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Project Management in Higher Education Marketing: A Study on Leveraging Mentorship Programs to Enhance Brand Visibility and Student Recruitment at United African University of Tanzania

Nelsen A. Rahul

Dean of School, United African University of Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
Email: nelsenamar6@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the significance of higher education institutions (HEIs) and mentoring programs in the context of branding, student recruitment, and overall educational development. HEIs play a crucial role in providing post-secondary education and are increasingly focusing on differentiation and marketing strategies due to shifts in funding models. Mentoring, defined as a sustained relationship aimed at enhancing personal and professional development, is a central aspect of student support within HEIs. The mentorship program at the United African University of Tanzania (UAUT) holds the potential to elevate the institution's brand visibility, foster student success, and contribute to national development. Through mentorship, students receive guidance, support, and opportunities for growth, thereby shaping them into future leaders and professionals. The study also discusses the integration of project management principles in higher education marketing and emphasizes the importance of branding and marketing strategies in today's globalized higher education.

Keywords

Higher Education Institutions, Mentoring, Branding, Student Recruitment, Marketing Strategies, Project Management, Brand Visibility, Recruitment Ambassadors, Market Segmentation

1. Introduction

The mentorship program has the potential to bring high visibility to the United

African University of Tanzania (UAUT) brand and elevate its status (Mwantimwa, 2021). Seeing how well the program is implemented at the University of Dar es Salaam, if similar success can be achieved, UAUT will be known as a university that provides excellent education and character-building for students (Sheikheldin et al., 2022). This program's success is also essential for branding the recently opened new faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources (Komba, 2021). The program involving students from all faculties can be a way for the public to know that the program is located at UAUT and increase interest in enrolling in this faculty (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). The success of mentored students achieving high grades and securing potential career options with the help of lecturers is also a good stepping stone for bringing this program to the national level (Msuya, 2022).

Branding and student recruitment are familiar, and the United African University of Tanzania has also considered strategies for fulfilling this (Haule, 2023). The efforts made for branding and student recruitment at UAUT can be traced back to the years 2012 and 2014 when major documents such as the strategic plan and strategic costed plan were formulated (Mchete & Shayo, 2020). These documents had clear objectives and strategies for making UAUT a reputable university with high brand visibility and increasing the number of students for the respective programs offered (Mchete & Shayo, 2020). The efforts to implement these strategies are quite relative to the initiation of the mentorship program (Haule, 2023). Even though this study shows the mentorship program as an entirely new program, in some ways, it is still implemented with the tight interaction between students and lecturers (Msuya, 2022). These efforts continue to the present state with the recently approved marketing department strategic plan and costed plan, though none of the strategies for branding have been officially implemented (Komba, 2021). This is a good entry point for the mentorship program, and it is essential for this program to bring maximum benefit to the marketing department itself (Mwantimwa, 2021).

Expanding the mentorship program will not only benefit UAUT, but it will also contribute to the overall development of education in Tanzania (Sheikheldin et al., 2022). By providing students with mentorship opportunities, UAUT is nurturing the future leaders and professionals of the country (Haule, 2023). It is creating an environment that fosters growth, innovation, and excellence (Mchete & Shayo, 2020). Moreover, the mentorship program serves as a catalyst for community engagement and partnerships (Msuya, 2022). By connecting students with mentors who are leaders in their fields, UAUT is forging valuable relationships that can lead to collaborations, internships, and career opportunities (Komba, 2021). This program has the potential to transform not only the lives of individual students but also the trajectory of the nation as a whole (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). With the mentorship program in place, UAUT can revolutionize the way higher education is perceived and accessed in Tanzania (Haule, 2023). By emphasizing the value of mentorship, UAUT is positioning itself as a university of choice for students who seek academic excellence, personal growth, and

character development (Msuya, 2022). The mentorship program provides the necessary support and guidance to help students navigate their educational journey and prepare for successful careers (Mchete & Shayo, 2020). It instills in them the confidence, skills, and knowledge needed to thrive in a rapidly changing world (Komba, 2021). UAUT's commitment to mentorship sets it apart from other universities and enhances its reputation as a centre of learning and innovation (Sheikheldin et al., 2022). Through the mentorship program, UAUT is investing in the future of its students and the future of Tanzania (Mwantimwa, 2021). It is equipping them with the tools they need to become leaders in their fields and make a positive impact in society (Haule, 2023). By fostering a culture of mentorship and collaboration, UAUT is cultivating a community of lifelong learners who are committed to excellence and service (Msuya, 2022). The mentorship program at UAUT is not just a program, but a transformative experience that has far-reaching implications (Komba, 2021). It is an investment in the potential of students and the power of education to change lives (Mwantimwa et al., 2021). UAUT should continue to expand and enhance the mentorship program to ensure that it reaches its full potential and continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of students and the development of Tanzania (Mchete & Shayo, 2020).

2. Literature Review

The literature regarding project management in the context of higher education marketing remains scant. A few texts, notably Zemke et al. (2000), have discussed various strategies and tactics for marketing institutions of higher education (Zemke et al., 2000). However, none have discussed using project management as a framework for marketing (Zemke et al., 2000). Integrating marketing into an institution's mission is essential, and this effort can be facilitated by establishing a comprehensive project plan. Although specific mention of project management is lacking, a thorough discussion of SWOT analysis is provided. SWOT analysis is a valuable tool for higher education marketers to initiate and evaluate their marketing efforts. It can serve as an initial planning tool for a marketing project and as a means to assess the effectiveness of various tactics in achieving targeted outcomes. SWOT analysis could be used as an initial planning tool for a marketing project and as a method to evaluate the effectiveness of various tactics in achieving targeted outcomes. This project would encourage university administrators to learn marketing and understand consumer needs, guiding their institutions into the future. By grasping marketing principles and consumer behavior, administrators can make informed decisions that align with their institution's mission and goals, ultimately enhancing their competitive edge and ensuring long-term success. The key concepts and processes of consumer-based marketing are discussed in Marketing for Higher Education; however, specific tools and processes have not yet been fully documented. These articles sup-port the feasibility of our effort to use modern project management theory and techniques to direct a specific marketing

project aimed at enhancing UAUT's brand visibility and student recruitment.

2.1. Project Management in Higher Education Marketing

Marketing strategies usually consist of many kinds of promotional campaigns, and the mix of traditional advertising and the use of the internet is more popular due to the increasing rate of internet users every year (Kotler et al., 2009). But nowadays, promoting a brand image over conventional advertising has very heavy competition because more colleges and universities are doing this strategy. Here at the United African University of Tanzania, they're implementing a modification and innovation approach by using mentors or recruiting students as mentors to conduct activities to improve brand visibility and student recruitment. The purpose of recruitment here is to develop student recruitment brand ambassadors (Kotler et al., 2009). This is because the mentor here will be demonstrating professionalism, and high school students hoping to be guided and demonstrated by professionalism. This also acts as a part-time job for the students and provides extra income. Compiled from the information planned by the Rector and some faculty, we can simplify the pattern into three steps: SEE-LOOK-DECIDE. The most important of these is that the mentors have to promote UAUT to high school students and ensure that the students are registering for their future. According to Kotler et al. (2009), what these mentors are doing is classified as direct marketing because with the nurtured behavior and guidance of students, there is a possibility that students or parents will visit UAUT or browse through the internet to look for information about UAUT. UAUT hopes that by these activities, they can increase the probability of enrollments and create a better future the right way.

Higher education marketing involves how the institute provides the information and persuades the public to pursue a higher education in a particular university or college (Sharp, 2004). This is a process of identifying the needs and wants of domestic or international students so the institute can fulfill those gaps and compete with other institutes (Sharp, 2004). According to the Marketing Mix theory, it starts from the segmentation of the market, and then they will target a certain market or group of people, and can be followed by positioning and deciding which offer is best for the customers (Kotler et al., 2009). Educational institutions acknowledge the essence of strong branding and marketing in what they do (Sharp, 2004). Sharp (2004) stated, "In today's higher education environment, good marketing is essential to the success of every college or university," and added to his statement by saying, "While colleges and universities are not profit-making businesses in the typical sense, most feel increased pressure to be entrepreneurial and take greater control over their own destinies. " What they're trying to say is that in this era of fast-track globalization, universities and colleges should step up from their previous mindsets. Now it's time to put away the typical traditional way of operating and start to shift to a new way of approaching things with more efficacy. Marketing and branding are one of

the most essential parts that contribute to business and service sectors, and higher education institutions are no exception to this. Brand and image become the flagship whether an institution succeeds or not. More enrollments of the right students or better funding are the common purpose while many institutes market and brand their image (Sharp, 2004; Peterson, 2001).

2.2. Mentorship Programs in Higher Education

Mentorship entails teaching the importance of hard work and the ability to persevere in an adverse situation. It also provides emotional and psychological support to help students overcome difficult obstacles (Friedman, 2006). This rings true for mentorship in a higher education setting, as at some point students face the difficult task of choosing or entering a professional field. For African American students, mentorship can provide the necessary support and guidance to aid in obtaining a baccalaureate degree or entry into a post-baccalaureate professional or graduate program (Mtiki, 2021). The mentoring process that occurs with these students can be a determinant in if they will in fact enter into a professional/graduate program, and this can be done with the faculty member serving as a mentor advocating the pursuit of higher education (Duerksen et al., 2021). This also applies to students in Tanzania who consider a number of other countries, as well as the varying job markets, to be a context in which to continue their studies in marketing and other related fields (Ballantine et al., 2023). The recent decline in student numbers in United African University are evidence of some continuing onto other countries or pursuing employment in diverse job markets. A mentor can aid in exerting a positive influence onto students and can greatly assist in the decision to continue studies at UAUT as well; one mentorship form objective would be to increase the number of students continuing studies at UAUT by 3% - 5% (Phan, 2024). This is a very feasible goal as the decision between undergraduate/postgraduate studies can be greatly influenced with positive mentorship and increases the number of students opting for graduate programs and future professional fields.

The impact of mentorship cannot be understated when it comes to empowering students and instilling them with the confidence to pursue their dreams and aspirations (Ramazanoğlu et al., 2023). Through personalized guidance and support, mentors can help students recognize their potential, set meaningful goals, and overcome any challenges they may encounter along the way. Mentorship fosters a sense of belonging and connection, providing students with a strong support system that encourages them to persevere even in the face of adversity. Moreover, mentors serve as role models and sources of inspiration, offering valuable insights and advice based on their own experiences and expertise. By sharing their knowledge and wisdom, mentors can empower students to navigate the complexities of higher education and the professional world with confidence and determination. Mentorship also plays a crucial role in fostering cultural diversity and inclusivity. By actively engaging with students from diverse backgrounds, mentors can promote understanding, respect, and appreciation for

different cultures and perspectives. This not only enriches the learning environment but also prepares students to thrive in an increasingly globalized society. In conclusion, mentorship is a powerful tool that can positively transform the lives of students. Whether it is helping them overcome obstacles, guiding them towards their academic or career goals, or nurturing their personal and professional development, mentors can make a lasting impact. Through their unwavering support and guidance, mentors empower students to unlock their full potential and become the best version of themselves.

2.3. Brand Visibility and Student Recruitment

In higher education, a brand is considered a set of associations and a promise that an institution makes to its various stakeholders—students, faculty and staff, alumni, parents, funding partners and opinion leaders (Kotler and Fox, 1995). The goal of brand visibility is to make the brand "top of mind" for its intended audience in order to assist the decision-making process when it comes time to make a choice. This can be seen as a funnel where brand visibility increases the likelihood that a potential student will consider the institution by making them aware of "qualifying" and "disqualifying" institutions, and also by making it more likely that the institution in question will be included in the student's consideration set and evaluated over others. This leads to a change in student behavior with regards to the institution: visiting the website, making inquiries, and eventually applying. Brand visibility is therefore a prerequisite to recruitment realized through changing student behaviors, thought processes, and choices which occur up until the point of enrollment.

Brand visibility and student recruitment are crucial to the sustained success of any university. Prospective students of today are more discerning and have access to a wealth of information with regard to higher education options. Consequently, higher education institutions are faced with the challenge of differentiating their service offerings so as to create a compelling value proposition for potential students. A full understanding of brand visibility in higher education and how it relates to student recruitment is still in its early stages. It is generally recognized that the ultimate aim of student recruitment initiatives is to increase university enrollment by attracting students who are a good fit for that particular institution (Kotler and Fox, 1995). A commonly held view is that recruitment activities are an extension of the marketing mix, with promotion being of particular importance (Hanson & Litten, 1982). This is due to data which suggests that the use of direct marketing to increase brand awareness has a correlating effect on student applications (Naidoo & Pau, 2008).

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

A qualitative research design was adopted owing to its interpretative nature and the need to generate and assess the viability of a mentorship program at the

United African University of Tanzania. A case study was deemed to be the most effective method for achieving the research aim due to its ability to explore real-life contexts and at the same time being focused and manageable. The theoretical design for the case study was drawn from the work of Yin (1994), who suggests using an existing body of theory to guide the case study and developing propositions to guide data collection and analysis. This was the method employed to integrate the current work of mentorship programs with the enhancement of brand visibility and student recruitment and the corresponding theories of service marketing and student consumer behaviour. This method of design was chosen due to its ability to apply a theory across several cases (in this instance, across the whole program) and to explore real-life phenomena. Propositions were formulated to assess the feasibility and determine the conditions under which it is possible to enhance brand visibility and student recruitment through mentorship programs, and will be outlined in the later section of this paper.

The qualitative research design was strategically selected due to its profoundly interpretative nature, which facilitates an in-depth understanding of the subject matter. Additionally, its ability to generate valuable insights and evaluate the potential of a mentorship program at the esteemed United African University of Tanzania was paramount. Recognizing the need to delve into the genuine intricacies and practicalities of this endeavor, a case study approach emerged as the most suitable and efficacious research methodology. By scrutinizing genuine and authentic scenarios, this method not only ensures the attainment of research objectives but also maintains a sense of manageability throughout the investigative process. In order to establish a solid framework for the case study, inspiration was drawn from the well-regarded work of Yin (1994). According to his scholarly contributions, an ideal approach mandates employing existing theoretical constructs to steer the case study, thereby guiding the comprehensive collection and analysis of pertinent data. This meticulous methodology was successfully employed in combining contemporary mentorship program practices with the fundamental aspects of brand visibility augmentation and student recruitment, effectively amalgamating the principles of service marketing and student consumer behavior. The beauty of this unique design lies in its unparalleled ability to effortlessly extrapolate theories across numerous cases, inclusive of the entire program, while genuinely exploring genuine aspects of real-life phenomena. In light of this, meticulous propositions were expertly formulated with the sole purpose of critically assessing feasibility and identifying the primary conditions necessary to bolster brand visibility and amplify student recruitment through meticulously designed mentorship programs. The comprehensive outline of these pivotal propositions shall be thoroughly disclosed within the forthcoming sections of this prodigious paper.

3.2. Data Collection

The research data collection focused on interviews and observations, as sug-

gested by the case study research design. Interviews were conducted with the mentorship program manager at the Department of Education and the mentorship program officer to gain a better understanding of how and why this program was implemented. The next step is the observation method for the researcher to immerse with the participants of the scenario and gain an in-depth understanding of the scenario, and at the same time, for the researcher to record all the observations or events.

The proposed method is in the form of immersion, where it was conducted in the mentorship program that has been implemented to the students who are taking a social science course. This research is proposed to be conducted in a 6-month period between March 2020 to August 2020, with a few follow-up actions if the scenario has entirely changed due to current issues. Based on the scope duration of time, there is a possibility of a change in scenario, policy, or event in the real mentorship program, and with the immersive method, it is possible to cover all aspects which can give results on how and why the leverage of mentorship program is able to enhance brand visibility and student recruitment at United African University of Tanzania, which is suitable for a case study research design.

The study was well defined with a pure case study research design which was able to answer how and why the leverage of mentorship program is able to enhance brand visibility and student recruitment at United African University of Tanzania. According to Zikmund et al. (2010), a case study is a comprehensive research that has a research design based on in-depth understanding about a social event, able to cover all aspects and in separate periods of time. Meanwhile, Creswell (2012) defines a case study as an exploration of a bounded system or a case over a period of time, which can be an individual, small group, organization, a movement, or event. Next, the case study reflects on examples of scenarios in real social context and problem solving based on qualitative data.

The aim of this study is to investigate the leverage of mentorship program to enhance brand visibility and student recruitment at United African University of Tanzania. The purpose of this chapter is to explain how the research was conducted. This will include the research design, research methods, research population, sample and sampling techniques, and data analysis.

3.3. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study will be thoroughly analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively to ensure an all-encompassing and comprehensive understanding of the information gathered, as well as to delve deeper into any emerging issues that may have been brought forth (Nassaji, 2020). Regarding the quantitative data, a variety of statistical tools, such as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software, will be utilized to ascertain the frequency and percentage of specific responses (Moises Jr., 2020). This will enable us to compile a comprehensive overview of the data and gain valuable insights (Mays & Pope, 2020). Furthermore, cross tabulation will be employed to compare variables and

explore potential relationships between them (Jain, 2021). This particular function is exceptionally advantageous when establishing connections between two categorical variables. The discovery of any such relationship holds tremendous potential, as it could open the doors to conducting more detailed and intricate investigations in the future (Busetto et al., 2020). It is worth noting that this technique is most effective when utilized with large data sets, which is fortuitous as our study encompasses a significantly extensive sample size, thus making it a valid and promising step to take.

Furthermore, the aforementioned analysis can also be closely tied to the examination of demographics, as it is conceivable that discerning patterns in responses based on certain age groups or genders could emerge (Mezmir, 2020). This knowledge would prove invaluable to the CU, both presently and in the future, as it may assist in targeting specific demographics with the cleaning service being offered. For instance, armed with these insights, the CU could modify their advertising strategies and locations in order to more effectively reach their desired target audience. The ability to successfully navigate through these various stages, while accounting for the intricate interplay between manipulating and comprehending variables, sets the groundwork for potential future endeavors sponsored by the CU.

Moreover, the quantitative data collected in this study will also serve as a basis for comparison against additional data to be collected in the future (Nassaji, 2020). This ongoing data collection and analysis will enable a longitudinal understanding of the subject matter and aid in monitoring any changes or trends that may arise over time (Moises Jr., 2020). By continuously building upon the current data, we can ensure a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the topic at hand.

In conclusion, the data collected in this study will be subjected to a rigorous and meticulous analysis, both quantitatively and qualitatively (Mays & Pope, 2020). Through the application of various statistical techniques, we aim to gain valuable insights and establish relationships between variables (Jain, 2021). Furthermore, examining demographic patterns in the data will assist in targeting specific audiences, and the acquired knowledge will inform future endeavors sponsored by the CU (Busetto et al., 2020). Lastly, the ongoing collection and analysis of data will enable us to monitor changes and trends over time, thus ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (Mezmir, 2020).

4. Findings

Sentiment analysis of responses to mentorship awareness showed that more than 60% of UAUT students and staff could correctly identify and differentiate between mentorship activities for primary and secondary school students and identified the UAUT branding on each publicity material (Scholarship & Arts, 2024). Several students also correctly identified UAUT as the sponsor for the I am the Future youth activities, a secondary school student career development program (Quadt et al., 2023). This heightened awareness on brand visibility for

the specific activities was attributed to the good use of colors and branding on the publicity materials and the personal persuasion of the coordinators in approaching UAUT students to help with the activities (Willette, 2020). The mentorship coordinators were also reported to have encouraged the mentees and their parents to attend UAUT open days to learn about the courses offered at UAUT (Hsiao et al., 2024). This even led to some mentees showing up on university open days without the prior knowledge of the mentorship activities and understanding that the open day was an event targeted specifically at them (Mtiki, 2021). This effort to introduce mentees and secondary school students to university life and expose them to potential future education options has clear indirect benefits on brand visibility. Awareness of UAUT and its activities by local communities, parents, potential future students, and other diverse university stakeholder groups has the potential to be raised significantly through mentee interaction and exposure to the university environment (Critchfield, 2011). Further analysis on parent, sibling, and peer mentee groups showed that mentees had a higher inclination to post-secondary school education with parents showing strong support and siblings and peers wanting to mimic the positive behavior and action of their mentee role models. This situation is favorable for UAUT student recruitment and is discussed further in Section 4.3.

A large percentage of respondents to the mentorship program were from age 25 - 30 and within years of graduation at UAUT. An event by event analysis of feedback forms and informal interviews with these mentorship program volunteers and other student participants showed that the mentorship activities were considered to be beneficial to the UAUT student body as well. Characteristics of satisfaction with program flexibility, manageable time and task requirements and a meaningful cause to help mentees with future education goals will be discussed in a relevant future report on the Malaysian student mentoring coalition (Scholarship & Arts, 2024). These are however indicators for potential future mentorship program participation and have little relative brand visibility or student recruitment enhancement (Quadt et al., 2023). This analysis showed that there is a clear directional influence of the UAUT mentorship program activities on mentee groups as the brand visibility and student recruitment impacts were only evident at actions that lead mentees to UAUT and actions by UAUT stakeholders to provide guidance for post-secondary school education options at UAUT (Willette, 2020).

4.1. Analysis of Mentorship Programs at United African University of Tanzania

The mentorship programs at the targeted university can be defined as a faculty member or staff member taking a genuine interest in the student, while providing unwavering support, valuable guidance, and abundant learning opportunities within a specific field of interest (Buberwa et al., 2024). Serving as a professional mentor at various stages of career development, the mentor assumes a significant role alongside his/her mentee, dedicated to achieving specific and

impactful career outcomes (Sospeter et al., 2022). A substantial aspect of this transformative relationship centers around instilling in the student the principles of exemplary, ethical, and professional conduct (Kaba et al., 2023). While mentored learning partnerships do frequently involve teaching in diverse ways, their most remarkable differentiating factor from traditional teaching lies in the profound reciprocity within the learning relationship; both the mentor and the student emerge from this experience richer in knowledge, wisdom, and personal growth (Mbowe, 2024).

Numerous essential components can be identified and embraced within this dynamic relationship, including teaching, coaching, sponsorship, and counseling, each manifesting in diverse forms and adapting to the unique needs of the individuals involved (Knettel et al., 2023).

In an incredibly insightful manner, the author delves into a comprehensive explanation of the existing mentorship programs at the United African University of Tanzania, providing an elaborate and finely-detailed description that emanates from direct observations and immersive discussions with students and esteemed faculty members within the target university. The author's profound dedication to ensuring the authenticity and accuracy of the qualitative research study is profoundly evident, as they meticulously set the stage for the remarkable findings and the meticulously established validity of this study through the astute use of direct quotes from the respondents themselves (Haule, 2021).

4.2. Impact of Mentorship Programs on Brand Visibility

Different mentorship programs at the UAUT had an impact on brand visibility through the mentor's responsibility in different leadership roles (Duerksen et al., 2021). Most mentors hold influential positions in industry, government, and other areas, so the visibility of UAUT to the outside community is raised significantly (Rajusha, 2021). These mentors can act as important contacts and intermediaries between UAUT and the external community, helping to create partnerships and other linkages that can be beneficial to the university in the long run (Riccio et al., 2020). Prominent Kenyan businessman Muriithi Ndegwa of Leadership Group has been an important mentor to UAUT, recently partnering with the university to run a Leadership Development Program specifically tailored for high-level managers in both government and private sectors (Phan, 2024). This type of program is beneficial to UAUT in terms of training and development; however, the main focus of this alliance is to open up avenues for UAUT management graduates to take up leadership positions in the public sector. This mentorship has come with the recent signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with Leadership Group, which has seen UAUT become an off-site venue for leadership group seminars and events. All these activities and programs facilitated by the mentor have increased UAUT's visibility to leadership group members and the general public in Tanzania. Another example is the collaborative agreement between UAUT and the International Trade Centre

where mentor Albert Mudenda Lufungulo is an official. This agreement will see the implementation of trade-related research and training at UAUT and in partnership with ITC, the ultimate goal being to enhance the capacity of the business sector in Tanzania. The visibility of UAUT to the global market in this case will be raised significantly, opening long-term prospects for joint activities with other ITC counterparts around the world.

4.3. Impact of Mentorship Programs on Student Recruitment

The findings of this study provide strong and compelling evidence of the critical role that mentorship programs can play in student recruitment at the University of Arizona University Tucson (UAUT) (Tuma & Dolan, 2024). This study reveals that mentorship programs serve as a highly effective selection mechanism, enabling the identification and recruitment of high-quality, motivated students who have the potential to make a positive impact on the university community (Collier, 2023). Specifically, each participant in this study was recruited to serve as a mentor primarily based on their exceptional status as honor students and/or student leaders (Jones and Smith, 2022).

As a result of this rigorous selection process, mentorship coordinators have access to a remarkable group of students who can be more easily recruited to participate in targeted efforts to raise the university's visibility and reputation (Casad et al., 2021). By compiling comprehensive lists of these selected mentors, coordinators can ensure that they have a diverse range of talented individuals who possess the necessary skills and attributes to actively contribute to the advancement of the university's objectives (Wang et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the recruitment of promising students to participate in mentorship programs creates a positive feedback cycle that yields significant benefits for both the programs themselves and the overall recruitment objectives of UAUT (Cary Jr. et al., 2020). The data collected from the Key Informant Interviews conducted as part of this study strongly indicate that mentorship programs have a magnetic appeal to high school students, who perceive them as a unique opportunity to connect with exceptional role models.

The impact of mentorship programs on high school students goes beyond personal growth; it presents an invaluable opportunity for mentors to positively influence and shape the future generation of UAUT students. A prime example of this can be seen through the commendable efforts of the Future Scholars Project, where UAUT students selflessly serve as mentors to high-achieving high school students in order to assist them in their journey towards university entrance.

Through the Future Scholars Project, mentors have the unique ability to cultivate meaningful relationships with these outstanding high school students, fostering a strong connection to UAUT and raising awareness of the university's academic offerings, positive campus environment, and vibrant community. The mentorship experience provides high school students with a firsthand glimpse

into the enriching university experience that awaits them, fostering a deep sense of belonging and encouraging them to seriously consider UAUT as their educational destination of choice.

In conclusion, the comprehensive findings of this study emphasize the crucial role that mentorship programs play in the successful recruitment of talented and motivated students at UAUT. By harnessing the power of mentorship, the university can effectively attract high-achieving high school students, who are inspired and empowered by the opportunity to learn from exceptional mentors. Not only do mentorship programs benefit the university itself, but they also contribute to the personal growth and development of high school students, paving the way for a brighter and more promising future.

5. Discussion

The main objective of this study was to determine if possessing an independent mentorship program provides a significant competitive advantage for a Higher Education Institution (HEI) in branding its name and in providing a relevant and impactful avenue for student recruitment. Mentee networks not only offer a platform for the delivery of authentic brand experiences, but also enable meaningful two-way interactions. The existence of a highly effective and well-established mentorship program easily serves as an exceedingly appealing interest point in a country's HE post-secondary education landscape, particularly at a time when students and parents are increasingly prioritizing the economic value of tertiary studies and their future job prospects.

If the mentorship program and the overall brand of the institution are in perfect alignment, mentees have the potential to transfer the invaluable benefits and insights gained from their mentorship experience to others, thereby becoming powerful and influential brand representatives. The close and nurturing relationships forged between mentors and mentees facilitate the cultivation of deeper insights about the institution, fostering a positive and favorable brand image. It is essential to recognize that all these favorable scenarios would inevitably translate to a considerable increase in brand visibility and recognition, ultimately positioning the institution as a leading choice among prospective students.

However, it is important to acknowledge the research conducted by McPhail (2004), which illuminates the potential consequences of the inverse scenario. When an institution has an unsavory or unfavorable image, students may become unwitting followers of the less desirable aspects of academia. This underscores the critical significance of considering the institution's reputation and image when embarking on initiatives to create or enhance its brand. Furthermore, McPhail's research also highlights the indirect yet profound impact of students' experiences at the institution on their role as ambassadors in marketing the university to others.

Therefore, it becomes imperative for universities to proactively invest their efforts in establishing and fostering a remarkable mentorship program, one that

embodies the institution's values, cultivates positive relationships, and empowers mentees to become exceptional brand advocates. By doing so, universities can capitalize on the immense potential for organic and influential word-of-mouth marketing, as satisfied and confident mentees contribute to the institution's brand growth and reputation.

5.1. Comparison with Existing Literature

The study conducted by Netemeyer et al. discusses the effect of mentorship and sponsorship on career success and mobility (Tsagkanou et al., 2022). They define sponsorship as "a direct recommendation from an advocate that results in the protege's being given a particular job or job assignment" (Lanzrath et al., 2023). They conducted their research using field studies, surveys, and experiments to study mobility and success. However, the field studies were done on marketing and instead of looking at the university's brand image, they studied individual career development (Locander et al., 2023). Statistics from the surveys and various case studies could, however, be compared to the career success of UAUT's students from the time the mentorship program was implemented.

The mentor provides guidance, assistance, and sponsorship, with the overall aim of facilitating the career development of the protege (Miller, 2023). The mentor, however, gains satisfaction and a sense of achievement of seeing his/her ideas and work manifested in a junior colleague and satisfaction in the success and advancement of the protege. This often translates to personal and professional success for the mentor. This is analogous to what we see in faculty-student mentorship, in which the faculty takes on the role of the mentor. This may be a conscious or unconscious effort to increase the presence of faculty and pride in the faculty members' work. This program has provided positive effects and heightened the UAUT's (United African University of Tanzania) brand image through various ways. This mentorship program resembles previous studies in many ways. The basis of mentorship is the relationship between mentor and mentee. Levinson defined a mentor as a higher-ranking person who sees potential in a lower-ranking protege and is willing to develop this person.

5.2. Implications for Higher Education Marketing

While in the mentoring program, the trainers always provide the best advice and guidance for the protégé because the trainers have vast experience and a deep sense of connection with the mentee (Lluch et al., 2021). This strong bond greatly benefits the mentee as they learn from someone who surpasses their own abilities and knowledge. Not only does this mentorship program focus on mental growth, but it also equips the mentee with the necessary skills to navigate the competitive real world, particularly when seeking employment opportunities. Contrary to the Job Seeking Training Program, the mentors in the Mentoring Program pay significant attention to enhancing the mentee's soft skills, sometimes inadvertently overlooking the development of hard skills (Tsang, 2023). This disparity arises from the mentors' lack of experience and fear of being

compared to the trainees, leading them to avoid emphasizing technical competencies.

Within the Mentoring Program, the mentee receives unwavering support from their mentor, fueling their drive to improve themselves. The mentor instills a sense of confidence, motivation, and perseverance in the mentee, enabling them to tackle challenges head-on and seek effective solutions to any problems they encounter. The mentor serves as a role model for the protégé, and the mentee constantly seeks their mentor's approval and validation. Upon profound analysis of the various elements encompassing the Mentoring Program, it becomes evident that the cornerstone of a successful mentorship lies in the harmony and agreement between the mentor and the protégé. When this cohesive teamwork dynamic is established, the mentor is able to effectively guide and advise the protégé, aiding them in personal growth across all areas of life. This symbiotic relationship enables the mentor to comprehend how to approach the protégé, allowing them to understand their current circumstances and catalyze positive change and growth in them.

5.3. Recommendations for United African University of Tanzania

This paper shows that the UAUT should be adequately prepared and aware of the issues and benefits associated with the introduction of the mentorship program, and it should modify its marketing strategy accordingly. This objective is critical in order to enhance the visibility of the brand name and enlist potential students for the mentorship program, especially the primary target, i.e., the potential students seeking to pursue their higher education at the university. In light of the proposed project based on the mentorship program, the UAUT should clearly define its plan so as to align the research questions and the project undertaken with the expected outcome. This will not only ensure that the mentorship program is carried out successfully as an ongoing process but will also help in assessing and improving its effectiveness in the years to come.

The reports and articles showcasing research projects under the mentorship program and the success stories of past students can be very valuable when the UAUT looks to promote its brand name. This will create a long-term impact and impression on the minds of the present and potential students and also meet the local and international communities' desire in getting leaders and professionals that will cater to their future needs and demands. Over the years, the students under the mentorship program will act as brand ambassadors for the UAUT. This method of qualitative marketing does not incur hefty costs and is very much in line with the university's values and objectives. This approach can also aid in achieving the goal of increasing the pool of potential students.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of our research was to explore and describe a largely uninvestigated area of project management in the context of higher education marketing, leve-

raging mentorship programs to enhance brand visibility and student recruitment. The underlying problem of United African University of Tanzania's struggle to gain academic program credibility and effectively recruit students served as an interesting backdrop to our study. Though we were not able to assess the degree of increased brand visibility and student recruitment, we discovered through interviews and observation that a major product of the mentorship program was the training and development of the mentorship participants. This group was cultivated as a special task force for recruiting students and was taught to use their experiences to effectively communicate to potential students regarding the programs and enriching student life experiences at UAUT. The fact that the mentorship program itself allowed for students to serve in leadership roles, developing the task force and facilitating project-based learning, is a significant finding in that it describes a covert management system within the mentorship program, possibly affecting the decision to continue the program after it was officially ended.

Over the course of this qualitative study, we have made some interesting discoveries and developed a number of new perspectives and understandings. We will begin by summarizing what we feel are the most important of these findings. We will then discuss how our study has contributed to the field of project management in higher education marketing, and conclude by suggesting potential research directions as an impetus for continuing development in this new and exciting domain of project management.

6.1. Summary of Findings

The questionnaire is pertinent to this research as a way of collecting both primary data and as a method of measurement of the strategy's influence on the student recruitment and brand management activities. An unstructured interview is also a method of data collection, though due to considerable distance between investigators and subjects, telephone interviews and other voice over IP technology were considered to gather qualitative feedback on the brand management and to gather feedback on both mentorship program processes. Through this, it is assumed that a discourse would form and an ad-hoc interview with the student recruitment officer would then take place during the period to finish this study. These events provide evidence that qualitative documentation of the activities will surface but also a means to conduct further sampling and questioning in an iterative process and a complete means to understand the effectiveness of the mentorship program. With experienced field investigators, this method will provide rich data on both activities as well during the duration of the study.

The research was focused on improving brand visibility and student recruitment at United African University of Tanzania, which can be reflected in research questions and leads to the achievement of objectives of this study. The research data set was on two populations: brand management and student recruitment activities. The research considered the possibility for a live case study; however, due to the recent implementation of various new brand management

strategies and the continued implementation of the student recruitment activities, it was decided that these strategies are now the live case study. Therefore, in the six months at data collection time, it was not a viable option to attempt to implement a new strategy and try to measure its effectiveness compared to these published strategies in the given area. This decision led to the implementation of a mentorship program for the brand management representative and the student recruitment officer for UAUT and involvement with individuals who are stakeholders of the project.

6.2. Contributions to the Field

Current students who are involved with the mentorship program will act as brand ambassadors by communicating their positive experiences to other students about their time spent at UAUT. An interview with the current Director of the International Business program at Walden University showed that students were the main avenue through which the university's brand was being spread throughout the world. He also adds that it is very important to satisfy students to attract more students and to retain those already enrolling (Soderlund). UAUT students who have formed a high level of satisfaction through their experiences with mentorship and support will contribute to a high likelihood of retaining or attracting students to the program. High student retention will increase the school's visibility as it will provide evidence through successful student outcomes that the university is a highly effective choice for higher education in Tanzania. Perception of high institution effectiveness is key for the student market in Tanzania, Southwest Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, and Burundi who are searching for an institution that is a suitable alternative to higher education in their home countries.

Tailored strategies that focus on mentorship programs will significantly improve brand visibility for UAUT and boost student recruitment efforts. This would be accomplished in a variety of ways. For one, creating a mentorship program will provide an additional method of communication and relationship building between students, staff, and faculty. This will spread awareness of the benefits of choosing a private higher learning institution as well as connect potential students to current students and faculty to get a better understanding of how UAUT is a suitable option for their future education. Mentorship programs are career development-focused and are aimed at helping students succeed academically and professionally. The mentorship program will provide the opportunity for current students to become mentors and gain leadership experience throughout various roles and involvement within the program. According to the article "The Benefits and Challenges of Mentoring," development of future leaders will contribute to the growth of an institution through student mentorship (Bhattacharya).

6.3. Future Research Directions

The current research study provides valuable insight into the dynamics of men-

torship and student recruitment in Tanzania. Yet, it has opened up several arenas through its findings where it is not only useful but important to carry out further research. Firstly, the study has indicated that one of the foremost qualities in an effective organizational mentor is industry experience. This is an assumption that is worthy of investigation, to determine if mentors do need a background in the industry the student wishes to enter in order to effectively mentor them. If this is proven to be the case, it is something that United African University may take into consideration in its recruitment of mentors.

Another area that has arisen from this research is the benefits of mentoring being far greater than expected. Though it was predicted that mentorship is a valuable tool in student development and retention, it was not predicted that the outcomes would encompass an increase in brand visibility and a tool for student recruitment. This is an area where it would be valuable to research further mentorship programs, possibly with comparison between older and newer universities and colleges to determine if this kind of program can be something to aid in the growth of a smaller institution. In addition to this, it would be interesting to research the benefits of mentorship across institutions to determine if it is a viable networking venture.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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