015) study on the financial returns of marketing education found that in the Australian education sector, marketing practices were partly necessitated by government funding cuts. Nevertheless, the study does not specify the strategies that educational institutions employ in their marketing. Apparently, these previous studies have primarily managed to shed light on education marketing in higher and or further education (e.g., Newman & Jahdi, 2009), with marketing in the lower echelons of education rarely getting a mention. Further, studies that have examined how educational institutions exercise marketing include Ore (2021), who investigated the effect of digital marketing on the education sector of Peru. The study found that digital marketing helped educational institutions develop their relationship with customers. Generally, a paucity of empirical literature on what makes marketing at lower levels of education necessary, particularly in basic education and the strategies that primary and secondary schools use, is evident. Moreover, existing research has insufficiently covered education marketing practices in developing countries.

This paper, therefore, attempts to help bridge such a knowledge gap, that is, the paucity of research on marketing strategies in basic education from developing countries in the context of Tanzania. Specifically, the paper highlights the necessity of education marketing in a developing country, Tanzania. It points out some working strategies education managers can use to manage contemporary markets at the basic education

level in its exploration of the current situation in the education market. To examine such necessity and the marketing strategies that private primary and secondary schools in Tanzania have adopted, the study employed a marketing-mix theory, as pointed out by Neil Borden (Filip, 2012). The theory assumes that marketing focuses on four key areas: product, price, place, and promotion, or simply the 4Ps, as suggested by Jerome McCarthy (Jain & Jain, 2022). In the context of education, the theory generates seven areas, as further amplified by Kotler and Fox (Casap, 2017), whereby an educational marketing-mix model comprises education programmes, price, place, promotion, processes, physical facilities, and people. Apparently, Kotler and Fox do not treat a ‘product’ as a vital element in education. Ivy (2008) also adds some components for education, including programme, prominence, prospectus, and premiums. Implicitly, what necessitates marketing and associated strategies for marketing education (as this paper demonstrates) fall under the marketing-mix theory parameters.

Methodology

The study was undertaken in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, primarily because of the sheer diversity of schools that market their educational services and the huge number of schools that the region has relative to other regions in the country (it is the region with the highest number of non-government schools). Dar es Salaam has 385 and 178 private primary and secondary schools, respectively (the highest number in the country for either category), according to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (2020). Data came from both primary and secondary schools. Each of these schools has one head of school. Out of 563 schools, 85 schools were selected to participate in the study. Using Cochran’s (1977) formula, the study computed the sample to comprise 85 heads of schools, with a desired margin of error of 5% and an estimated proportion of 0.5. Moreover, the study treated education levels (primary and secondary) as strata, with Slovin’s formula (Altares et al. 2003, p. 13) facilitating the determination of the sample from each level. To avoid revealing the identity of the schools that were involved, the study uses letters in lieu of their respective names for ethical reasons. Table 1 presents the composition of the sampled heads of schools.

Table 1

Number of Heads of Schools Involved in the Study by Education Level

SN.	School education level	Population	Sampled schools
1	Heads of Primary Schools	385	58
2	Heads of Secondary Schools	178	27
	Total	563	85

Desk research facilitated the examination of school websites and media outlets electronically because the marketing of schools is available online in the public domain of both mainstream and social media platforms on which schools have active accounts. In addition, observing different school practices during fieldwork required visiting the selected school campuses and photographing symbolic school marketing exertions. Furthermore, interviews with 85 school heads in Dar es Salaam provided in-depth information on why they must market their schools, how they do it and what they consider to be effective in their marketing strategies.

The resultant textual and image data were coded after data transcription, followed by organising them manually into emerging patterns treated as themes. Subsequently, the thematic analysis of the data entailed specifically identifying marketing strategies in use and associated effects. Besides describing the actual use of a strategy and the extent of its effectiveness, the study also deployed description analysis through frequencies.

Findings and Discussions

The study found that understanding and undertaking educational marketing is driven by competition among schools following the reintroduction and rising number of private schools and colleges alongside the existence of public schools. This development has triggered competition for education services seekers. Such competition is, indeed, facing educational institutions that offer lower quality levels of education as they struggle to attract the best primary school leavers. In this regard, one of the school heads said during an interview:

We struggle to ensure members of the public within and outside the country know about us. We cannot afford to keep quiet about ourselves and the good things that we do, even though we know several other schools also have the same exemplary students. We win them over to our side through advertisements on social networks such as Facebook, WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram. Thus, we post details about interesting things in our school, and we put ads on videos of famous musicians such as [name] and [name] (*Head of School KN*).

Such evidence contrasts with occurrences in the previous few years when public educational institutions were mainly for students on government bursaries, and private ones were for those who had failed to qualify to join these schools but could pay for their schooling. Similarly, Cassidy (2013) contended that marketing in education is attributable to competition.

Moreover, it emerged that managing educational markets can assure institutional survival in a competitive environment. In education, schools or colleges failing to

to market education services to potential clients can go out of business because the more competitive options can cater for those clients' needs and aspirations. One of the interviewees said:

There are different demands and expectations from both students and stakeholders in the market. They must be served by schools in diverse ways. By understanding what they want, we make sure the wishes of the stakeholders are available in the school, and we tell them about this. Through marketing, we have what they want. There is no option two for our survival as an institution; if you do not give them what they expect, they transfer elsewhere (*Head of School TE*).

Moreover, it emerged that educational managers were conversant with the increasingly complex educational market in Tanzania. The complexity of this market stems from the diversity of clients and education stakeholders with different demands and expectations. In the country's market, some clients still need conventional services from educational institutions, whereas other clients would like services at a distance and online. Such delivery modes have now been possible due to the increased use of information communication technology. As one of the interviewees pointed out,

Our school has a website. You can get information from there; we upload it with our advertisements and learning materials, but of course, it has restrictions. We do so because there are times when our students do not necessarily work at school. They can work from home (*Head of School GH*).

The diversification of demands upon education, indeed, exists in different countries, as Tooley (2013) has contended.

Furthermore, an understanding of the educational market helps managers identify not only the services clients require but also the expected quality and standards. Schools must improve their services by considering the perspective of those who use them. Consequently, schools in Tanzania have struggled to engage prospective students through various methods, aiming to inform the public about their policies and understand students' preferences. One interviewee shared the following experience in this context:

We stay close to the media. We advertise our services through various media, particularly [name] radios. We decided to use [name] because it reaches many people in different localities, regardless of its being listened to by many Christians, but they [the radio] assured

us it reaches many people. Through radio programmes, we communicate what we have, and the listeners respond by telling us what else we should do and what to improve (*Head of School PP*).

The use of different channels for communicating such advertisements concurs with the marketing-mix theory's assumption that promotion is a key issue in education marketing. In line with that, Kotler and Keller (2016) support a point that equates promotion to communication.

To understand the needs and aspirations of clients, some schools solicit opinions from parents and guardians on a daily basis and during graduation ceremonies. As one of the interviewees explained,

We use graduation ceremonies as much as possible to gather many people who come to observe what is going on. The school management then seizes that opportunity to talk to the audience. We tell the audience about the features of the school and inform them about how we stand in examination results. They get an opportunity to tell us what they want us to add or do better (*Head of school TX*).

As for education marketing strategies that private primary and secondary schools apply in Tanzania, it emerged that the strategy includes improving and maintaining the quality of services. Moreover, having attractive remunerations for staff, maintaining high academic standards at school, and providing impressive other services are vital ingredients. In this regard, one of the interviewees said:

We make our school attractive to parents and students by retaining highly motivated teachers. Apart from salaries and other allowances, our school provides transport and meals to staff, and it is not just meals, but it is quality meals, to ensure their presence at work all the time. This has become a great weapon for [school name] secondary school, helping to retain competent teachers as compared to our competitors. We know that most schools do not provide such fringe benefits. Besides, [school name] allows our staff and students to know that there's room for growth (*Head of School WC*).

These efforts aimed to retain the quality teachers are consistent with the marketing-mix theory, which assumes that people are vital in education marketing. As Newman and Jahdi (2009) further contend, schools endowed with people/teachers of calibre who are champions, possessing capabilities and charisma, are attractive to the market. Besides, any capable client goes for quality services; hence, there is an overriding need to maintain academic standards as a strategy. Thus, any institution not deploying quality control and assurance in all aspects of its services could fail to develop a competitive edge in the market with cut-throat competition.

In recent decades, Tanzanians, who can send their children to a school of their choice, have been enrolling their children in schools and colleges based on outstanding examination results. These parents treat good examination results as a foremost indicator of quality education. School owners are, therefore, increasingly under pressure to sustain such lofty levels. Moreover, outstanding schools in academic performance are also doubly obliged to improve their conduct as well. Indeed, the maintenance of good performance, therefore, has become a strategic line of competition among schools in Tanzania. One of the interviewees said:

Since the market needs high student performance, we enrol students with high capacity in the first place. Before admission of Form One students, we conduct interviews through which we choose capable students able to perform well in Form Two and Four examinations. This helps the school perform impressively at the regional and national levels. The school has also opened different branches across the country, the branches which offer the same service. We are in Dar es Salaam, Zanzibar and Mtwara, so we make it easy for the customers to get the same service nearby (*Head of School KJ*).

Such opening of school branches in different regions is in line with market characteristics presumed under the marketing-mix theory in education marketing regarding the place of services, whereby the placement of service institutions considers the convenience of customers.

Indeed, once schools perform well academically, they strive to ensure the public knows about it. The public becomes aware of how good they are academically. Through observations, the study managed to collect data on what such schools do to inform the public. Figure 1 presents the writing on a school bus, exposing the school's academic performance, which is ranked first in the Dar es Salaam region and sixth nationally in 2018. However, in early 2023, the National Examination Council of Tanzania stopped such ranking schools by national examination results, which incidentally had disadvantaged many public schools.



Figure 1: School bus showing the school's performance at national and regional levels

Similarly, the quality of other services for students, such as good dormitories, transportation, computer laboratories, and recreational facilities, as well as security, continues to serve as an attraction to the clients. As a result, schools also market themselves based on the quality of these services. One of the interviewees said:

For next year, we have a plan to raise the number of students. We now strive to improve the quality of our buildings, such as classrooms and offices, to make them more attractive to parents and their children. We increase the number of school buses. Until recently, we had only two buses. We also improve the quality of food for our students, of course, to maintain good health for them and in that way improve the capacity of learning and high performance of the children. All these make the school to be known to more people and increase the number of children brought to our school (*Head of School VF*).

Making classrooms and offices attractive is consistent with the marketing-mix theory, which suggests that physical facilities are crucial in the marketing of education.

Another strategy that schools deploy is raising the visibility of a school or college through the mass media. In Tanzania today, several institutions strive for

visibility within and outside the country. These schools use both online, including social media platforms, and mainstream media to communicate what they do and their exceptional niche to current and potential clients. One of the school heads said during an interview: *“We stay close to the media. Our public relations officer is managing this, posting advertisements from the management about vacancies, study opportunities, events that we have participated in and impending ones”* (Head of School MG). Apart from the legacy media, schools today exploit the avenues that social networks such as Twitter engender, as one of the heads explained:

We are using Twitter and Instagram accounts to keep the public informed. We also involve our school in social activities to improve the school’s reputation in society. We give donations and participate in charity activities. All these are then documented and uploaded on our website and our social media (Head of School GH).

Moreover, opening and running a website bearing the name of a school and regularly uploading information about the school further market these institutions. One of the school heads claimed during an interview: *“Our school has a website; you can get information from there, and we upload our information and advertisements”* (Head of GH School). This finding concurs with Ore’s (2021) claim that schools use digital means to reach and attract customers. Besides, some schools have banners mounted in different places, whereas others have straight connections with parents through telephones and e-mails. As one of the interviewees explained,

We also use school buses. Our buses transporting our pupils in the city bear school phone numbers written on them and a message encouraging members of the public to call and inquire about our services. We make sure the buses are clean and attractive. We also use brochures, adverts and banners placed in different places. In that way, we send messages to our customers, and they give us feedback. We tell them we have an international staff. We employ some workers who are not Tanzanians so that they bring their skills and knowledge to our school. We have learned that parents want competence in English. We, therefore, have some Ugandan and Kenyan English teachers. Some want French; we have two Rwandese teachers for that (Head of School PP).

Schools in Tanzania are also strategically interested in internationalisation to determine their admissions in a bid to capture not only the local market but also the cross-border ones. Several schools are increasingly enrolling students from different countries. Basic education statistics in Tanzania show that by 2020, non-Tanzanian pupils amounted to 3,335 children in pre-primary classes, 2,004 in primary schools, and 1,331 in secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology,

2020). Such internationalisation is not just about enrolling international students but also about instituting changes in the curricula, the medium of instruction and fees charged. In fact, a few schools in the country use an international curriculum. Amidst the internationalisation of education in Tanzania, the English language remains a dominant medium of instruction in private schools. One of the interviewees said:

We produce newsletters that talk more about the school. They show various activities by teachers, students, and other workers at the school and outside the school campus, depicting our international school community. We have articles by students talking about their good experiences at school; these are even for foreigners to read. The newsletters also have pictures of laboratories, libraries, and dormitories. We have foreign teachers as well. This year, we have employed an English teacher from Malawi and a Bible knowledge teacher from Kenya (*Head of School MG*).

Consequently, Tanzania's private schools strive to spearhead internationalisation to capture a broad-based market. Some countries outside Africa use internationalisation as an economic strategy and/or a financing strategy for education. These countries and their educational institutions collect significant amounts of foreign exchange through fees.

Furthermore, assurance of timely completion of studies is another strategy that schools in Tanzania apply to manage the contemporary educational market. Schools that allow students to complete their studies in a timely manner have a competitive edge. On the contrary, schools that elongate or delay students' completion of their studies and issue certificates several months after graduation lose many clients since word spread, particularly by mouth. In other words, the most attractive schools and colleges to students today are also marked by timely completion of studies and issuance of certificates. One of the school heads said during an interview: "*We strive to make sure no one repeats a class here. It is seven years, and they must finish in seven years. Any service that they deserve is provided instantly. That is why on the graduation day we even issue certificates*" (*Head of school NG*). As earlier pointed out, market management today also indicates that schools apply diverse modes of education delivery beyond conventional schooling (physical classrooms). In this regard, offering online teaching and learning, distance education, and executive programmes has become a useful strategy. The heads interviewed explained that they had websites to serve such purposes, including offering evening classes. One interviewee said: "*We had to understand that there are clients out there who are not necessarily in a position to come physically to our school campus, but we can still serve them from their homes or workplaces, for example, those who use the school for qualifying tests*" (*Head of School JN*). In other words, schools have become so flexible that they can also cater

to the needs of learners who are unable to become full-time learners due to a myriad of circumstances.

The delivery modes of education in Tanzania today also accommodate part-time learning, evening classes, and learning under special arrangements such as executive programmes. The development of such programmes is also consistent with the marketing-mix theory, which treats programmes as an area of focus for educational institutions when marketing themselves. Moreover, this diversification of delivery modes augurs well with the marketing-mix assumption that processes for schools are also essential in marketing their services.

The study also found that schools today increasingly use rolling strategic plans with a thorough analysis of the market that evaluates their strength, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC analysis). Such an analysis can account for a school's opportunities, the strengths of their competitors and what they need to do differently to have a competitive edge and survive in the market. A post on one of the schools' websites exemplifies such strategic planning thusly:

During the 2012-13 school year, [school name] completed an in-depth review of its core guiding statement (mission, vision, and values) through a highly consultative process involving all members of the [school name] community. This review was an important starting point in developing a new strategic plan for the school to replace the previous one that ran from 2009-12. A range of consultation exercises, including surveys, open meetings, and focus group meetings, took place, with many community suggestions incorporated in the statements that were adopted by the board between January and August 2013. Work on the strategic plan was complemented by the writing of key school-wide statements on our teaching and learning philosophy, our approach to international-mindedness, community engagement and customer service (*Post on the school AA website*)

In addition, school managers revealed that they also utilised the services of school alumni to brand their school. As one of the school heads interviewed pointed out,

You must do marketing; we use, for example, our current students, former ones, and teachers. We give privileges to high-performing students, advertise the school, pay the teachers handsomely, use brochures and leaflets and distribute them in churches and mosques. You can also distribute them to primary schools, which have standard seven classes (*Head of School YZ*).

Such use of alumni corresponds with a marketing-mix theory assumption that education marketing targets people. Even with internationalisation, the people

remain the target. Figure 2 presents the frequency of participants reporting improvements in the quality of service as the foremost strategy for schools to capture and manage the market:

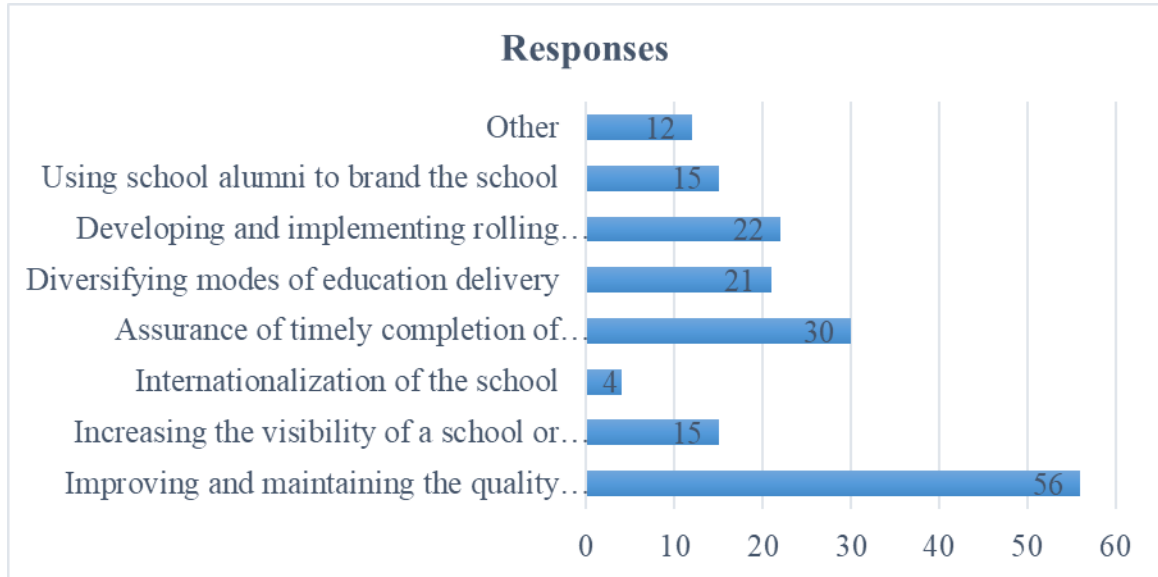


Figure 2: Frequency of using marketing strategies in private schools in Tanzania

Apart from the strategies that emerged during interviews and rated in terms of use frequency, participants also specified other marketing strategies the schools deployed. One of the school heads said during an interview:

The strategies include competitive school fees, mass media broadcasting and branding, supporting community projects in the neighbourhood, engaging parents in school activities who eventually act as ambassadors outside, academic exhibitions during graduation, improving the working environment, especially for teachers, alongside giving them motivation through rewards, and when possible salary increments; games and sports at school, hiring the right number of teachers and maintaining a good teacher-pupil ratio, and good customer care (*Head of school PB*).

School heads perceived most of the strategies that they applied in marketing their institutions to have yielded the results and, therefore, considerably effective. Figure 3 presents the results of the participant's assessment of the strategies' effectiveness:

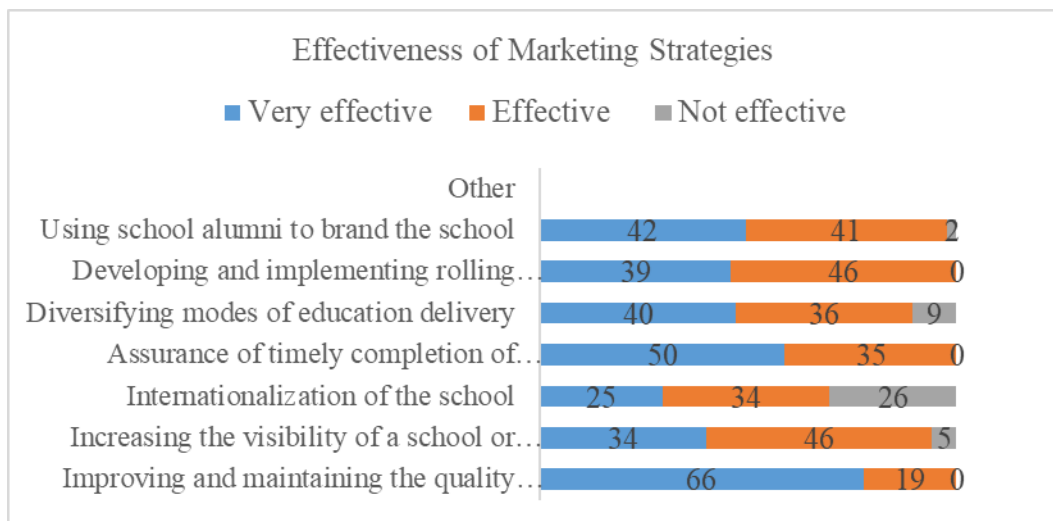


Figure 3: Participants' response on the effectiveness of school marketing strategies

As Figure 1.3 illustrates, the provision and maintenance of quality school service are vital, as none of the participants considered it to be ineffective. Other strategies that were not considered by any participant as ineffective, for example, the development of a strategic plan and assurance of timely completion. Besides, the rest of the strategies are perceived to have varied levels of effectiveness. Participants also attested to how the effectiveness of the strategies they use in their schools depended on the overall school results. In this regard, one of the respondents said:

Customers increase their loyalty depending on examination results. The school has been in the first position at the district level for five years conservatively in Primary School Leaving Examinations; radio and television broadcasting has increased the number of pupils in my school from 300 in 2020 to 450 in 2021. Parental involvement in school activities has also been effective as we continuously receive calls for new enrolments by parents who were referred to us by other parents who are currently with us or whose children graduated from us; student academic performance, in-class and national exams have improved; timely completion of studies has given us time for exercises which make the students very familiar with the knowledge itself and examining processes; enhancing quality of services to our customers, it has made the community around and other people to bring their children to this school... We also have a habit of asking how a parent came to know the school; most of the clients do not care about school fees, but the quality of the services, and improving the quality of services has increased the rate of enrolment of students and popularity of the school (*Head of School DL*).

Such testimonies affirm the worthiness of marketing a school using diverse strategies. However, a school's high performance and quality of its services must scaffold the use of marketing strategies, which is consistent with the marketing-mix theory assumptions regarding the place of processes and products (performance). In this regard, the participants provided some testimonies on how a certain strategy had failed to help a respective school, as illustrated below:

Visibility alone has minimal influence on customer buying behaviour. Even the largest and most trusted schools may face closure if they fail to engage parents directly. While improving the quality of services can help, particularly in producing strong results in national exams, it is insufficient on its own. A major challenge lies in the delay of information transfer from existing customers to potential ones. Unlike media, which can reach millions instantly, new customers often rely on physical observation of services and outcomes. Moreover, media visibility holds little value if a school's Form Four results lack strong achievement, as exam results remain the most effective form of advertisement. Efforts to increase media visibility, including using local outlets like [X and Y] TV stations, did not translate into significant growth in student enrolment. Also, the decision to lower school fees, while aimed at accessibility, discouraged parents with high expectations for international standards. The school's "Zero to Hero" strategy, focused on quantity over quality, further undermined its academic performance. This ultimately led to diminished trust among parents and a loss of confidence in the school's plans (*Head of School JR*).

Implicitly, not every strategy is applicable to every school. In fact, some may not necessarily become effective directly and within a short period. Besides, making concerted efforts to market a school may not necessarily determine how clients respond, particularly because they essentially focus on the quality of services and the school's academic performance.

Conclusion

Both non-government primary and secondary schools in Tanzania market their education services because of several factors that have brought about such practices. These factors include the need for survival in an increasingly complex and competitive education market, diverse demands from clients and competition among schools to attract clients so that they can enrol fee-paying students and earn school income. Evidently, marketing in education is necessitated by competition, the need for school survival assurance, and the increased complexity of the education sector brought about by the diversification of delivery modes and clients'

choices. Therefore, schools ought to know what their clients want and respond accordingly. School managers also ought to employ a range of strategies to ensure the quality of service and make the school perform well, especially in national examinations. School managers must learn how to understand the expectations of the clients and design ways through which the expectations can be met.

Regarding strategies, Tanzanian schools employ measures such as maintaining service quality, enhancing visibility, fostering internationalisation, ensuring timely completion of studies or syllabi, adopting diverse delivery modes, strategic planning, and branding through alumni networks. These strategies underscore the need for schools to not only develop effective marketing approaches but also ensure that education programmes are high quality, offering value for money. Location and school status are crucial factors, while promotion and effective communication are integral to marketing, alongside high standards in educational processes and physical facilities. Competent human resources and community engagement are also vital in addressing client expectations.

However, these strategies do not fully account for all elements of education marketing, such as programme, prominence, prospectus, and premiums. Ivy's framework, for instance, may be less applicable in Tanzania's basic education, given its nationally standardised curricula, which limit schools' ability to create unique study programmes for marketing. Moreover, the exclusion of 'product' by some scholars like Kotler and Fox is inconsistent with this study's findings, which highlight the performance of school leavers as a key marketing tool, particularly for private schools. One notable gap in Tanzanian schools' strategies is the lack of emphasis on the 'process' element, likely because teaching and learning processes are less visible to external clients. The results suggest that schools are prioritising service quality to attract clients. The study confirms that marketing significantly impacts Tanzania's basic education, particularly in privately owned schools, necessitating an increasingly market-oriented approach in the education sector.

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