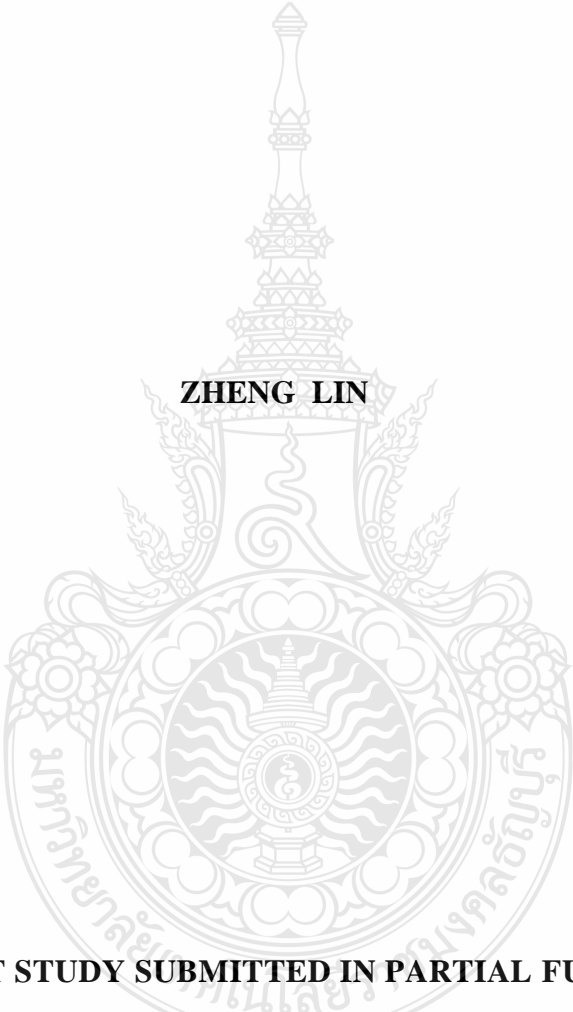


**IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MARKETING STRATEGIES
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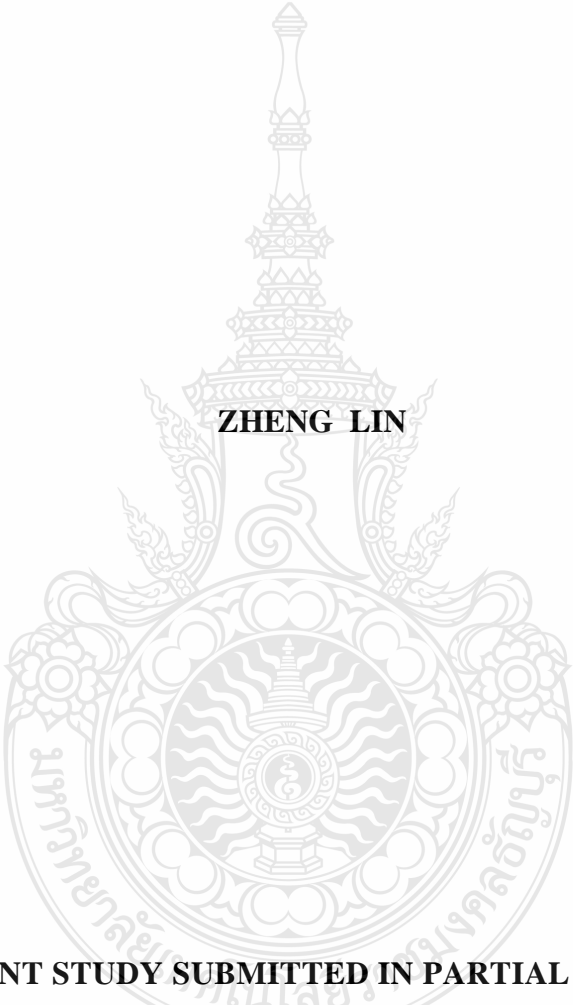
ZHENG LIN



**AN INDEPENDENT STUDY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS
ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM IN GENERAL MANAGEMENT
FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
RAJAMANGALA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY THANYABURI
ACADEMIC YEAR 2023
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Independent Study Title Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Marketing Strategies
of Learning Institutions
Name - Surname Mr.Zheng Lin
Major Subject General Management
Independent Study Advisor Assistant Professor Suraporn Onputtha, Ph.D.
Academic Year 2023

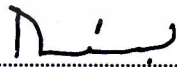
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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. The study seeks to identify the means by which these institutions have adapted their marketing approaches, the consequences of such adaptations on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, as well as utilization of digital marketing channels, financial challenges, and recommendations for effective adaptation.

The sample group was 400 executives or managers of learning institutions. The questionnaire was used as a research instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, means and standard deviation were utilized to analyze the collected data. Inferential statistics including Chi-square test were also performed to investigate the hypotheses.

This study provides insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. The study identifies the need for these institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to the present circumstances, prioritize the adoption of digital marketing channels, and collaborate with other institutions to develop cost-effective marketing strategies. The recommendations will help learning institutions overcome the challenges brought about by the pandemic and ensure their continued success in the education sector.

Keywords: COVID-19, marketing strategy, educational institution

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a profound impact on various sectors of society, including education. The pandemic has caused schools and universities to close their physical campuses and shift to online learning, resulting in significant changes to the way educational institutions operate. In particular, the pandemic has affected the marketing strategies of educational institutions, which play a crucial role in the enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. In order to comprehend how educational institutions have responded to the pandemic and its consequences on student enrolment, recruitment, and retention, it is crucial to evaluate the influence of COVID-19 on their marketing strategies.

One of the primary challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic is the decline in enrollment and retention rates. According to a report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), enrollment in higher education institutions in the United States fell by 2.5% in the fall of 2020, with a particularly significant decline in enrollment among international students (NSCRC, 2020). This decline in enrollment has also been observed in other countries, such as Canada, where enrollment in post-secondary education fell by 5.7% in the fall of 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). The decline in enrollment has been attributed to various factors, including the shift to online learning, financial challenges faced by students and their families, and uncertainty about the future of the pandemic.

In addition to the decline in enrollment, the pandemic has also affected the recruitment and retention of students. The shift to online learning has made it more challenging for educational institutions to attract and retain students, as traditional recruitment methods, such as

campus visits and open houses, have become difficult to implement. Furthermore, the pandemic has led to increased competition among institutions as they seek to attract and retain students. An increase in competition for students as a result of the pandemic was noted by 63 % of higher education institutions (AACRAO, 2020).

To address these challenges, educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to the new reality of the pandemic. One of the ways in which institutions have adapted is by increasing their use of digital marketing channels, such as social media and online advertising. A study by Education Dive found that 92% of higher education institutions used social media to reach out to potential students during the epidemic (Education Dive, 2020).

Additionally, a report by the eMarketer shows that digital advertising spending by educational institutions in the United States increased by 15.5% in 2020, as institutions sought to reach prospective students online (eMarketer, 2020).

However, while the use of digital marketing channels has increased, it remains unclear how these strategies have impacted enrollment and retention rates. Furthermore, it is not known how institutions are addressing the financial challenges brought about by the pandemic and how this has affected their marketing strategies. Accordingly, it is essential to research how COVID-19 has affected educational institutions' marketing plans in order to comprehend how they have responded to the epidemic and its consequences on student enrolment, recruitment, and retention.

The problem caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions is multifaceted and has implications for enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. This pandemic has led to a decline in enrollment, as well as changes in the way institutions operate and recruit students. Furthermore, the financial challenges caused by the pandemic have also had an impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions.

The pandemic has led to a decline in enrollment in educational institutions. According to a report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC, 2020), enrollment in higher education institutions in the United States fell by 2.5% in the fall of 2020. Similarly, enrollment in post-secondary education in Canada fell by 5.7% in the fall of 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). The decline in enrollment has been attributed to various factors, including the shift to online learning, financial challenges faced by students and their families, and uncertainty about the future of the pandemic. This decline in enrollment has significant implications for educational institutions, as it can lead to a decrease in revenue and an increase in financial challenges.

Secondly, the pandemic has led to changes in the way educational institutions operate and recruit students. The shift to online learning has made it more challenging for institutions to attract and retain students, as traditional recruitment methods, such as campus visits and open houses, have become difficult to implement. An increase in competition for students as a result of the pandemic was noted by 63 % of higher education institutions, as per a poll by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO, 2020).

Furthermore, the shift to online learning has also resulted in changes in the way institutions market themselves to prospective students, with a greater emphasis on digital marketing channels, such as social media and online advertising. However, it remains unclear how these changes in marketing strategies have impacted enrollment and retention rates.

Lastly, the financial challenges caused by the pandemic have had an impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The decline in enrollment and the shift to online learning have led to a decrease in revenue for institutions, which has resulted in financial challenges. According to a report by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2020), the pandemic has resulted in a decline in revenue for higher education institutions of up to 20%. To address these financial challenges, institutions have had to make changes to their marketing strategies, such as reducing their marketing budgets or shifting their focus to online advertising. However, it is not known how these changes have affected the enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The goal of this study is to look at how COVID-19 has impacted educational institutions' marketing plans and how it has impacted students' rates of enrolment, recruitment, and retention. The study will also examine the use of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates.

Additionally, the study will explore the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and how institutions can effectively adapt to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and

retention of students. The results will be useful for educational institutions, as well as policymakers and researchers in the field of education, in developing strategies to address the challenges caused by the pandemic.

Additionally, this study will fill a vacuum in the literature on the influence of COVID-19 on the marketing plans of educational institutions, as other studies have mostly concentrated on the transition to online learning and its impacts on student learning results. This study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and how these strategies have affected enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are to:

1. To study organizational factors and COVID-19 impacts on marketing strategy, digital marketing strategy, financial challenges, and student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate
2. To investigate that educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. To compare the negative effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate categorized by organizational factors
4. To investigate the influence of COVID-19 Impact on negative effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate
5. Provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

1.3 Research Questions

The research will address the following questions:

1. What are the impact of COVID-19 on educational institute regarding marketing strategy, digital marketing strategy, financial challenges, and student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate?

2. Have educational institutions adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. Is there any difference in negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate categorized by organizational factors?

4. Is there any influence of COVID 19 impact on on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate?

5. What recommendations can be provided to educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

1.4 Research Scopes

The study population for this research will be educational institutions, including universities, colleges, and vocational schools. Since the COVID-19 epidemic has had a considerable impact on these nations and a drop in higher education enrolment, the study will concentrate on institutions in the United States and Canada. The study will also include both public and private institutions, as well as institutions that offer both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The sample for this study will consist of 400 educational institutions, selected through a stratified random sampling method. The sample will be stratified based on the type of institution (public or private) and the level of education offered (undergraduate or graduate). The sample size of 400 institutions will provide a large enough sample to generate reliable and valid results. The variables that will be examined in this study include the marketing strategies of educational institutions, enrollment, recruitment, retention rates, and the use of digital marketing channels.

The study will also examine the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The study area for this research will be the United States and Canada. These countries have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have experienced a decline in enrollment in higher education institutions. The study will also include both public and private institutions, as well as institutions that offer both undergraduate and graduate programs.

In order to collect data for this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used. The primary data collection method will be a survey, which will be administered to the institutions in the sample. The survey will include questions on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, enrollment, recruitment, retention rates, and the use of digital marketing channels. The survey will also include questions on the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies. The survey will be administered online, and responses will be collected and analyzed using statistical software.

1.5 Definition of Terms

COVID-19: A highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus.
Educational Institutions: Universities, colleges, and vocational schools that offer post-secondary education.

Marketing Strategies: The actions and plans implemented by educational institutions to promote their programs and services to prospective students.

Enrollment: The number of students who have registered and are attending classes at an educational institution.

Recruitment: The process of attracting and encouraging prospective students to enroll in an educational institution.

Retention: The number of students who continue to attend an educational institution from one academic year to the next.

Digital Marketing Channels: Online platforms, such as social media and online advertising, used by educational institutions to reach and communicate with prospective students.

Financial Challenges: The financial difficulties faced by educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as a decrease in revenue and an increase in expenses.
Online Learning: A form of education that is delivered remotely through the use of technology, such as the internet and video conferencing.

Strategic Adaptation: The process of adjusting or modifying marketing strategies in response to changes or challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Institutions: Educational institutions that are publicly funded and operated by the government.

Private Institutions: Educational institutions that are independently operated and typically rely on tuition and private funding.

Undergraduate Programs: Programs of study that lead to a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

Graduate Programs: Programs of study that lead to a master's or doctoral degree.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the theory of strategic adaptation, which posits that organizations must adapt their strategies in response to changes or challenges in order to survive and succeed (Wagner & Gooderham, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a significant change and challenge for educational institutions, and it is important to understand how institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

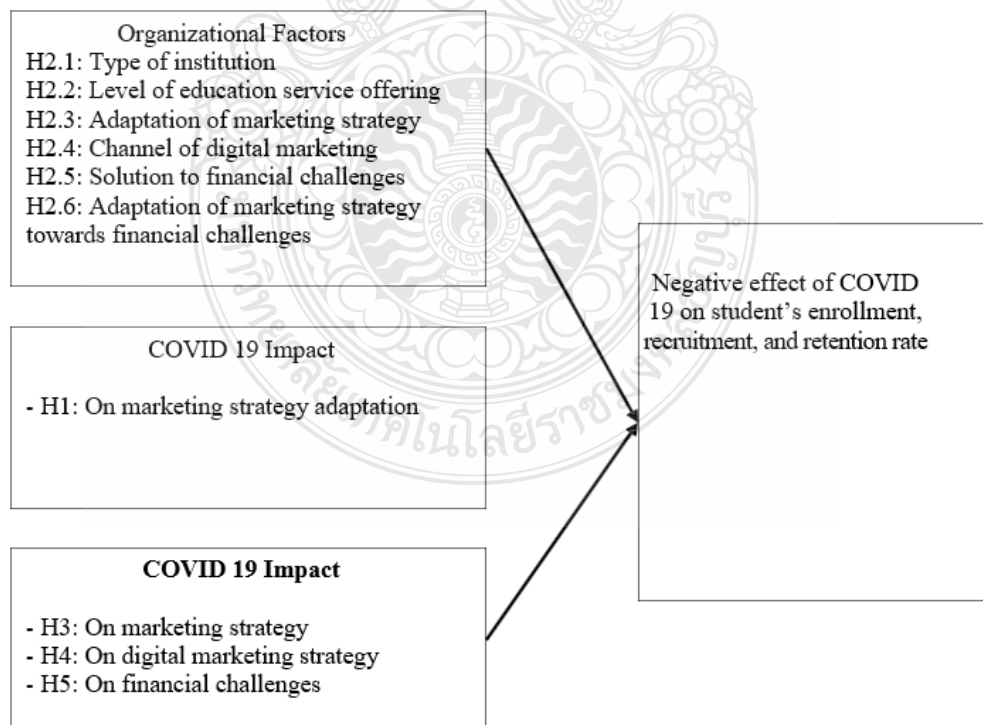


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses have been developed for this study:

H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

H2: Different organizational factors including type of institution, level of education service offering, adaptation of marketing strategy, channel of digital marketing, solution to financial challenges, and adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

1.7 Research Contributions

This research will provide valuable insights for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. The findings of this study will help institutions to understand the impact of the pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, and the strategies that have been effective in addressing these challenges. Additionally, the study will provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to utilize digital marketing channels effectively, which will help institutions to reach and communicate with prospective students.

The research will also provide insight into the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing

strategies. This information will be useful for institutions to identify the financial difficulties they are facing and develop strategies to address them.

Furthermore, the research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, which will be useful for educational institutions to develop long-term strategies to address the challenges caused by the pandemic.

This research will contribute to the literature on the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The findings of this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The research will also contribute to the literature on the use of digital marketing channels by educational institutions. The study will examine how institutions have utilized digital marketing channels during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates. This information will be useful for researchers to understand the effectiveness of digital marketing channels in reaching and communicating with prospective students.

Additionally, the research will contribute to the literature on the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic. The study will examine how these challenges have affected the marketing strategies of institutions and provide valuable insights into how institutions can address these challenges. It will also provide a deeper understanding of the impact of financial constraints on the decisions and strategies of educational institutions in the context of a crisis. Furthermore, this study will provide new insights on how institutions can effectively manage the financial challenges caused by the pandemic and how it can affect their long-term sustainability. This information is vital for academic institutions and policymakers to understand the financial implications of the pandemic on educational institutions, and how to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis on the education sector.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting every aspect of our daily lives, it is not surprising that the impact on learning institutions has become a major focus of research. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional learning models and forced education systems to rapidly adapt to the new normal. As a result, the body of research on the impact of COVID-19 on learning institutions has been growing rapidly, as scholars and educators attempt to understand the challenges posed by the pandemic and find ways to address them. The vast range of studies on this topic highlights the importance of understanding the impact of the pandemic on learning institutions and provides valuable insights into the future of education.

2.1 The Changing Landscape of Education During COVID-19

As the pandemic swept across the world, it had an immediate and profound impact on the education sector. With schools, colleges, and universities closing their doors in an effort to curb the spread of the virus, students, teachers, and institutions were forced to adapt to new modes of learning, teaching, and assessment. The sudden and widespread shift to remote learning has been described as "the largest-scale experiment in remote learning in human history" (Kolowich, 2020). One of the most significant impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector has been the widespread closure of schools, colleges, and universities (Kolowich, 2020). According to UNESCO (2020), by the end of March 2020, over 190 countries had closed educational institutions, affecting nearly 1.5 billion students. The closure of educational institutions was necessary to control the spread of the virus, but had significant implications for students, teachers, and institutions.

One of the immediate effects of school closures was the disruption of learning (Kolowich, 2020). With students unable to attend school in person, many fell behind in their studies, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (UNESCO, 2020). This has been compounded by the unequal access to digital technologies, with many students from low-income families unable to participate in remote learning (Kolowich, 2020). Another immediate effect of COVID-19 on the education sector has been the strain on

teachers and educational institutions (Nilsen et al., 2020). With schools and universities forced to rapidly shift to remote learning, teachers have had to adapt to new teaching methods and technologies, which has been challenging and time-consuming (Nilsen et al., 2020). In addition, many teachers have struggled to maintain student engagement and motivation in remote learning environments (Kolowich, 2020).

The shift to remote learning has also had significant implications for assessment and evaluation (Nilsen et al., 2020). With traditional forms of assessment, such as exams and tests, difficult to administer in remote learning environments, teachers have had to find alternative ways to evaluate student progress and performance (Nilsen et al., 2020). This has led to concerns about the validity and reliability of assessment methods, as well as the potential for cheating and academic dishonesty (Nilsen et al., 2020).

The sudden shift to remote learning has also highlighted the need for digital technologies in education (Kolowich, 2020). With many students and teachers forced to use online platforms for learning and teaching, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of digital technologies in education. However, the widespread use of digital technologies has also raised concerns about data privacy and security, as well as the potential for cyberbullying and online harassment.

Additionally, several studies have investigated the effects of COVID-19 on students' mental health and well-being. One study conducted by Wang et al. (2021) found that students who participated in remote learning reported higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared

to students who attended school in person. The study highlights the importance of providing support and resources to students during this challenging time.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has also had an impact on students with disabilities, as remote learning may not be accessible for all students with different abilities (Kim et al., 2020). In a study by Kim et al. (2020), it was found that students with disabilities reported greater difficulties in accessing remote learning materials and participating in online classes compared to students without disabilities. This highlights the need for inclusive education practices and the provision of adequate support for students with disabilities during times of crisis.

Restrictions on movement had even more pronounced effects on international students and their respective institutions. Tan et al. (2021) focused on the effects of COVID-19 on international students studying in universities in the United States. The study found that international students faced various challenges during the pandemic, including difficulties in accessing online learning materials and support services, as well as increased stress and anxiety levels. The study highlights the need for universities to provide adequate support and resources to international students during this time of crisis.

2.2 The Effects of the Pandemic on Student Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world of education, particularly in terms of international student enrollment. The closure of borders, suspension of visa services, and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic has led to a significant reduction in international student enrollment. According to a report by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to result in a 40% decrease in international student enrollment in the United States (IIE, 2020). The same report found that this reduction in

international student enrollment is likely to result in a loss of \$15 billion in revenue for universities in the United States.

International students play a vital role in the economic and cultural diversity of universities, and the reduction in international student enrollment has had a significant impact on these institutions (Chung, 2021). A study by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC) found that the number of international students enrolled in Chinese universities in 2020 decreased by 24.5% compared to the previous year (NBSC, 2020). Similarly, a study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that the number of international students enrolled in Australian universities in 2020 decreased by 19.7% compared to the previous year (ABS, 2020).

The pandemic has led to an increase in transfer student rates, with a range of impacts on transferring students and the institutions they are transferring to. With the closure of universities and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, many students opted to transfer to different institutions to continue their education. A study by the National

Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCC) found that the number of transfer students increased by 11% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year (NSCC, 2020).

The increase in transfer student rates is attributed to several factors, including the switch to online learning and concerns about the financial stability of universities (Sánchez, 2020). A study by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) found that students who transferred to new institutions in 2020 were more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of online learning at their previous institutions (HEC, 2020). Similarly, a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) found that the COVID-19 pandemic had led to increased concerns among students about the financial stability of universities, with many students opting to transfer to institutions that they believe are more financially secure (NACAC, 2020).

The increase in transfer student rates has had a significant impact on both the transferring students and the institutions they are transferring to. For transferring students, the process of transferring can be stressful and time-consuming, particularly if they are transferring to a new institution in a different state or country (Chen, 2020). A study by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) found that transferring students often face challenges in transferring their credits, particularly if they are transferring to a new institution with different academic requirements (AACC, 2020).

The pandemic had a significant impact on the enrollment of incoming freshman students in higher education institutions. Overall, it led to decreased enrollment, decreased college application rates, and challenges in the college planning and decision-making process. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2020), the enrollment of first-time college students fell by 4.4% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year. This decrease was observed across all student demographics and academic levels, but it was particularly pronounced among low-income, first-generation, and minority students. Similarly, the enrollment of first-time college students fell by 7.6% at public institutions and by 2.3% at private nonprofit institutions, according to the College Board (2020). The College Board report highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic, along with economic uncertainty and remote learning, was the main factor that contributed to the decrease in enrollment among freshman students.

The pandemic also led to a decrease in college application rates. According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) (2021), the number of high school seniors who applied to college fell by 10.2% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year. This decrease was observed across all student demographics and geographic regions. Moreover, the pandemic created challenges for high school students and their families in the college planning and decision-making process.

The pandemic also had a significant impact on higher education institutions and their financial stability, leading to increased financial concerns and changes in financial aid policies. According to a report by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) (2020), colleges and universities experienced significant declines in revenue due to the pandemic, including a decrease in tuition and fees, room and board, and auxiliary revenues. The pandemic led to an increase in expenses for colleges and universities, including additional expenses for technology, online learning, and health and safety measures (NACUBO, 2020). This put significant financial pressure on higher education institutions, making it difficult for them to maintain their financial stability and support their students.

The pandemic has resulted in a drastic shift in the recruitment and admissions processes of universities and colleges globally. With the lockdowns, physical visits to campus and face-to-face interactions with recruiters have become challenging (National Association for College Admission Counseling [NACAC], 2020). As a result, institutions have had to resort to virtual recruitment and admissions processes (NACAC, 2020). Virtual recruitment and admissions have presented new challenges for universities and colleges. The most prominent challenge is the limited interaction between recruiters and prospective students (Wang, 2021).

2.3 Online Education Accessibility and Equity Challenges in Light of New Normal

Students with disabilities are facing significant challenges in virtual learning due to inadequate accommodations. It has been reported that students with disabilities are facing significant challenges with the transition to online learning (Zahorik & Black, 2020). Inadequate accommodations are among the biggest challenges facing students with disabilities in virtual

learning. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), students with disabilities are at a higher risk of falling behind in their studies due to the lack of adequate accommodations in virtual learning. The NCES report stated that only 59% of students with disabilities received adequate accommodations in virtual learning, compared to 75% of students without disabilities. This disparity highlights the need for schools to make accommodations for students with disabilities in virtual learning.

One of the biggest challenges for students with disabilities in virtual learning is the lack of accessibility to technology (Sebastian, 2020). For students with disabilities, access to technology and the internet is essential for learning. However, many students with disabilities struggle to access these resources due to cost, technical difficulties, and lack of training (Sebastian, 2020). This lack of accessibility to technology and the internet exacerbates the challenges faced by students with disabilities in virtual learning. Students with disabilities face challenges in virtual learning because of the lack of support from teachers and staff (Zahorik & Black, 2020).

Challenges of lack of proper facilitations to fully integrate into virtual learning have not been isolated to students with disabilities. It has been noted that non-native speakers are facing challenges with language barriers that hinder their ability to fully participate in virtual learning (Alqahtani, 2019). This can include difficulties in understanding the language used by instructors, lack of support for non-native speakers, and limited access to resources in their native language (Lu & Ting, 2019). According to Alqahtani (2019), non-native speakers face challenges in virtual learning environments, including language barriers and lack of support. The study found that non-native speakers may struggle with understanding the language used in virtual learning platforms, and that there is a lack of support for non-native speakers in virtual learning environments. This can result in non-native speakers feeling isolated and unable to fully participate in the learning process.

Lu and Ting (2019) found that language barriers can also impact non-native speakers' access to resources in virtual learning environments. This includes the ability to access information and materials in their native language, which can further exacerbate the challenges faced by non-native speakers. The authors suggest that virtual learning

platforms should provide resources in multiple languages to support non-native speakers, and that instructors should provide additional support and resources to help non-native speakers understand the language used in virtual learning environments. On their part, Papp et al. (2020) found that language barriers can impact non-native speakers' ability to participate in virtual discussions and contribute to the learning process.

Another area of concern is the use of AI systems to personalize learning and provide individualized feedback to students. A study by Kostakos et al. (2019) found that AI-powered personalized learning systems can result in biased recommendations based on students' past performance, leading to unequal treatment and perpetuating existing inequalities. The authors argue that this highlights the need for greater transparency in AI systems and for educators to carefully consider the potential biases that may be present in these systems.

The use of AI systems in education also raises concerns about privacy and the potential for sensitive student information to be misused. A study by Cheung and colleagues (2021) found that AI-powered systems used for student assessment and personalized learning can result in the collection and storage of large amounts of personal data, potentially leading to privacy breaches and unequal treatment of marginalized groups. The authors call for greater transparency and accountability in the use of AI systems in education.

2.4 Branding and Reputation Management to Navigating the Pandemic

The challenges posed by the pandemic have forced educational institutions to adapt and find new strategies to navigate the changing landscape (Johnson, 2020). The theory of strategic adaptation provides a useful framework for understanding how organizations respond to external changes and can help explain the strategies that educational institutions are using to survive and thrive during the pandemic (Wang, 2021). According to Johnson (2020), organizations that employ strategic adaptation tend to be more resilient and better equipped to handle external changes. This is because they are proactive in anticipating and responding to external events, rather than simply reacting to them.

One of the major concerns for educational institutions during and after the pandemic has been reputation risk mitigation (Park, 2021). Reputation risk refers to the potential harm that a negative image or perception can cause to an institution's reputation, affecting its

stakeholders and future prospects (Smith, 2020). One of the key measures that educational institutions can put in place for reputation risk mitigation is proactive communication (Lee, 2020). According to Lee (2020), transparent and regular communication is critical in ensuring that stakeholders feel informed and confident in the institution's ability to handle the challenges posed by the pandemic. This includes updates on plans, actions, and safety measures. Another effective measure for reputation risk mitigation is the implementation of best practices for online learning (Johnson, 2021). With the shift to online learning, it is crucial for educational institutions to ensure that their students receive high-quality education and support, thereby mitigating the potential for negative perceptions about their institution (Johnson, 2021).

Educational institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to meet the needs of students and stakeholders (Park, 2021). This may involve creating new programs or services, or modifying existing ones to meet the changing demands of the market. By doing this, educational institutions can demonstrate their commitment to serving their stakeholders, which can help maintain and enhance their reputation (Park, 2021). Institutions must implement measures that ensure preparedness to respond effectively to any negative impacts on their reputation (Smith, 2020). This may involve having crisis communication plans in place and regular monitoring of social media and other channels to identify and address any concerns or issues in a timely manner (Smith, 2020). Maintaining brand consistency is crucial in ensuring that the reputation of these institutions remains intact in these uncertain times (Brown, 2020). According to Brown (2020), educational institutions must be aware of their brand image and ensure that their messaging and communication align with their overall brand strategy. This includes adapting their branding and marketing tactics to match the current situation, but also maintaining the core values and principles that make up their brand identity. Chang and Kline (2020) also emphasize the importance of effective communication during the pandemic, stating that it is essential for educational institutions to communicate regularly and transparently with their audiences. This includes updates on plans, actions and safety measures to ensure that students and staff feel secure and confident in the institution.

Kim and Lee (2021) noted that educational institutions that effectively managed their reputation during the pandemic experienced increased levels of trust and engagement from their audiences. They concluded that a consistent brand image and effective communication strategies are key factors in maintaining and strengthening the reputation of educational institutions during times of crisis. By adapting their branding and communication strategies to meet the needs of their audiences, educational institutions can mitigate the risks to their reputation and build trust in their institution (Chang and Kline, 2020; Kim and Lee, 2021).

Effective communication is a crucial factor in building trust and maintaining the reputation of educational institutions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular and transparent updates, along with a consistent brand image, are essential components of a successful reputation management strategy (Kim and Lee, 2021; Brown, 2020). The pandemic has resulted in a shift in the way educational institutions communicate with their students, staff, and stakeholders. Building trust through effective communication is essential in navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic and maintaining a positive reputation (Chang and Kline, 2020). Kim and Lee (2021) found that educational institutions that effectively managed their reputation during the pandemic experienced increased levels of trust and engagement from their audiences. This highlights the importance of transparent and regular communication in building trust, especially in times of uncertainty.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 of this thesis is dedicated to the methodology used in the study. A thorough review of the study design, analysis unit, indicators, measurement variables, research equipment, and analysis sequence is given in this section. Determining the viability and correctness of the study findings depends on the methodology part. To learn more about the present state of the marketing techniques used by educational institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study used a cross-sectional design, which involves gathering data from a specific moment in time. This study's design was appropriate since it gave an overview of the educational institutions' present situation, which is necessary to comprehend how the pandemic has affected their marketing plans.

The educational institutions affected by the COVID-19 epidemic served as the study's unit of analysis. 400 educational institutions from various parts of the world were included in the sample. Based on the data's accessibility and the study's time restrictions, this sample size was chosen. The use of digital marketing channels, the effect of the pandemic on enrollment and retention rates, and the steps taken by institutions to address the financial difficulties caused by the pandemic and its impact on their marketing strategies were among the indicators and measurement variables used in this study.

A self-administered questionnaire served as the research tool for this study. This tool was used to collect information from educational institutions on their usage of digital marketing platforms, how they handled the pandemic's effects on enrollment and retention rates, and the steps they took to handle the financial difficulties the epidemic caused. This study's measurement variables were established by combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. While open-ended questions were used to get qualitative data, Likert-scale questions were used

to gather quantitative data. Coding of the qualitative data was done first, then statistical analysis of the quantitative data using regression analysis and descriptive statistics.

3.1. Research Design

The study used a quantitative research methodology since it was seen to be the most appropriate given the goal of the study, which was to ascertain how COVID-19 affected educational institutions' marketing plans. The research approach was selected because it allowed for systematic data collection and analysis, enabling generalization of findings to the public. A cross-sectional design was used for the study, which involves gathering information from educational institutions all at once. The institutions considered for the study were drawn at random from the pool of American educational institutions. 400 universities were chosen as the sample size using a sample size calculator.

The researcher created an online survey questionnaire based on the study's goals and research questions in order to collect data. The survey's closed-ended questions required respondents to choose one answer from a list of available options. The questions were created to gather data on the schools' marketing approaches, how COVID-19 affected those approaches, and how the pandemic affected student enrolment, recruiting, and retention. To assess the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pilot test of the survey questionnaire was conducted using a sample of 10 institutions.

400 completed questionnaires were received from the institutions during the course of the two-week data collecting period. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, were used to assess the data that had been collected. To ascertain the link between the independent variables (marketing techniques) and the dependent variables, inferential statistics, including multiple regression analysis, was applied (enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students). The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) program was used to analyze the data. The findings were reviewed and analyzed in light of the study questions and objectives after the data were presented in tables and figures.

3.2. Unit of Analysis

3.2.1 Population and Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study was educational institutions that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The population for this study was defined as all post-secondary

educational institutions that were operating in the United States. This included both public and private universities, colleges, and trade schools.

For this investigation, the sample was chosen using a stratified random sampling technique. With this approach, the population is divided into strata or subgroups depending on specific traits, and samples are then chosen from each stratum. In this instance, the strata were established according to the size and kind of educational institution (public or private) (small, medium, or large).

For this study, 400 institutions in total were chosen, of which 200 were private and 200 were public. This formula was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N * Z^2 * p * q}{E^2}$$

E is the required degree of precision, where n is the sample size, N is the population size, Z is the standard normal deviation, p is the estimated percentage of the population that possesses the feature under study, q is the estimated proportion of the population that does not. A survey that was distributed to the chosen universities was used to gather the data for this investigation.

Table 3.1 Summary of study population, sampling, data collection and analysis approach

Category	Description
Population	All post-secondary educational institutions operating in the United States (public & private universities, colleges, and trade schools)
Sampling Method	Stratified random sampling
Strata	Established according to the size and type of institution (public or private) (small, medium, or large)
Sample Size	400 institutions (200 private & 200 public)
Formula used to determine sample size	$n = (NZ^2pq)/E^2$
Data Collection	Survey distributed to chosen institutions
Data Analysis	Descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square tests, t-tests, regression analysis)
Advantages of Sampling Method	Representative sample of population selected; more accurate representation of population due to balanced sample with regards to type and size of institution

3.2.2 Data Collection

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data collection methods were used to collect data from the educational institutions themselves, while secondary data collection methods were used to gather data from existing literature and sources, such as articles and reports.

1. Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection was carried out through a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather data from the educational institutions on their marketing strategies, the challenges they faced, and the changes they made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent to 400 educational institutions, which were selected through a purposive sampling method, and responses were collected online through a survey platform.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with marketing managers or representatives of educational institutions. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the difficulties that educational institutions experienced and the adjustments that they made to their marketing plans. Ten interviews were done, of which five were performed in-person and five by video conference.

2. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was collected from academic journals, reports, and other sources relevant to the research. The sources were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their publication date, with only sources published from 2018 to date being used. The sources were searched for using various academic databases, such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Table 3.2 Select secondary sources and variable focus

Study	Variable
Bolton, J. R., & Sacher, J. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates as a Dependent Variable
Brown, J. (2019)	COVID-19 pandemic; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates
Brown, J. (2020)	Marketing Strategies
Chang, J., & Kline, P. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Chen, Y. (2020)	Financial Challenges
Chung, Y. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic
Dahir, A. (2020)	Financial Challenges
Johnson, R. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Johnson, R. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies
Jones, S. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates
Kim, J., Kim, S., & Lee, K. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic
Kolowich, S. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Lee, J. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic as an independent variable; Marketing Strategies
Liu, S., & Shu, Y. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies

3.3 Research Instrumentation

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The primary tool utilized to gather data for this study was the research questionnaire.

Questions, both closed-ended and open-ended, were included in the questionnaire. In contrast to open-ended questions, which were meant to gather qualitative data, closed-ended questions were intended to gather quantitative data. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on educational institutions' marketing plans, the effect of COVID-19 on student enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, the use of digital marketing channels, and the financial difficulties encountered by educational institutions during the pandemic.

3.3.2 Scoring

The Likert scale, a five-point rating system from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used to assess the closed-ended items in the questionnaire. The total score for each variable was computed by adding the results from each question. In order to examine the

data, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were created using the scores for each variable.

3.3.3 Data Coding and Entry

The information gathered from the survey was coded and added to a database. Each response was given a number code as part of the coding process. The information was then put into a database using a piece of software that made data administration and analysis simple.

3.3.4 Reporting Bias Testing

Testing for reporting bias was done to make sure the information collected was accurate.

When study participants give false or misleading information, whether on purpose or accidentally, reporting bias occurs. The participants were given the assurance that their answers would be kept private and anonymous in order to reduce reporting bias. The questionnaire also made use of a mix of open-ended and closed-ended items to lessen social desirability bias.

3.4 Sequence of Analysis

The sequence of analysis involved several steps to ensure that the data collected was accurately analyzed and interpreted. The steps were as follows:

1. Data Cleaning: The first step was to clean the data collected from the questionnaires. This involved checking for missing values, inconsistent responses, and any errors in data entry. The data was then corrected and edited where necessary.

2. Descriptive Statistics: The next step was to calculate descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, and standard deviation for each variable. This allowed for a general understanding of the distribution of the data and provided insights into the central tendencies of the variables.

3. Inferential Statistics: Lastly, inferential statistics were then conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This was done by using One sample T-Test, Independent Samples T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, and regression analysis.

The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software and results were presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphs. The results were then interpreted and discussed in light of the research objectives and hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Statistics
H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	One sample T-Test
H2: Different organizational factors including type of institution, level of education service offering, adaptation of marketing strategy, channel of digital marketing, solution to financial challenges, and adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.	Independent Samples T-Test and One-Way ANOVA
H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis
H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis
H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four presents results for statistical analysis that correspond to the study's research questions and hypothesis. The chapter is sectioned in different parts that describes how the data was analyzed, output and visualization of data and an interpretation of the obtained results. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Statistics 20.0) was used to carry out analysis of the collected data. The process of analyzing data deployed quiet an array of statistical methods in order to obtain more insight and establish conclusions about the study topic. This chapter will provide meaningful information that will be used to draw suitable conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.

4.2 Preparation of Data

The process of data preparation involves arranging the collected data, into excel sheet with alignment to the correct variable name. The second step is to clean the data; this step involves eliminating irrelevant response, handling missing data (either eliminating the entire case response from one institution or filling the missing value based on responses given for other questions). Once the data is cleaned and ready for analysis, it is imported to SPSS, the tool to be used to conduct data analysis. Data analysis in SPSS has to start with creating variables, that is, assigning appropriate variable names, selecting appropriate data type for each variable responses and assigning value labels to data entries that align to a quantitative scale. After creation of variables, the data from excel is entered in the data window of SPSS.

4.3 Data Analysis

The research on Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions obtained responses from 400 participants (institutions). This data was obtained using questionnaires. Each question asked was considered a variable and analyzed individually. Name of the institution is a subjective variable and therefore it was not applied for data analysis. Statistical analysis produced summary statistics for each

variable, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, t-test analysis, Analysis of Variance and regression modelling. Summary statistics are visually represented using pie charts and bar graphs.

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics give an explanation of the dataset by featuring how the entries are distributed, the distributions of data and a measure of central tendency.

1. Type of learning institution

Table 4.1 frequency distribution table representing the type of learning institution

	type of institution	
	Frequency	Percent
public	201	50.3
private	199	49.8
Total	400	100.0

The sample recorded both public and private institutions of higher learning in the United States. This study, which focuses on finding out the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions, considered type of institution as strata. Therefore, to avoid bias in data collection, these two groups were assigned equal opportunities. There were 201 public institutions of higher learning and 199 private institutions of higher learning. The corresponding percentages are 50.3% and 49.8% respectively. These two values are equivalent thus eliminating bias.

2. Level of education offered

Table 4.2 frequency distribution table representing level of education offered

level of education offered		
	Frequency	Percent
undergraduate	200	50.0
postgraduate	200	50.0
Total	400	100.0

This study focused on institutions of higher learning that offer both undergraduate and postgraduate education. This variable was also considered a grouping variable when sampling (strata) so that responses about the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on learning institutions is not biased. 200 institutions of higher learning in the United States were sampled. A similar number of institutions offering postgraduate studies were sampled. The representative percentage for both groups is 50%.

3. Adoption of marketing strategies

Table 4.3 extent to which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
not at all	13	3.3
Slightly	20	5.0
Moderately	23	5.8
Considerably	164	41.0
Extremely	180	45.0
Total	400	100.0

The COVID-19 pandemic caused adverse effects on education. Most learning institutions were closed down, this caused a sudden halt in learning activities at the onset of the pandemic. As the pandemic continued to rage across the world, a number of institutions tried to come up with ways to ensure continuity of learning, but this was not successful in most cases. Several students terminated their studies for a number of reasons.

Some were actually caused by the conditions of the institutions. A couple of months after, institutions realized the need to continue operating despite continuation of the pandemic. Marketing is the best way to create awareness about a certain product or service. Different institutions of higher learning in the United States adapted marketing strategies to ensure they remain operational amidst the pandemic. However, different institutions applied different extent of strategies. From the results, the highest number of institutions (45%) adopted extreme marketing strategies, 41% adopted considerable marketing strategies, 5.8%

adopted moderate strategies, and 5% adopted slight marketing strategies while 3.3% of learning institutions did not adopt any marketing strategies.

4. Ways of adopting marketing strategies

Table 4.4 Ways in which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Increased use of digital marketing channels	111	27.8
Changed focus of marketing campaigns	123	30.8
Reduced marketing efforts	103	25.8
Other	63	15.8
Total	400	100.0

Institutions of higher learning adopted marketing strategies in different ways as a way of responding to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. 27.8% of the institutions increased the use of digital marketing channels, 30.8% changed focus of their marketing campaigns, 25.8% reduced their marketing efforts and 15.8% adopted other ways. Since the pandemic caused several changes in normalcy, several changes had to be changed on how to handle different scenarios. This is the reason as to why change of focus of marketing campaigns recorded the highest percentage. This involved coming up with innovative marketing methods and methods of conducting activities. Digital marketing channels is also a key strategy since social interactions were greatly minimized leaving online space as the most commonly used space for interactions. Other ways of marketing strategies

that were adopted by a few institutions are personalizing communication with prospective students, enhancing mobile friendly websites and spreading the visuals and aesthetics of institutions.

5. Increased the use of digital marketing channels

Table 4.5 extent to which an institution has increased the use of digital marketing channels during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Slightly	18	4.5
Moderately	11	2.8
Considerably	181	45.3
Extremely	190	47.5
Total	400	100.0

Digital marketing channels is currently the most popular and successful marketing strategy for many types of businesses. Access to the internet and the digital space is has become widespread, and due to convenience, it is preferred for transmission of information. 47.5% of institutions of higher learning in the United States have increased the use of digital marketing channels extremely, 45.3% have considerably increased their use of digital marketing channels. A cumulative percentage of 7.3% have slightly am moderately increased the use of digital marketing strategies.

6. Digital marketing channels used

Table 4.6 Which digital marketing channels has your institution utilized during the pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Website	102	25.5
social media	92	23.0
E-mail marketing	96	24.0
Online advertisement	94	23.5
Other	16	4.0
Total	400	100.0

There are several digital marketing channels that can be used by businesses to spread information about services provided. Learning institutions can market their services (courses offered, charges and resources) through social media, website, email, and online marketing. 25.5% of higher learning institutions use their website as a digital marketing channel, 23% use social media platforms as a digital marketing channel, 24% use e-mail marketing and 23.5% use online advertisement such as ads. Other digital marketing channels used by institutions of higher learning include: partnerships with other brands and establishing blogs or videos.

7. Extent of financial challenges effect on institution's marketing strategies

Table 4.7 To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies

strategies?		
	Frequency	Percent
Slightly	22	5.5
Moderately	27	6.8
considerably	174	43.5
extremely	177	44.3
Total	400	100.0

Effective marketing strategies for any kind of business is usually associated with particular costs. A good marketing strategy will require much more funding since quality resources are put in place when marketing the product or service. Educational institutions have to set a side sufficient finance to ensure the marketing process of their portfolio is conducted successfully, thus gaining profits in terms of more recruitment of students or increase of revenue obtained by the institution. During the COVID-19 pandemic most of the institutions of higher learning in the United States experienced a decrease in the amount of revenue raised. This resulted into the need to withdraw some services or reduce the quality of services offered. The institutions' marketing sector was not left out - it also experienced a number of challenges due to the reduction of revenue. 44.3% of

learning institutions' marketing strategies were extremely affected by financial challenges during the pandemic. 43.5% of the marketing strategies were considerably affected by financial challenges. 6.8% of the institutions' marketing strategies were moderately affected, and 5.5% were just slightly affected by financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Effect of financial challenges on marketing strategies

Table 4.8 In what ways have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies

	Frequency	Percent
Reduced marketing budget	98	24.5
Changed focus of marketing campaigns	126	31.5
Reduced marketing efforts	108	27.0
other	68	17.0
Total	400	100.0

Financial constraints can cause several challenges on marketing strategies deployed by institutions of higher learning. Such challenges might be; reduction in marketing budget, changing the focus of marketing channels and reduction of marketing efforts. 31.1% of institutions of higher learning in the United States changed focus of their marketing campaigns as a way of responding to financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. 27% of the institutions reduced their marketing efforts while 24.5% reduced their marketing budget. Other ways in which financial challenges faced by learning institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic affected marketing strategies include; spending more on online marketing platforms and going beyond the norm to establish more relations, which is costly.

9. Financial challenges faced by learning institutions

Table 4.9 financial challenges that learning institutions faced during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue	183	45.8
Increase in operational costs	91	22.8
Reduction in enrolment income	104	26.0
other	22	5.5
Total	400	100.0

Several challenges can face institutions of higher learning due to financial challenges. These problems mainly result when there is extreme reduce in acquired revenue. Such challenges include; reduction in enrolment income (this results when there are no new students joining the institution; as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic), increase in operational costs (containment measures of COVID-19 were quite costly, there was need to acquire protective garment, regularly fumigate lecture halls and also conduction tests for the virus. All these costs were to catered for by the institutions without an earlier plan or budgeting, thus resulting into numerous challenges.), and decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue (the transmission method and rate of corona virus necessitated governments to abolish social gatherings, learners in lecture halls were victims and thus institutions had to stop offering physical classes and switch to online classes. This move resulted to a decrease in tuition revenue and also minimized enrolment revenue). 45.8% of institutions faced financial challenges that aligns towards decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue. 26% of the institutions experienced reduction in enrollment income. 22.8% of the institutions experienced an increase in operational costs. Other challenges that were faced by institutions of higher learning during the pandemic are; increase in student transfers, reduced application rates and death of some lectures and students.

10. How institutions address financial challenges

Table 4.10 How has your institution addressed these financial challenges

	Frequency	Percent
Reduced marketing budget	109	27.3
Increased fundraising efforts	86	21.5
Reduced operational costs	109	27.3
other	96	24.0
Total	400	100.0

Since the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were inevitable, and the challenges experienced were not light, institutions of higher learning had to come up with ways of handling the challenges. A number of ways in which institutions address financial challenges are increasing fundraising efforts, reducing operational costs and reducing their budgeting costs. 27.3% of the institutions reduced their marketing budget. A similar number reduced their operational costs as a way of addressing financial challenges caused by the pandemic. 21.5% increased their fundraising efforts. 24% of institutions adapted other ways of addressing financial challenges such as using less expensive ways of marketing.

11. Effects of COVID-19 on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates

Table 4.11 extent of negative effects that the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates

	Frequency	Percent
not at all	8	2.0
slightly	13	3.3
moderately	27	6.8
considerably	189	47.3
extremely	163	40.8
Total	400	100.0

COVID-19 affected students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates differently for various learning institutions. 40.8% of the institutions experienced extreme effects, 47.3% experienced considerable effects. 6.8% of institutions experienced moderate

effects on their student enrollment, retention and recruitment rates, 3.3% experienced slight effects, and 2% did not experience any effect.

4.3.2 Inferential Statistics

1. One sample T-Test analysis

One sample T-Test analysis is used. The hypothesis is written as follows.

H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The test produces a critical t statistic that is compared against the tabulated t statistic. Tabulated t-statistic is obtained from t tables that are available online. The table makes use of the degree of freedom (df), the level of confidence and the type of test conducted (whether one sided or two sided). The conclusion is drawn from a comparison of the two values (critical value and tabulated value). If the critical value is greater than tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

t-test results						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	400	4.22	.861	.043		
One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	97.955	399	.000	4.215	4.13	4.30

The critical t-statistic (t) is 97.955. The degree of freedom is 399, the test is a 2-tailed test at 0.05 level of significance. Using these values to obtain the tabulated t

statistic; the corresponding value is 0.00. 97.955 is greater than 0.00. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion to be drawn is that there is a significant difference between the groups or measurement scales of the dependent variable (effect of the pandemic on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rate).

2. Independent Sample T-Test

H2.1: Different type of institution had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

	type of institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	public	201	4.16	.897	.063	-1.304	.193
	private	199	4.27	.821	.058		

The result indicated that different type of institution did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.2: Different level of education service offering had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

	level of education offered	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	undergraduate	200	4.19	.903	.064	-.697	.486
	postgraduate	200	4.25	.818	.058		

The result indicated that different level of education service offering did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

3. One-way ANOVA

H2.3: Different adaptation of marketing strategy had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.080	3	.693	.936	.423
Within Groups	293.430	396	.741		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different adaptation of marketing strategy did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.4: Different channel of digital marketing had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.658	3	1.219	1.654	.176
Within Groups	291.852	396	.737		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different channel of digital marketing did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.5: Different solution to financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.104	3	.035	.046	.987
Within Groups	295.406	396	.746		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different solution to financial challenges did not different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.6: Different adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.243	3	.748	1.010	.388
Within Groups	293.267	396	.741		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

4. Regression Analysis

Regression modelling is suitable for developing a model that will assess the impact of covid-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions. Regression analysis helps to indicate how much variance is present in one response as is explained by a predictor or explanatory variable. A regression model gives an explanation of the relationship between two or more variables. The key advantage of this model is that it

gives the exact extent and direction of effect. A regression model is also suitable for predicting or forecasting future occurrences. A regression model comprises of key values or statistics including: R statistic, R- squared and correlation

coefficients. The R-squared reveal how much variation in the response variable is explained by the independent variables. The regression model for this study considers the effect of the pandemic on student’s enrollment, recruitment and retention rates as the dependent variable and the independent variables are financial challenges, marketing strategies and effects of COVID-19. Accordingly, the hypotheses are as follows:

H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

Based on hypothesis drawing, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is also part of a regression model. ANOVA tests the significance of variables used in a regression model. ANOVA tests the hypothesis. The result produces a p-value that is compared against the standard level of confidence (0.05). A rule is made either to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.045 ^a	.002	-.006	.863

The R-squared for this model is 0.002. This shows that 0.2% of variation in the effect of the pandemic on student’s enrollment, recruitment and retention rates is explained by the explanatory variables.

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.603	3	.201	.270	.847 ^a
	Residual	294.907	396	.745		
	Total	295.510	399			

The p-value (denoted in the ANOVA model summary as Sig.) is 0.847, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the null hypothesis and draw a conclusion that the model is significant.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	4.079		
	Marketing strategies in response to COVID-19 pandemic	.032	.044	.037	.730	.466
	COVID-19 effects	.033	.058	.028	.563	.574
	Financial challenges as a result of COVID-19 pandemic	-.013	.053	-.013	-.251	.802

a. Predictors: (Constant), To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?, How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your institution's enrollment and retention rates?, extent to which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

b. Dependent Variable: what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

The model coefficients show an extent of effect in the model. H3: COVID-19 impact on marketing strategy influence the positive effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. H4: COVID 19 impact on digital

marketing strategy influence the positive effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. And, H5: COVID-19 impact on financial challenges influence the positive effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. For every unit change in marketing strategies in response to COVID-19 pandemic, the effect on enrollment, retention and recruitment rates increases by 0.032 units. If the nature of COVID-19 effects changes by a unit, the effect on enrollment, retention and recruitment rates increases by 0.033 units. For every unit change in financial challenges as a result of the pandemic, enrollment and retention rates for institutions of higher learning decreases by 0.013 units.

4.4 Content Analysis

Content analysis determines the existence of particular concepts or ideas with regard to qualitative data (Stemler, 2000). Content analysis will be used to understand recommendations given to institutions of higher learning about adopting marketing strategies in response to COVID- 19 pandemic. Respondents gave different recommendations that are actually helpful. Some of the suggestions are; branding – this is representing the institution and the students and also showing the unique attributes associated with your institution. Livestreaming was also highly recommended. This method of marketing enables potential students to get first-hand information from their desired institution. Leveraging students and alumni; this mode offers a stream of marketing from actual partakers or members of the institutions thus high chances that prospective students can gain insight about a particular institution and actual enroll at the school. Another highly recommended marketing strategy is focusing on positive career outcomes. Students are mainly attracted to good performing institutions since they are interested in obtaining quality education which will in turn affect the jobs and pay they get in future. Using content that discusses careers positively and actually show cases success that is attributed to a particular institution, will automatically attract new students and maintain the existing ones.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the education sector worldwide. The sudden shift to remote learning and closure of campuses have forced educational institutions to rethink their marketing strategies to ensure that they can continue to attract and retain students. This research study aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

How have educational institutions adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

What is the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions?

How have educational institutions utilized digital marketing channels during the pandemic, and how has it affected enrollment and retention rates?

What are the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic, and how has it affected their marketing strategies?

What recommendations can be provided to educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

To achieve these research objectives, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. A survey was conducted to collect data from educational institutions in different parts of the world. The survey was designed to gather information on the marketing strategies employed by the institutions, the impact of the pandemic on their enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, the utilization of digital marketing channels, and the financial challenges faced by the institutions. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected institutions to gain more in-depth insights into their marketing strategies and the challenges they faced during the pandemic.

The results of the survey and interviews show that educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. The majority of institutions have increased their use of digital marketing channels, such as social media and email marketing, to reach out to prospective students. The institutions also reported a reduction in enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates due to the pandemic. Financial challenges, such as reduced funding and increased operational costs, have forced institutions to make changes to their marketing strategies.

The study recommends that educational institutions should continue to leverage digital marketing channels to reach out to prospective students, even after the pandemic. Institutions should also consider diversifying their revenue streams to reduce the impact of financial challenges on their marketing strategies. Furthermore, institutions should prioritize the health and safety of their students and staff, and communicate effectively with them to build trust and confidence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The study findings provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by institutions and the strategies they adopted to overcome them. The study's recommendations offer practical solutions for institutions to adapt their marketing strategies and attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

5.2 Findings

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the educational sector, forcing institutions to adopt new marketing strategies to attract and retain students. This paper aimed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, focusing on their adaptation to the new reality, enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, digital marketing channels, financial challenges, and recommendations for adapting to the pandemic. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, and regression analysis, to answer the research objectives and questions.

Research Objective 1: Understand how educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research findings indicated that most educational institutions had significantly and extremely adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was confirmed by the hypothesis testing, which showed that the hypothesis that "educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" was true. The institutions' adaptation strategies included the use of digital marketing channels, virtual open houses, online learning, and increased communication with students and parents. The study recommended that institutions should continue to adapt their marketing strategies to meet the changing needs of students and parents.

Research Objective 2: Investigate the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

The regression analysis showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. The hypothesis that "the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions" was confirmed. The study recommended that institutions should focus on retaining existing students and finding new ways to attract new students, such as virtual tours, online learning, and communication with prospective students.

Research Objective 3: Analyze the utilization of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates.

The study found that the majority of educational institutions had increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic. The hypothesis that "educational institutions have increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic, and this has had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates" was confirmed. The study recommended that institutions should continue to invest in digital marketing channels to attract and retain students, such as social media, email marketing, and online ads.

Research Objective 4: Identify the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The study found that financial challenges had an extremely negative impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The data collected from institutions of higher learning showed that financial challenges affected their marketing strategies, forcing them to change their methods of marketing. The study recommended that institutions should find ways to manage their finances, such as cutting costs, seeking financial assistance, and exploring new revenue streams.

Research Objective 5: Provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The study recommended that institutions should adopt a student-centered approach to marketing, focus on digital marketing channels, increase communication with students and parents, adapt to the changing needs of students, and find ways to manage their finances. The study also recommended that institutions should invest in training and development for their marketing teams to stay up-to-date with new marketing strategies and technologies. Finally, the study suggested that institutions should continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing strategies to ensure that they are achieving their goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to attract and retain students. The study found that the majority of institutions had significantly and extremely adapted their marketing strategies, increased the use of digital marketing channels, and faced financial challenges during the pandemic

5.3 Implications and Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a global health crisis that has disrupted all aspects of society, including the education sector. Educational institutions have had to adapt to the new normal of remote learning, social distancing, and reduced physical interactions. These changes have had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. This study aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions and provide recommendations for effective adaptation to the new environment.

The study found that educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. This adaptation has been necessary to ensure that institutions continue to attract and retain students. The study found that a majority of educational institutions had considerably or extremely adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions that fail to adapt their marketing strategies may lose out on potential students to institutions that have adapted their strategies.

The study also found that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. This finding is in line with the current trend of reduced enrollment rates in many educational institutions due to the pandemic. Learning institutions need to understand this trend and find ways to mitigate it. One of the ways that institutions can mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates is by adopting effective digital marketing strategies. The study found that institutions that increased their use of digital marketing channels had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates.

Digital marketing recorded the highest percentage as compared to other types of marketing strategies, thus confirming the hypothesis. This finding suggests that institutions that invest in digital marketing strategies are more likely to attract and retain students. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions need to invest in effective digital marketing strategies to increase enrollment and retention rates. These digital marketing strategies should be targeted towards the needs of the students and should be effective in reaching them through various digital channels.

The study also found that financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to changes in their marketing strategies. Educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to accommodate the financial challenges they face. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions need to find innovative ways of marketing themselves while still managing their finances effectively. Institutions need to invest in cost-effective marketing strategies that can reach potential students without incurring additional costs.

Learning institutions that have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had better results in terms of enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates compared to those that have not adapted their strategies. This finding implies that institutions that fail to adapt their marketing strategies may lose out on potential students to institutions that have adapted their strategies. Learning institutions need to invest in innovative marketing strategies that can adapt to the changing environment and still attract and retain students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. Educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to ensure that they continue to attract and retain students. Institutions need to invest in cost-effective digital marketing strategies that can reach potential students without incurring additional costs. Institutions that have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic have had better results in terms of enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates compared to those that have not adapted their strategies. The findings of this study have implications for learning institutions and their marketing strategies in the post-COVID-19 era. Institutions need to find innovative ways of marketing themselves while still managing their finances effectively to attract and retain students.

5.4 Recommendations

Adopt Digital Marketing Strategies:

The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation in the education sector, making it necessary for institutions to prioritize digital marketing strategies. Institutions should invest in online platforms and social media to reach out to potential students. They should also leverage digital tools such as webinars, virtual campus tours, and online events to attract and engage students. Digital marketing strategies can help institutions overcome the physical restrictions caused by the pandemic and reach a wider audience.

Enhance Student Experience:

The pandemic has disrupted the traditional learning experience, and institutions must prioritize student experience to ensure retention and satisfaction. Institutions should focus on providing quality education and personalized learning experiences to students. This can be achieved through online learning platforms that provide interactive and engaging

learning experiences. Institutions should also ensure that students have access to support services such as academic advising, mental health support, and career services to ensure that they succeed academically and professionally.

Strengthen Institutional Branding:

Institutions should focus on strengthening their brand reputation to attract and retain students. This can be achieved through effective branding strategies such as developing a unique value proposition and messaging that differentiates the institution from competitors. Institutions should also invest in creating a strong online presence and establishing partnerships with industry leaders to enhance their reputation.

Provide Financial Support:

The pandemic has led to financial constraints for both institutions and students. Institutions should provide financial support to students, such as scholarships, bursaries, and tuition fee waivers. This can help institutions attract and retain students who may be facing financial challenges. Institutions should also seek funding from external sources and explore cost-saving measures to address their financial constraints.

Collaborate with Industry Partners:

Institutions should collaborate with industry partners to provide students with real-world experiences and enhance their employability. This can be achieved through internships, co-op programs, and partnerships with industry leaders. Collaboration with industry partners can also help institutions develop relevant and marketable programs that attract students.

Leverage Alumni Networks:

Institutions should leverage their alumni networks to attract and retain students. Alumni can serve as brand ambassadors and provide testimonials about their experience at the institution. Institutions should also provide opportunities for alumni to engage with current students through mentorship programs, networking events, and career fairs.

Focus on Diversity, Equity:

Institutions should prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in their marketing strategies to attract and retain a diverse student population. This can be achieved through messaging that promotes inclusivity and equity and by providing resources and support

for marginalized communities. Institutions should also create a welcoming and inclusive campus environment that supports diversity and promotes equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges to the education sector, but it has also presented opportunities for institutions to innovate and adapt their marketing strategies. Institutions must prioritize digital marketing strategies, enhance student experience, strengthen institutional branding, provide financial support, collaborate with industry partners, leverage alumni networks, and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. By implementing these recommendations, institutions can effectively adapt their marketing strategies to ensure enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students during and after the pandemic.

5.5 Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education sector, causing many institutions to shift to online learning and adapt their marketing strategies. This study aimed to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and provide recommendations for adapting to the changing environment. While the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the marketing strategies of educational institutions during the pandemic, it is important to consider the limitations of the study and how they may impact the interpretation of the findings.

Limitations of the Study: Sample Size: One limitation of this study is the sample size. The study only collected data from a limited number of educational institutions, which may not be representative of the entire population of educational institutions globally. The findings of this study may not be applicable to smaller institutions or institutions in different regions or countries.

Data Collection: Another limitation of this study is the method of data collection. The data for this study was collected through an online survey, which may have limitations in terms of response rate and representativeness. It is possible that the institutions that chose to respond to the survey may have different characteristics than those that did not respond. Additionally, the data collected through the survey was self-reported, which may introduce bias into the findings.

Generalizability: The results of this study may not be generalizable to institutions with different characteristics such as those with different levels of funding, student demographics, or geographic location. The findings of this study may also be limited by the fact that the study was conducted during a specific time period, and the marketing strategies of institutions may have changed since then.

External Factors: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational institutions' marketing strategies may have been influenced by external factors beyond their control, such as government regulations, social distancing measures, and economic conditions. These external factors may not have been accounted for in the study, which could limit the interpretation of the findings.

Self-Reporting: The study relied on self-reported data from educational institutions. The responses provided may not have been accurate or may have been biased. There may have been a tendency for institutions to provide more favorable responses to make themselves look better.

Causality: The study was not designed to establish a causal relationship between marketing strategies and enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates. While the study found a correlation between the two, it is important to consider other factors that may have influenced the results.

Impact on Interpretation of Findings:

The limitations of this study may impact the interpretation of the findings in several ways. First, the small sample size and limited geographic scope may limit the generalizability of the findings. The findings may not be applicable to educational institutions in other regions or countries or with different characteristics.

Second, the method of data collection may have introduced bias into the results. The self-reported nature of the data may have led to inaccurate responses, and the limited response rate may have further limited the representativeness of the findings.

Third, the findings of the study may be limited by external factors that were not accounted for in the study. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates may have been influenced by other factors beyond the control of educational institutions.

Fourth, the study did not establish causality between marketing strategies and enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates. While the study found a correlation, other factors may have influenced the results.

To address the limitations of this study and improve the interpretation of the findings, future research should consider a larger sample size that is more representative of the population of educational institutions globally. The study should also consider a range of different data collection methods to improve the response rate and representativeness of the data.

5.6 Future Research

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions worldwide. In response to the pandemic, institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to address the changes in student behavior, preferences, and expectations. While existing research has shed light on the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions, there are still many areas that require further exploration. This paper aims to discuss potential areas of future research related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions.

Potential Areas of Future Research

Impact of the pandemic on international student recruitment: The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the international student recruitment process, with travel restrictions and visa delays affecting the ability of institutions to attract and retain international students. Future research could explore the impact of the pandemic on the recruitment of international students and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to overcome these challenges.

Effectiveness of digital marketing strategies: The pandemic has accelerated the shift towards digital marketing strategies, with institutions increasingly relying on social media, email, and online events to engage with students. Future research could investigate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and their impact on student enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates.

Role of brand reputation in student decision-making: The pandemic has highlighted the importance of brand reputation in student decision-making. Future research could explore the role of brand reputation in student decision-making and how institutions can leverage their reputation to attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

Impact of pandemic on student expectations and preferences: The pandemic has changed the expectations and preferences of students, with many now seeking more flexible learning options and a greater emphasis on digital learning. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on student expectations and preferences and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to meet these changing needs.

Financial challenges faced by institutions: The pandemic has created significant financial challenges for institutions, with many facing budget cuts and revenue losses. Future research could explore the impact of these financial challenges on marketing strategies and how institutions can overcome these challenges to continue attracting and retaining students.

Role of community engagement in marketing strategies: The pandemic has highlighted the importance of community engagement in marketing strategies, with institutions relying on local communities for support during the crisis. Future research could explore the role of community engagement in marketing strategies and how institutions can leverage community partnerships to attract and retain students.

Impact of pandemic on enrollment trends in different regions: The impact of the pandemic on enrollment trends may vary across different regions, with some regions experiencing greater declines than others. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on enrollment trends in different regions and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to address these regional variations.

Impact of pandemic on student mental health and well-being: The pandemic has had a significant impact on student mental health and well-being, with many experiencing increased stress and anxiety. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on student mental health and well-being and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to support students' emotional needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions, with institutions having to adapt quickly to address the changing needs and preferences of students. While existing research has provided insights into the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies, there are still many areas that require further exploration. Future research could focus on areas such as the impact of the pandemic on international student recruitment, the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, the role of brand reputation in student decision-making, and the impact of the pandemic on student expectations and preferences. By addressing these research gaps, institutions can develop more effective marketing strategies that will help them attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges across all sectors, including the education sector. Learning institutions have been forced to adapt their operations to ensure the safety of their students and staff while also providing quality education. One area that has been particularly impacted is the marketing strategies used by these institutions to attract and retain students. In response to the pandemic, institutions have had to re-evaluate their marketing strategies and make necessary changes to continue to enroll, recruit, and retain students. This research has explored the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions, and it is clear that adapting marketing strategies in response to the pandemic is critical to maintain enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students.

The first objective of this research was to understand how educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that most institutions had considerably and extremely adopted marketing strategies. This indicates that institutions have recognized the importance of changing their marketing strategies to align with the new normal brought about by the pandemic. By adapting their marketing strategies, institutions have been able to continue to attract and retain students amidst the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

The second objective of this research was to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. The findings showed that enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions have reduced as a result of the pandemic. This is not surprising,

given the challenges that institutions have had to face, including closures, remote learning, and reduced student support services. The reduction in enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates underscores the need for institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to continue attracting and retaining students.

The third objective of this research was to analyze the utilization of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates. The results showed that digital marketing recorded the highest percentage as compared to other types of marketing strategies. This indicates that institutions have recognized the importance of digital marketing in reaching out to prospective and current students amidst the pandemic. The utilization of digital marketing has had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates, further emphasizing the importance of adapting marketing strategies to align with the new normal.

The fourth objective of this research was to identify the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies. The data collected showed that financial challenges extremely affected the marketing strategies of learning institutions. This is not surprising, given that institutions have had to deal with reduced revenue, increased costs, and the need to invest in technology to support remote learning. Despite the financial challenges, institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to continue attracting and retaining students.

The fifth objective of this research was to provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. Based on the findings, institutions need to embrace digital marketing, focus on personalized communication, develop a strong online presence, and leverage partnerships and collaborations to continue attracting and retaining students. These recommendations underscore the importance of institutions adapting their marketing strategies to align with the new normal brought about by the pandemic.

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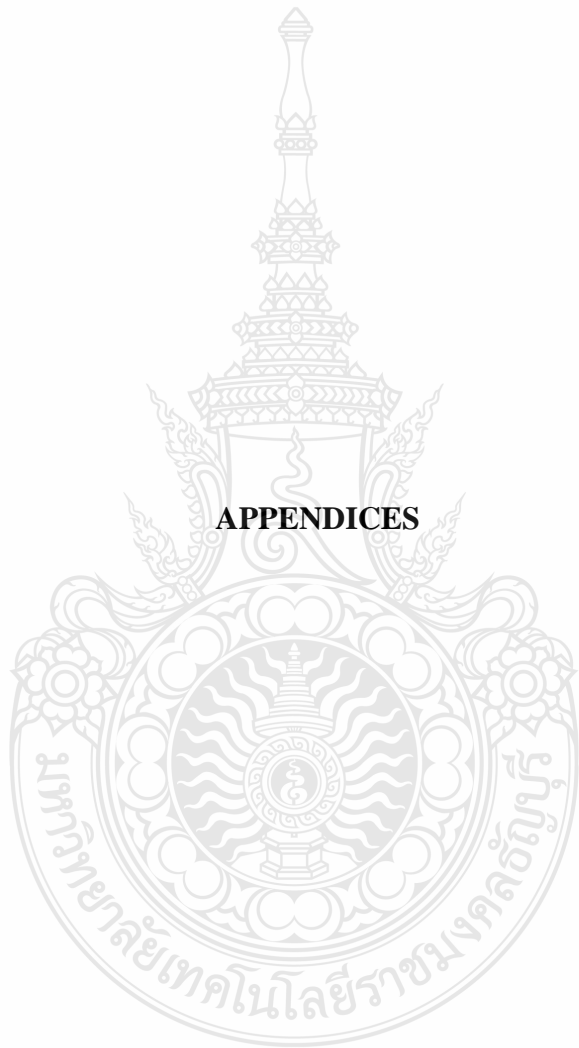
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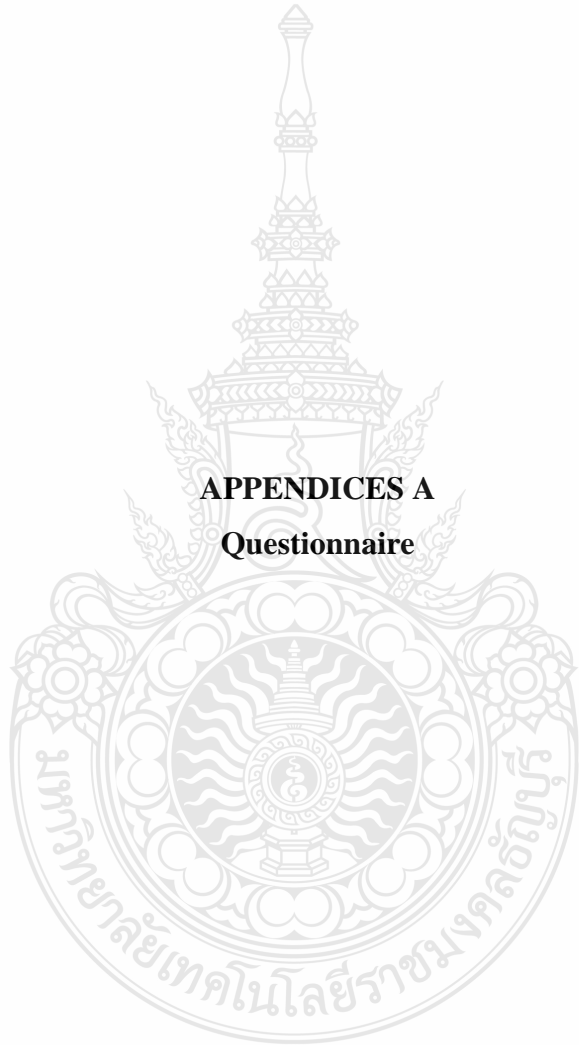
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APPENDICES



APPENDICES A
Questionnaire



Questionnaire survey

Research Title: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this survey is to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. The information collected from this survey will be used for academic research purposes only and will be kept confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Thank you for participating.

Ms. Zheng Lin

Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi Thailand

1. Demographic Information

- 1.1. Name of Institution:
- 1.2. Type of Institution:
 Public
 Private
- 1.3. Level of Education Offered:
 Undergraduate
 Graduate

2. Marketing Strategies in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

2.1 To what extent has your institution adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all | <input type="checkbox"/> Slightly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Moderately | <input type="checkbox"/> Considerably |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Extremely | |

2.2 In what ways has your institution adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Increased use of digital marketing channels
- Changed focus of marketing campaigns
- Reduced marketing efforts
- Other (please specify):

2.3 How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your institution's enrollment and retention rates?

- Positively
- Negatively
- No significant impact

2.4 To what extent has your institution increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- Extremely

2.5 Which digital marketing channels has your institution utilized during the pandemic?

- Website
- Social media
- E-mail marketing
- Online advertisements
- Other (please specify):

3. Financial Challenges and Marketing Strategies

3.1 To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- Extremely

3.2 What financial challenges has your institution faced during the COVID-19 pandemic? (Please select all that apply)

- Decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue
- Increase in operational costs
- Reduction in endowment income
- Others, please specify:

3.3 In what ways have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?

- Reduced marketing budget
- Changed focus of marketing campaigns
- Reduced marketing efforts
- Other (please specify):

3.4 How has your institution addressed these financial challenges?

- Reduced marketing budget
- Increased fundraising efforts
- Reduced operational costs
- Others, please specify:

4. Recommendations

4.1 What recommendations would you give to other educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.

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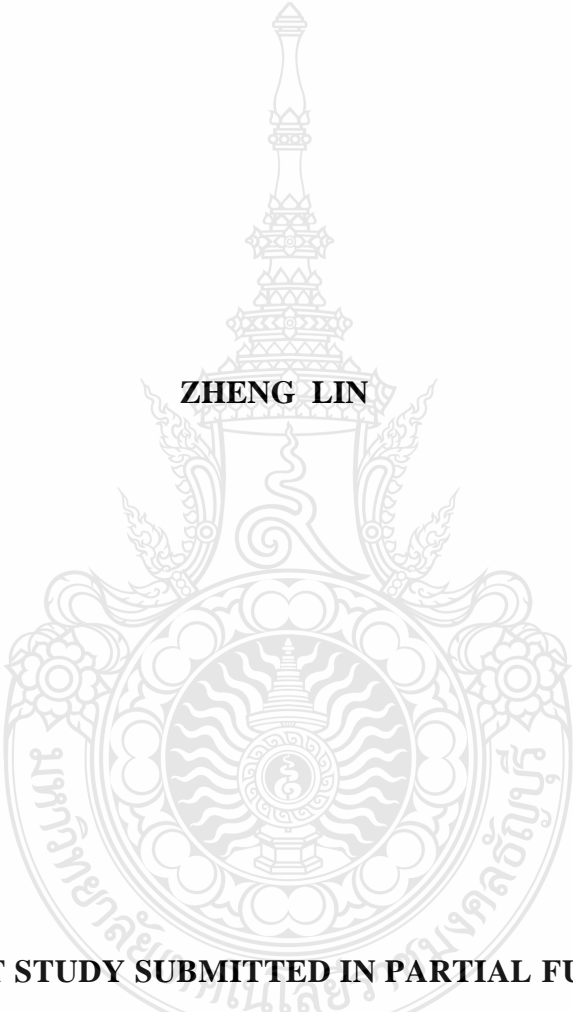
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FACULTY OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

RAJAMANGALA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY THANYABURI

**IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MARKETING STRATEGIES
OF LEARNING INSTITUTIONS**

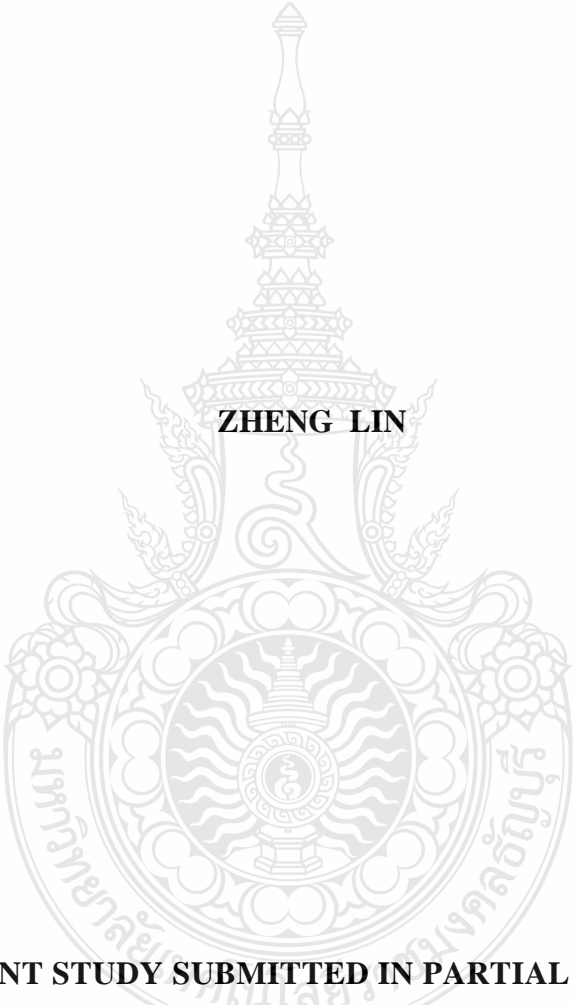
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Independent Study Title Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Marketing Strategies
of Learning Institutions
Name - Surname Mr.Zheng Lin
Major Subject General Management
Independent Study Advisor Assistant Professor Suraporn Onputtha, Ph.D.
Academic Year 2023

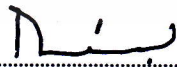
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Approved by the Faculty of Business Administration, Rajamangala University
of Technology Thanyaburi in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's
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5 July 2023

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ABSTRACT

This study endeavors to analyze the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. The study seeks to identify the means by which these institutions have adapted their marketing approaches, the consequences of such adaptations on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, as well as utilization of digital marketing channels, financial challenges, and recommendations for effective adaptation.

The sample group was 400 executives or managers of learning institutions. The questionnaire was used as a research instrument for data collection. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, means and standard deviation were utilized to analyze the collected data. Inferential statistics including Chi-square test were also performed to investigate the hypotheses.

This study provides insight into the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. The study identifies the need for these institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to the present circumstances, prioritize the adoption of digital marketing channels, and collaborate with other institutions to develop cost-effective marketing strategies. The recommendations will help learning institutions overcome the challenges brought about by the pandemic and ensure their continued success in the education sector.

Keywords: COVID-19, marketing strategy, educational institution

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background and Problem Statement

The outbreak of COVID-19 has had a profound impact on various sectors of society, including education. The pandemic has caused schools and universities to close their physical campuses and shift to online learning, resulting in significant changes to the way educational institutions operate. In particular, the pandemic has affected the marketing strategies of educational institutions, which play a crucial role in the enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. In order to comprehend how educational institutions have responded to the pandemic and its consequences on student enrolment, recruitment, and retention, it is crucial to evaluate the influence of COVID-19 on their marketing strategies.

One of the primary challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic is the decline in enrollment and retention rates. According to a report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC), enrollment in higher education institutions in the United States fell by 2.5% in the fall of 2020, with a particularly significant decline in enrollment among international students (NSCRC, 2020). This decline in enrollment has also been observed in other countries, such as Canada, where enrollment in post-secondary education fell by 5.7% in the fall of 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). The decline in enrollment has been attributed to various factors, including the shift to online learning, financial challenges faced by students and their families, and uncertainty about the future of the pandemic.

In addition to the decline in enrollment, the pandemic has also affected the recruitment and retention of students. The shift to online learning has made it more challenging for educational institutions to attract and retain students, as traditional recruitment methods, such as

campus visits and open houses, have become difficult to implement. Furthermore, the pandemic has led to increased competition among institutions as they seek to attract and retain students. An increase in competition for students as a result of the pandemic was noted by 63 % of higher education institutions (AACRAO, 2020).

To address these challenges, educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to the new reality of the pandemic. One of the ways in which institutions have adapted is by increasing their use of digital marketing channels, such as social media and online advertising. A study by Education Dive found that 92% of higher education institutions used social media to reach out to potential students during the epidemic (Education Dive, 2020).

Additionally, a report by the eMarketer shows that digital advertising spending by educational institutions in the United States increased by 15.5% in 2020, as institutions sought to reach prospective students online (eMarketer, 2020).

However, while the use of digital marketing channels has increased, it remains unclear how these strategies have impacted enrollment and retention rates. Furthermore, it is not known how institutions are addressing the financial challenges brought about by the pandemic and how this has affected their marketing strategies. Accordingly, it is essential to research how COVID-19 has affected educational institutions' marketing plans in order to comprehend how they have responded to the epidemic and its consequences on student enrolment, recruitment, and retention.

The problem caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions is multifaceted and has implications for enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. This pandemic has led to a decline in enrollment, as well as changes in the way institutions operate and recruit students. Furthermore, the financial challenges caused by the pandemic have also had an impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions.

The pandemic has led to a decline in enrollment in educational institutions. According to a report by the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCRC, 2020), enrollment in higher education institutions in the United States fell by 2.5% in the fall of 2020. Similarly, enrollment in post-secondary education in Canada fell by 5.7% in the fall of 2020 (Statistics Canada, 2020). The decline in enrollment has been attributed to various factors, including the shift to online learning, financial challenges faced by students and their families, and uncertainty about the future of the pandemic. This decline in enrollment has significant implications for educational institutions, as it can lead to a decrease in revenue and an increase in financial challenges.

Secondly, the pandemic has led to changes in the way educational institutions operate and recruit students. The shift to online learning has made it more challenging for institutions to attract and retain students, as traditional recruitment methods, such as campus visits and open houses, have become difficult to implement. An increase in competition for students as a result of the pandemic was noted by 63 % of higher education institutions, as per a poll by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO, 2020).

Furthermore, the shift to online learning has also resulted in changes in the way institutions market themselves to prospective students, with a greater emphasis on digital marketing channels, such as social media and online advertising. However, it remains unclear how these changes in marketing strategies have impacted enrollment and retention rates.

Lastly, the financial challenges caused by the pandemic have had an impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The decline in enrollment and the shift to online learning have led to a decrease in revenue for institutions, which has resulted in financial challenges. According to a report by the American Council on Education (ACE, 2020), the pandemic has resulted in a decline in revenue for higher education institutions of up to 20%. To address these financial challenges, institutions have had to make changes to their marketing strategies, such as reducing their marketing budgets or shifting their focus to online advertising. However, it is not known how these changes have affected the enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The goal of this study is to look at how COVID-19 has impacted educational institutions' marketing plans and how it has impacted students' rates of enrolment, recruitment, and retention. The study will also examine the use of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates.

Additionally, the study will explore the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and how institutions can effectively adapt to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and

retention of students. The results will be useful for educational institutions, as well as policymakers and researchers in the field of education, in developing strategies to address the challenges caused by the pandemic.

Additionally, this study will fill a vacuum in the literature on the influence of COVID- 19 on the marketing plans of educational institutions, as other studies have mostly concentrated on the transition to online learning and its impacts on student learning results. This study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and how these strategies have affected enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main objectives of this research are to:

1. To study organizational factors and COVID 19 impacts on marketing strategy, digital marketing strategy, financial challenges, and student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate
2. To investigate that educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. To compare the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate categorized by organizational factors
4. To investigate the influence of COVID 19 Impact on negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate
5. Provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

1.3 Research Questions

The research will address the following questions:

1. What are the impact of COVID 19 on educational institute regarding marketing strategy, digital marketing strategy, financial challenges, and student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate?

2. Have educational institutions adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

3. Is there any difference in negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate categorized by organizational factors?

4. Is there any influence of COVID 19 impact on on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate?

5. What recommendations can be provided to educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

1.4 Research Scopes

The study population for this research will be educational institutions, including universities, colleges, and vocational schools. Since the COVID-19 epidemic has had a considerable impact on these nations and a drop in higher education enrolment, the study will concentrate on institutions in the United States and Canada. The study will also include both public and private institutions, as well as institutions that offer both undergraduate and graduate programs.

The sample for this study will consist of 400 educational institutions, selected through a stratified random sampling method. The sample will be stratified based on the type of institution (public or private) and the level of education offered (undergraduate or graduate). The sample size of 400 institutions will provide a large enough sample to generate reliable and valid results. The variables that will be examined in this study include the marketing strategies of educational institutions, enrollment, recruitment, retention rates, and the use of digital marketing channels.

The study will also examine the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The study area for this research will be the United States and Canada. These countries have been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and have experienced a decline in enrollment in higher education institutions. The study will also include both public and private institutions, as well as institutions that offer both undergraduate and graduate programs.

In order to collect data for this research, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be used. The primary data collection method will be a survey, which will be administered to the institutions in the sample. The survey will include questions on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, enrollment, recruitment, retention rates, and the use of digital marketing channels. The survey will also include questions on the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies. The survey will be administered online, and responses will be collected and analyzed using statistical software.

1.5 Definition of Terms

COVID-19: A highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus.
Educational Institutions: Universities, colleges, and vocational schools that offer post-secondary education.

Marketing Strategies: The actions and plans implemented by educational institutions to promote their programs and services to prospective students.

Enrollment: The number of students who have registered and are attending classes at an educational institution.

Recruitment: The process of attracting and encouraging prospective students to enroll in an educational institution.

Retention: The number of students who continue to attend an educational institution from one academic year to the next.

Digital Marketing Channels: Online platforms, such as social media and online advertising, used by educational institutions to reach and communicate with prospective students.

Financial Challenges: The financial difficulties faced by educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as a decrease in revenue and an increase in expenses.
Online Learning: A form of education that is delivered remotely through the use of technology, such as the internet and video conferencing.

Strategic Adaptation: The process of adjusting or modifying marketing strategies in response to changes or challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Public Institutions: Educational institutions that are publicly funded and operated by the government.

Private Institutions: Educational institutions that are independently operated and typically rely on tuition and private funding.

Undergraduate Programs: Programs of study that lead to a bachelor's degree or equivalent.

Graduate Programs: Programs of study that lead to a master's or doctoral degree.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on the theory of strategic adaptation, which posits that organizations must adapt their strategies in response to changes or challenges in order to survive and succeed (Wagner & Gooderham, 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic has presented a significant change and challenge for educational institutions, and it is important to understand how institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

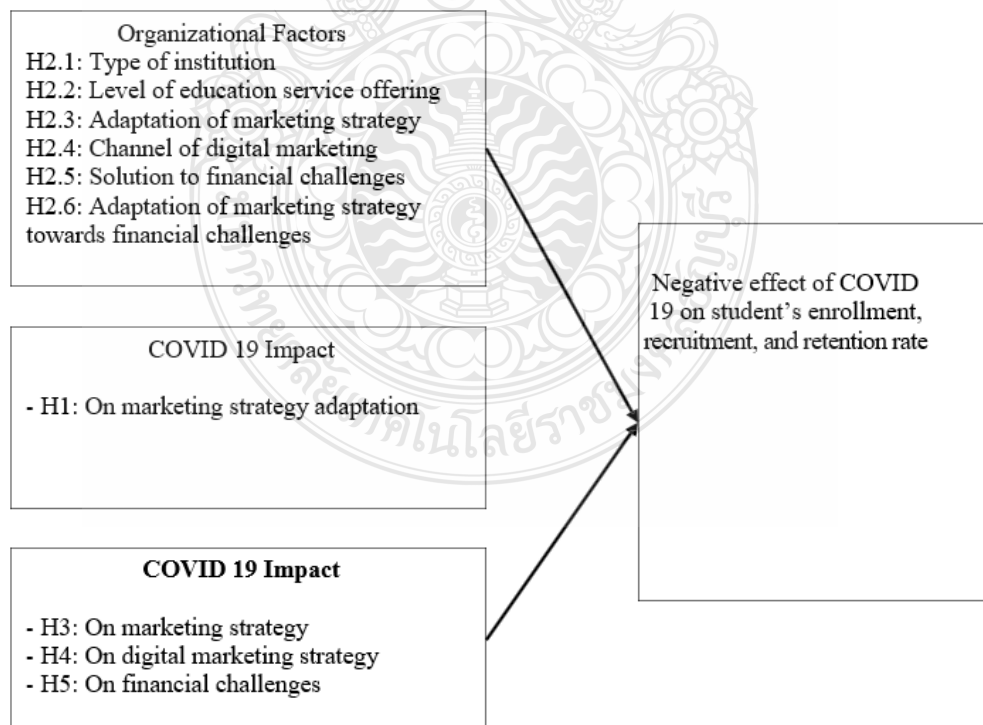


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the conceptual framework, the following hypotheses have been developed for this study:

H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

H2: Different organizational factors including type of institution, level of education service offering, adaptation of marketing strategy, channel of digital marketing, solution to financial challenges, and adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

1.7 Research Contributions

This research will provide valuable insights for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. The findings of this study will help institutions to understand the impact of the pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, and the strategies that have been effective in addressing these challenges. Additionally, the study will provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to utilize digital marketing channels effectively, which will help institutions to reach and communicate with prospective students.

The research will also provide insight into the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing

strategies. This information will be useful for institutions to identify the financial difficulties they are facing and develop strategies to address them.

Furthermore, the research will provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, which will be useful for educational institutions to develop long-term strategies to address the challenges caused by the pandemic.

This research will contribute to the literature on the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The findings of this study will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The research will also contribute to the literature on the use of digital marketing channels by educational institutions. The study will examine how institutions have utilized digital marketing channels during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates. This information will be useful for researchers to understand the effectiveness of digital marketing channels in reaching and communicating with prospective students.

Additionally, the research will contribute to the literature on the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic. The study will examine how these challenges have affected the marketing strategies of institutions and provide valuable insights into how institutions can address these challenges. It will also provide a deeper understanding of the impact of financial constraints on the decisions and strategies of educational institutions in the context of a crisis. Furthermore, this study will provide new insights on how institutions can effectively manage the financial challenges caused by the pandemic and how it can affect their long-term sustainability. This information is vital for academic institutions and policymakers to understand the financial implications of the pandemic on educational institutions, and how to mitigate the negative impact of the crisis on the education sector.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With the COVID-19 pandemic affecting every aspect of our daily lives, it is not surprising that the impact on learning institutions has become a major focus of research. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional learning models and forced education systems to rapidly adapt to the new normal. As a result, the body of research on the impact of COVID-19 on learning institutions has been growing rapidly, as scholars and educators attempt to understand the challenges posed by the pandemic and find ways to address them. The vast range of studies on this topic highlights the importance of understanding the impact of the pandemic on learning institutions and provides valuable insights into the future of education.

2.1 The Changing Landscape of Education During COVID-19

As the pandemic swept across the world, it had an immediate and profound impact on the education sector. With schools, colleges, and universities closing their doors in an effort to curb the spread of the virus, students, teachers, and institutions were forced to adapt to new modes of learning, teaching, and assessment. The sudden and widespread shift to remote learning has been described as "the largest-scale experiment in remote learning in human history" (Kolowich, 2020). One of the most significant impacts of COVID-19 on the education sector has been the widespread closure of schools, colleges, and universities (Kolowich, 2020). According to UNESCO (2020), by the end of March 2020, over 190 countries had closed educational institutions, affecting nearly 1.5 billion students. The closure of educational institutions was necessary to control the spread of the virus, but had significant implications for students, teachers, and institutions.

One of the immediate effects of school closures was the disruption of learning (Kolowich, 2020). With students unable to attend school in person, many fell behind in their studies, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds (UNESCO, 2020). This has been compounded by the unequal access to digital technologies, with many students from low-income families unable to participate in remote learning (Kolowich, 2020). Another immediate effect of COVID-19 on the education sector has been the strain on

teachers and educational institutions (Nilsen et al., 2020). With schools and universities forced to rapidly shift to remote learning, teachers have had to adapt to new teaching methods and technologies, which has been challenging and time-consuming (Nilsen et al., 2020). In addition, many teachers have struggled to maintain student engagement and motivation in remote learning environments (Kolowich, 2020).

The shift to remote learning has also had significant implications for assessment and evaluation (Nilsen et al., 2020). With traditional forms of assessment, such as exams and tests, difficult to administer in remote learning environments, teachers have had to find alternative ways to evaluate student progress and performance (Nilsen et al., 2020). This has led to concerns about the validity and reliability of assessment methods, as well as the potential for cheating and academic dishonesty (Nilsen et al., 2020).

The sudden shift to remote learning has also highlighted the need for digital technologies in education (Kolowich, 2020). With many students and teachers forced to use online platforms for learning and teaching, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of digital technologies in education. However, the widespread use of digital technologies has also raised concerns about data privacy and security, as well as the potential for cyberbullying and online harassment.

Additionally, several studies have investigated the effects of COVID-19 on students' mental health and well-being. One study conducted by Wang et al. (2021) found that students who participated in remote learning reported higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression compared

to students who attended school in person. The study highlights the importance of providing support and resources to students during this challenging time.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has also had an impact on students with disabilities, as remote learning may not be accessible for all students with different abilities (Kim et al., 2020). In a study by Kim et al. (2020), it was found that students with disabilities reported greater difficulties in accessing remote learning materials and participating in online classes compared to students without disabilities. This highlights the need for inclusive education practices and the provision of adequate support for students with disabilities during times of crisis.

Restrictions on movement had even more pronounced effects on international students and their respective institutions. Tan et al. (2021) focused on the effects of COVID-19 on international students studying in universities in the United States. The study found that international students faced various challenges during the pandemic, including difficulties in accessing online learning materials and support services, as well as increased stress and anxiety levels. The study highlights the need for universities to provide adequate support and resources to international students during this time of crisis.

2.2 The Effects of the Pandemic on Student Recruitment, Enrollment, and Retention

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the world of education, particularly in terms of international student enrollment. The closure of borders, suspension of visa services, and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic has led to a significant reduction in international student enrollment. According to a report by the Institute of International Education (IIE), the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to result in a 40% decrease in international student enrollment in the United States (IIE, 2020). The same report found that this reduction in

international student enrollment is likely to result in a loss of \$15 billion in revenue for universities in the United States.

International students play a vital role in the economic and cultural diversity of universities, and the reduction in international student enrollment has had a significant impact on these institutions (Chung, 2021). A study by the National Bureau of Statistics of China (NBSC) found that the number of international students enrolled in Chinese universities in 2020 decreased by 24.5% compared to the previous year (NBSC, 2020). Similarly, a study by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found that the number of international students enrolled in Australian universities in 2020 decreased by 19.7% compared to the previous year (ABS, 2020).

The pandemic has led to an increase in transfer student rates, with a range of impacts on transferring students and the institutions they are transferring to. With the closure of universities and the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic, many students opted to transfer to different institutions to continue their education. A study by the National

Student Clearinghouse Research Center (NSCC) found that the number of transfer students increased by 11% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year (NSCC, 2020).

The increase in transfer student rates is attributed to several factors, including the switch to online learning and concerns about the financial stability of universities (Sánchez, 2020). A study by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) found that students who transferred to new institutions in 2020 were more likely to be dissatisfied with the quality of online learning at their previous institutions (HEC, 2020). Similarly, a study by the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) found that the COVID-19 pandemic had led to increased concerns among students about the financial stability of universities, with many students opting to transfer to institutions that they believe are more financially secure (NACAC, 2020).

The increase in transfer student rates has had a significant impact on both the transferring students and the institutions they are transferring to. For transferring students, the process of transferring can be stressful and time-consuming, particularly if they are transferring to a new institution in a different state or country (Chen, 2020). A study by the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) found that transferring students often face challenges in transferring their credits, particularly if they are transferring to a new institution with different academic requirements (AACC, 2020).

The pandemic had a significant impact on the enrollment of incoming freshman students in higher education institutions. Overall, it led to decreased enrollment, decreased college application rates, and challenges in the college planning and decision-making process. According to the National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2020), the enrollment of first-time college students fell by 4.4% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year. This decrease was observed across all student demographics and academic levels, but it was particularly pronounced among low-income, first-generation, and minority students. Similarly, the enrollment of first-time college students fell by 7.6% at public institutions and by 2.3% at private nonprofit institutions, according to the College Board (2020). The College Board report highlights that the COVID-19 pandemic, along with economic uncertainty and remote learning, was the main factor that contributed to the decrease in enrollment among freshman students.

The pandemic also led to a decrease in college application rates. According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC) (2021), the number of high school seniors who applied to college fell by 10.2% in the fall of 2020 compared to the previous year. This decrease was observed across all student demographics and geographic regions. Moreover, the pandemic created challenges for high school students and their families in the college planning and decision-making process.

The pandemic also had a significant impact on higher education institutions and their financial stability, leading to increased financial concerns and changes in financial aid policies. According to a report by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) (2020), colleges and universities experienced significant declines in revenue due to the pandemic, including a decrease in tuition and fees, room and board, and auxiliary revenues. The pandemic led to an increase in expenses for colleges and universities, including additional expenses for technology, online learning, and health and safety measures (NACUBO, 2020). This put significant financial pressure on higher education institutions, making it difficult for them to maintain their financial stability and support their students.

The pandemic has resulted in a drastic shift in the recruitment and admissions processes of universities and colleges globally. With the lockdowns, physical visits to campus and face-to-face interactions with recruiters have become challenging (National Association for College Admission Counseling [NACAC], 2020). As a result, institutions have had to resort to virtual recruitment and admissions processes (NACAC, 2020). Virtual recruitment and admissions have presented new challenges for universities and colleges. The most prominent challenge is the limited interaction between recruiters and prospective students (Wang, 2021).

2.3 Online Education Accessibility and Equity Challenges in Light of New Normal

Students with disabilities are facing significant challenges in virtual learning due to inadequate accommodations. It has been reported that students with disabilities are facing significant challenges with the transition to online learning (Zahorik & Black, 2020). Inadequate accommodations are among the biggest challenges facing students with disabilities in virtual

learning. According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES, 2021), students with disabilities are at a higher risk of falling behind in their studies due to the lack of adequate accommodations in virtual learning. The NCES report stated that only 59% of students with disabilities received adequate accommodations in virtual learning, compared to 75% of students without disabilities. This disparity highlights the need for schools to make accommodations for students with disabilities in virtual learning.

One of the biggest challenges for students with disabilities in virtual learning is the lack of accessibility to technology (Sebastian, 2020). For students with disabilities, access to technology and the internet is essential for learning. However, many students with disabilities struggle to access these resources due to cost, technical difficulties, and lack of training (Sebastian, 2020). This lack of accessibility to technology and the internet exacerbates the challenges faced by students with disabilities in virtual learning. Students with disabilities face challenges in virtual learning because of the lack of support from teachers and staff (Zahorik & Black, 2020).

Challenges of lack of proper facilitations to fully integrate into virtual learning have not been isolated to students with disabilities. It has been noted that non-native speakers are facing challenges with language barriers that hinder their ability to fully participate in virtual learning (Alqahtani, 2019). This can include difficulties in understanding the language used by instructors, lack of support for non-native speakers, and limited access to resources in their native language (Lu & Ting, 2019). According to Alqahtani (2019), non-native speakers face challenges in virtual learning environments, including language barriers and lack of support. The study found that non-native speakers may struggle with understanding the language used in virtual learning platforms, and that there is a lack of support for non-native speakers in virtual learning environments. This can result in non-native speakers feeling isolated and unable to fully participate in the learning process.

Lu and Ting (2019) found that language barriers can also impact non-native speakers' access to resources in virtual learning environments. This includes the ability to access information and materials in their native language, which can further exacerbate the challenges faced by non-native speakers. The authors suggest that virtual learning

platforms should provide resources in multiple languages to support non-native speakers, and that instructors should provide additional support and resources to help non-native speakers understand the language used in virtual learning environments. On their part, Papp et al. (2020) found that language barriers can impact non-native speakers' ability to participate in virtual discussions and contribute to the learning process.

Another area of concern is the use of AI systems to personalize learning and provide individualized feedback to students. A study by Kostakos et al. (2019) found that AI-powered personalized learning systems can result in biased recommendations based on students' past performance, leading to unequal treatment and perpetuating existing inequalities. The authors argue that this highlights the need for greater transparency in AI systems and for educators to carefully consider the potential biases that may be present in these systems.

The use of AI systems in education also raises concerns about privacy and the potential for sensitive student information to be misused. A study by Cheung and colleagues (2021) found that AI-powered systems used for student assessment and personalized learning can result in the collection and storage of large amounts of personal data, potentially leading to privacy breaches and unequal treatment of marginalized groups. The authors call for greater transparency and accountability in the use of AI systems in education.

2.4 Branding and Reputation Management to Navigating the Pandemic

The challenges posed by the pandemic have forced educational institutions to adapt and find new strategies to navigate the changing landscape (Johnson, 2020). The theory of strategic adaptation provides a useful framework for understanding how organizations respond to external changes and can help explain the strategies that educational institutions are using to survive and thrive during the pandemic (Wang, 2021). According to Johnson (2020), organizations that employ strategic adaptation tend to be more resilient and better equipped to handle external changes. This is because they are proactive in anticipating and responding to external events, rather than simply reacting to them.

One of the major concerns for educational institutions during and after the pandemic has been reputation risk mitigation (Park, 2021). Reputation risk refers to the potential harm that a negative image or perception can cause to an institution's reputation, affecting its

stakeholders and future prospects (Smith, 2020). One of the key measures that educational institutions can put in place for reputation risk mitigation is proactive communication (Lee, 2020). According to Lee (2020), transparent and regular communication is critical in ensuring that stakeholders feel informed and confident in the institution's ability to handle the challenges posed by the pandemic. This includes updates on plans, actions, and safety measures. Another effective measure for reputation risk mitigation is the implementation of best practices for online learning (Johnson, 2021). With the shift to online learning, it is crucial for educational institutions to ensure that their students receive high-quality education and support, thereby mitigating the potential for negative perceptions about their institution (Johnson, 2021).

Educational institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to meet the needs of students and stakeholders (Park, 2021). This may involve creating new programs or services, or modifying existing ones to meet the changing demands of the market. By doing this, educational institutions can demonstrate their commitment to serving their stakeholders, which can help maintain and enhance their reputation (Park, 2021). Institutions must implement measures that ensure preparedness to respond effectively to any negative impacts on their reputation (Smith, 2020). This may involve having crisis communication plans in place and regular monitoring of social media and other channels to identify and address any concerns or issues in a timely manner (Smith, 2020). Maintaining brand consistency is crucial in ensuring that the reputation of these institutions remains intact in these uncertain times (Brown, 2020). According to Brown (2020), educational institutions must be aware of their brand image and ensure that their messaging and communication align with their overall brand strategy. This includes adapting their branding and marketing tactics to match the current situation, but also maintaining the core values and principles that make up their brand identity. Chang and Kline (2020) also emphasize the importance of effective communication during the pandemic, stating that it is essential for educational institutions to communicate regularly and transparently with their audiences. This includes updates on plans, actions and safety measures to ensure that students and staff feel secure and confident in the institution.

Kim and Lee (2021) noted that educational institutions that effectively managed their reputation during the pandemic experienced increased levels of trust and engagement from their audiences. They concluded that a consistent brand image and effective communication strategies are key factors in maintaining and strengthening the reputation of educational institutions during times of crisis. By adapting their branding and communication strategies to meet the needs of their audiences, educational institutions can mitigate the risks to their reputation and build trust in their institution (Chang and Kline, 2020; Kim and Lee, 2021).

Effective communication is a crucial factor in building trust and maintaining the reputation of educational institutions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Regular and transparent updates, along with a consistent brand image, are essential components of a successful reputation management strategy (Kim and Lee, 2021; Brown, 2020). The pandemic has resulted in a shift in the way educational institutions communicate with their students, staff, and stakeholders. Building trust through effective communication is essential in navigating the challenges posed by the pandemic and maintaining a positive reputation (Chang and Kline, 2020). Kim and Lee (2021) found that educational institutions that effectively managed their reputation during the pandemic experienced increased levels of trust and engagement from their audiences. This highlights the importance of transparent and regular communication in building trust, especially in times of uncertainty.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 of this thesis is dedicated to the methodology used in the study. A thorough review of the study design, analysis unit, indicators, measurement variables, research equipment, and analysis sequence is given in this section. Determining the viability and correctness of the study findings depends on the methodology part. To learn more about the present state of the marketing techniques used by educational institutions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, this study used a cross-sectional design, which involves gathering data from a specific moment in time. This study's design was appropriate since it gave an overview of the educational institutions' present situation, which is necessary to comprehend how the pandemic has affected their marketing plans.

The educational institutions affected by the COVID-19 epidemic served as the study's unit of analysis. 400 educational institutions from various parts of the world were included in the sample. Based on the data's accessibility and the study's time restrictions, this sample size was chosen. The use of digital marketing channels, the effect of the pandemic on enrollment and retention rates, and the steps taken by institutions to address the financial difficulties caused by the pandemic and its impact on their marketing strategies were among the indicators and measurement variables used in this study.

A self-administered questionnaire served as the research tool for this study. This tool was used to collect information from educational institutions on their usage of digital marketing platforms, how they handled the pandemic's effects on enrollment and retention rates, and the steps they took to handle the financial difficulties the epidemic caused. This study's measurement variables were established by combining qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. While open-ended questions were used to get qualitative data, Likert-scale questions were used

to gather quantitative data. Coding of the qualitative data was done first, then statistical analysis of the quantitative data using regression analysis and descriptive statistics.

3.1. Research Design

The study used a quantitative research methodology since it was seen to be the most appropriate given the goal of the study, which was to ascertain how COVID-19 affected educational institutions' marketing plans. The research approach was selected because it allowed for systematic data collection and analysis, enabling generalization of findings to the public. A cross-sectional design was used for the study, which involves gathering information from educational institutions all at once. The institutions considered for the study were drawn at random from the pool of American educational institutions. 400 universities were chosen as the sample size using a sample size calculator.

The researcher created an online survey questionnaire based on the study's goals and research questions in order to collect data. The survey's closed-ended questions required respondents to choose one answer from a list of available options. The questions were created to gather data on the schools' marketing approaches, how COVID-19 affected those approaches, and how the pandemic affected student enrolment, recruiting, and retention. To assess the validity and reliability of the instrument, a pilot test of the survey questionnaire was conducted using a sample of 10 institutions.

400 completed questionnaires were received from the institutions during the course of the two-week data collecting period. Descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, were used to assess the data that had been collected. To ascertain the link between the independent variables (marketing techniques) and the dependent variables, inferential statistics, including multiple regression analysis, was applied (enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students). The statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS) program was used to analyze the data. The findings were reviewed and analyzed in light of the study questions and objectives after the data were presented in tables and figures.

3.2. Unit of Analysis

3.2.1 Population and Sampling

The unit of analysis for this study was educational institutions that were impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The population for this study was defined as all post-secondary

educational institutions that were operating in the United States. This included both public and private universities, colleges, and trade schools.

For this investigation, the sample was chosen using a stratified random sampling technique. With this approach, the population is divided into strata or subgroups depending on specific traits, and samples are then chosen from each stratum. In this instance, the strata were established according to the size and kind of educational institution (public or private) (small, medium, or large).

For this study, 400 institutions in total were chosen, of which 200 were private and 200 were public. This formula was used to determine the sample size:

$$n = \frac{N * Z^2 * p * q}{E^2}$$

E is the required degree of precision, where n is the sample size, N is the population size, Z is the standard normal deviation, p is the estimated percentage of the population that possesses the feature under study, q is the estimated proportion of the population that does not. A survey that was distributed to the chosen universities was used to gather the data for this investigation.

Table 3.1 Summary of study population, sampling, data collection and analysis approach

Category	Description
Population	All post-secondary educational institutions operating in the United States (public & private universities, colleges, and trade schools)
Sampling Method	Stratified random sampling
Strata	Established according to the size and type of institution (public or private) (small, medium, or large)
Sample Size	400 institutions (200 private & 200 public)
Formula used to determine sample size	$n = (NZ^2pq)/E^2$
Data Collection	Survey distributed to chosen institutions
Data Analysis	Descriptive and inferential statistics (chi-square tests, t-tests, regression analysis)
Advantages of Sampling Method	Representative sample of population selected; more accurate representation of population due to balanced sample with regards to type and size of institution

3.2.2 Data Collection

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the study employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data collection methods were used to collect data from the educational institutions themselves, while secondary data collection methods were used to gather data from existing literature and sources, such as articles and reports.

1. Primary Data Collection

Primary data collection was carried out through a survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather data from the educational institutions on their marketing strategies, the challenges they faced, and the changes they made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The questionnaire (Appendix 1) was sent to 400 educational institutions, which were selected through a purposive sampling method, and responses were collected online through a survey platform.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with marketing managers or representatives of educational institutions. The purpose of the interviews was to learn more about the difficulties that educational institutions experienced and the adjustments that they made to their marketing plans. Ten interviews were done, of which five were performed in-person and five by video conference.

2. Secondary Data Collection

Secondary data was collected from academic journals, reports, and other sources relevant to the research. The sources were selected based on their relevance to the research topic and their publication date, with only sources published from 2018 to date being used. The sources were searched for using various academic databases, such as JSTOR, Google Scholar, and the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC).

Table 3.2 Select secondary sources and variable focus

Study	Variable
Bolton, J. R., & Sacher, J. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates as a Dependent Variable
Brown, J. (2019)	COVID-19 pandemic; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates
Brown, J. (2020)	Marketing Strategies
Chang, J., & Kline, P. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Chen, Y. (2020)	Financial Challenges
Chung, Y. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic
Dahir, A. (2020)	Financial Challenges
Johnson, R. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Johnson, R. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies
Jones, S. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic; Student Enrolment, Recruitment, and Retention Rates
Kim, J., Kim, S., & Lee, K. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Kim, S., & Lee, J. (2021)	COVID-19 pandemic
Kolowich, S. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic
Lee, J. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic as an independent variable; Marketing Strategies
Liu, S., & Shu, Y. (2020)	COVID-19 pandemic; Marketing Strategies

3.3 Research Instrumentation

3.3.1 Questionnaire

The primary tool utilized to gather data for this study was the research questionnaire.

Questions, both closed-ended and open-ended, were included in the questionnaire. In contrast to open-ended questions, which were meant to gather qualitative data, closed-ended questions were intended to gather quantitative data. The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data on educational institutions' marketing plans, the effect of COVID-19 on student enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, the use of digital marketing channels, and the financial difficulties encountered by educational institutions during the pandemic.

3.3.2 Scoring

The Likert scale, a five-point rating system from strongly agree to strongly disagree, was used to assess the closed-ended items in the questionnaire. The total score for each variable was computed by adding the results from each question. In order to examine the

data, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were created using the scores for each variable.

3.3.3 Data Coding and Entry

The information gathered from the survey was coded and added to a database. Each response was given a number code as part of the coding process. The information was then put into a database using a piece of software that made data administration and analysis simple.

3.3.4 Reporting Bias Testing

Testing for reporting bias was done to make sure the information collected was accurate.

When study participants give false or misleading information, whether on purpose or accidentally, reporting bias occurs. The participants were given the assurance that their answers would be kept private and anonymous in order to reduce reporting bias. The questionnaire also made use of a mix of open-ended and closed-ended items to lessen social desirability bias.

3.4 Sequence of Analysis

The sequence of analysis involved several steps to ensure that the data collected was accurately analyzed and interpreted. The steps were as follows:

1. Data Cleaning: The first step was to clean the data collected from the questionnaires. This involved checking for missing values, inconsistent responses, and any errors in data entry. The data was then corrected and edited where necessary.

2. Descriptive Statistics: The next step was to calculate descriptive statistics such as the mean, median, and standard deviation for each variable. This allowed for a general understanding of the distribution of the data and provided insights into the central tendencies of the variables.

3. Inferential Statistics: Lastly, inferential statistics were then conducted to determine if there was a significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. This was done by using One sample T-Test, Independent Samples T-Test, One-Way ANOVA, and regression analysis.

The data was analyzed using IBM SPSS software and results were presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphs. The results were then interpreted and discussed in light of the research objectives and hypotheses.

Hypothesis	Statistics
H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.	One sample T-Test
H2: Different organizational factors including type of institution, level of education service offering, adaptation of marketing strategy, channel of digital marketing, solution to financial challenges, and adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.	Independent Samples T-Test and One-Way ANOVA
H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis
H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis
H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.	Regression analysis

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter four presents results for statistical analysis that correspond to the study's research questions and hypothesis. The chapter is sectioned in different parts that describes how the data was analyzed, output and visualization of data and an interpretation of the obtained results. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Statistics 20.0) was used to carry out analysis of the collected data. The process of analyzing data deployed quiet an array of statistical methods in order to obtain more insight and establish conclusions about the study topic. This chapter will provide meaningful information that will be used to draw suitable conclusions and recommendations in the next chapter.

4.2 Preparation of Data

The process of data preparation involves arranging the collected data, into excel sheet with alignment to the correct variable name. The second step is to clean the data; this step involves eliminating irrelevant response, handling missing data (either eliminating the entire case response from one institution or filling the missing value based on responses given for other questions). Once the data is cleaned and ready for analysis, it is imported to SPSS, the tool to be used to conduct data analysis. Data analysis in SPSS has to start with creating variables, that is, assigning appropriate variable names, selecting appropriate data type for each variable responses and assigning value labels to data entries that align to a quantitative scale. After creation of variables, the data from excel is entered in the data window of SPSS.

4.3 Data Analysis

The research on Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions obtained responses from 400 participants (institutions). This data was obtained using questionnaires. Each question asked was considered a variable and analyzed individually. Name of the institution is a subjective variable and therefore it was not applied for data analysis. Statistical analysis produced summary statistics for each

variable, descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, t-test analysis, Analysis of Variance and regression modelling. Summary statistics are visually represented using pie charts and bar graphs.

4.3.1 Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics give an explanation of the dataset by featuring how the entries are distributed, the distributions of data and a measure of central tendency.

1. Type of learning institution

Table 4.1 frequency distribution table representing the type of learning institution

	type of institution	
	Frequency	Percent
public	201	50.3
private	199	49.8
Total	400	100.0

The sample recorded both public and private institutions of higher learning in the United States. This study, which focuses on finding out the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions, considered type of institution as strata. Therefore, to avoid bias in data collection, these two groups were assigned equal opportunities. There were 201 public institutions of higher learning and 199 private institutions of higher learning. The corresponding percentages are 50.3% and 49.8% respectively. These two values are equivalent thus eliminating bias.

2. Level of education offered

Table 4.2 frequency distribution table representing level of education offered

level of education offered		
	Frequency	Percent
undergraduate	200	50.0
postgraduate	200	50.0
Total	400	100.0

This study focused on institutions of higher learning that offer both undergraduate and postgraduate education. This variable was also considered a grouping variable when sampling (strata) so that responses about the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on learning institutions is not biased. 200 institutions of higher learning in the United States were sampled. A similar number of institutions offering postgraduate studies were sampled. The representative percentage for both groups is 50%.

3. Adoption of marketing strategies

Table 4.3 extent to which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
not at all	13	3.3
Slightly	20	5.0
Moderately	23	5.8
Considerably	164	41.0
Extremely	180	45.0
Total	400	100.0

The COVID-19 pandemic caused adverse effects on education. Most learning institutions were closed down, this caused a sudden halt in learning activities at the onset of the pandemic. As the pandemic continued to rage across the world, a number of institutions tried to come up with ways to ensure continuity of learning, but this was not successful in most cases. Several students terminated their studies for a number of reasons.

Some were actually caused by the conditions of the institutions. A couple of months after, institutions realized the need to continue operating despite continuation of the pandemic. Marketing is the best way to create awareness about a certain product or service. Different institutions of higher learning in the United States adapted marketing strategies to ensure they remain operational amidst the pandemic. However, different institutions applied different extent of strategies. From the results, the highest number of institutions (45%) adopted extreme marketing strategies, 41% adopted considerable marketing strategies, 5.8%

adopted moderate strategies, and 5% adopted slight marketing strategies while 3.3% of learning institutions did not adopt any marketing strategies.

4. Ways of adopting marketing strategies

Table 4.4 Ways in which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Increased use of digital marketing channels	111	27.8
Changed focus of marketing campaigns	123	30.8
Reduced marketing efforts	103	25.8
Other	63	15.8
Total	400	100.0

Institutions of higher learning adopted marketing strategies in different ways as a way of responding to the effects of COVID-19 pandemic. 27.8% of the institutions increased the use of digital marketing channels, 30.8% changed focus of their marketing campaigns, 25.8% reduced their marketing efforts and 15.8% adopted other ways. Since the pandemic caused several changes in normalcy, several changes had to be changed on how to handle different scenarios. This is the reason as to why change of focus of marketing campaigns recorded the highest percentage. This involved coming up with innovative marketing methods and methods of conducting activities. Digital marketing channels is also a key strategy since social interactions were greatly minimized leaving online space as the most commonly used space for interactions. Other ways of marketing strategies

that were adopted by a few institutions are personalizing communication with prospective students, enhancing mobile friendly websites and spreading the visuals and aesthetics of institutions.

5. Increased the use of digital marketing channels

Table 4.5 extent to which an institution has increased the use of digital marketing channels during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Slightly	18	4.5
Moderately	11	2.8
Considerably	181	45.3
Extremely	190	47.5
Total	400	100.0

Digital marketing channels is currently the most popular and successful marketing strategy for many types of businesses. Access to the internet and the digital space is has become widespread, and due to convenience, it is preferred for transmission of information. 47.5% of institutions of higher learning in the United States have increased the use of digital marketing channels extremely, 45.3% have considerably increased their use of digital marketing channels. A cumulative percentage of 7.3% have slightly am moderately increased the use of digital marketing strategies.

6. Digital marketing channels used

Table 4.6 Which digital marketing channels has your institution utilized during the pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Website	102	25.5
social media	92	23.0
E-mail marketing	96	24.0
Online advertisement	94	23.5
Other	16	4.0
Total	400	100.0

There are several digital marketing channels that can be used by businesses to spread information about services provided. Learning institutions can market their services (courses offered, charges and resources) through social media, website, email, and online marketing. 25.5% of higher learning institutions use their website as a digital marketing channel, 23% use social media platforms as a digital marketing channel, 24% use e-mail marketing and 23.5% use online advertisement such as ads. Other digital marketing channels used by institutions of higher learning include: partnerships with other brands and establishing blogs or videos.

7. Extent of financial challenges effect on institution's marketing strategies

Table 4.7 To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies

strategies?		
	Frequency	Percent
Slightly	22	5.5
Moderately	27	6.8
considerably	174	43.5
extremely	177	44.3
Total	400	100.0

Effective marketing strategies for any kind of business is usually associated with particular costs. A good marketing strategy will require much more funding since quality resources are put in place when marketing the product or service. Educational institutions have to set a side sufficient finance to ensure the marketing process of their portfolio is conducted successfully, thus gaining profits in terms of more recruitment of students or increase of revenue obtained by the institution. During the COVID-19 pandemic most of the institutions of higher learning in the United States experienced a decrease in the amount of revenue raised. This resulted into the need to withdraw some services or reduce the quality of services offered. The institutions' marketing sector was not left out - it also experienced a number of challenges due to the reduction of revenue. 44.3% of

learning institutions' marketing strategies were extremely affected by financial challenges during the pandemic. 43.5% of the marketing strategies were considerably affected by financial challenges. 6.8% of the institutions' marketing strategies were moderately affected, and 5.5% were just slightly affected by financial challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic.

8. Effect of financial challenges on marketing strategies

Table 4.8 In what ways have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies

	Frequency	Percent
Reduced marketing budget	98	24.5
Changed focus of marketing campaigns	126	31.5
Reduced marketing efforts	108	27.0
other	68	17.0
Total	400	100.0

Financial constraints can cause several challenges on marketing strategies deployed by institutions of higher learning. Such challenges might be; reduction in marketing budget, changing the focus of marketing channels and reduction of marketing efforts. 31.1% of institutions of higher learning in the United States changed focus of their marketing campaigns as a way of responding to financial challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. 27% of the institutions reduced their marketing efforts while 24.5% reduced their marketing budget. Other ways in which financial challenges faced by learning institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic affected marketing strategies include; spending more on online marketing platforms and going beyond the norm to establish more relations, which is costly.

9. Financial challenges faced by learning institutions

Table 4.9 financial challenges that learning institutions faced during the COVID-19 pandemic

	Frequency	Percent
Decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue	183	45.8
Increase in operational costs	91	22.8
Reduction in enrolment income	104	26.0
other	22	5.5
Total	400	100.0

Several challenges can face institutions of higher learning due to financial challenges. These problems mainly result when there is extreme reduce in acquired revenue. Such challenges include; reduction in enrolment income (this results when there are no new students joining the institution; as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic), increase in operational costs (containment measures of COVID-19 were quite costly, there was need to acquire protective garment, regularly fumigate lecture halls and also conduction tests for the virus. All these costs were to catered for by the institutions without an earlier plan or budgeting, thus resulting into numerous challenges.), and decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue (the transmission method and rate of corona virus necessitated governments to abolish social gatherings, learners in lecture halls were victims and thus institutions had to stop offering physical classes and switch to online classes. This move resulted to a decrease in tuition revenue and also minimized enrolment revenue). 45.8% of institutions faced financial challenges that aligns towards decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue. 26% of the institutions experienced reduction in enrollment income. 22.8% of the institutions experienced an increase in operational costs. Other challenges that were faced by institutions of higher learning during the pandemic are; increase in student transfers, reduced application rates and death of some lectures and students.

10. How institutions address financial challenges

Table 4.10 How has your institution addressed these financial challenges

	Frequency	Percent
Reduced marketing budget	109	27.3
Increased fundraising efforts	86	21.5
Reduced operational costs	109	27.3
other	96	24.0
Total	400	100.0

Since the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were inevitable, and the challenges experienced were not light, institutions of higher learning had to come up with ways of handling the challenges. A number of ways in which institutions address financial challenges are increasing fundraising efforts, reducing operational costs and reducing their budgeting costs. 27.3% of the institutions reduced their marketing budget. A similar number reduced their operational costs as a way of addressing financial challenges caused by the pandemic. 21.5% increased their fundraising efforts. 24% of institutions adapted other ways of addressing financial challenges such as using less expensive ways of marketing.

11. Effects of COVID-19 on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates

Table 4.11 extent of negative effects that the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates

	Frequency	Percent
not at all	8	2.0
slightly	13	3.3
moderately	27	6.8
considerably	189	47.3
extremely	163	40.8
Total	400	100.0

COVID-19 affected students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates differently for various learning institutions. 40.8% of the institutions experienced extreme effects, 47.3% experienced considerable effects. 6.8% of institutions experienced moderate

effects on their student enrollment, retention and recruitment rates, 3.3% experienced slight effects, and 2% did not experience any effect.

4.3.2 Inferential Statistics

1. One sample T-Test analysis

One sample T-Test analysis is used. The hypothesis is written as follows.

H1: Educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The test produces a critical t statistic that is compared against the tabulated t statistic. Tabulated t-statistic is obtained from t tables that are available online. The table makes use of the degree of freedom (df), the level of confidence and the type of test conducted (whether one sided or two sided). The conclusion is drawn from a comparison of the two values (critical value and tabulated value). If the critical value is greater than tabulated value, the null hypothesis is rejected, otherwise, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

t-test results						
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean		
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	400	4.22	.861	.043		
One-Sample Test						
				Test Value = 0		
					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	97.955	399	.000	4.215	4.13	4.30

The critical t-statistic (t) is 97.955. The degree of freedom is 399, the test is a 2-tailed test at 0.05 level of significance. Using these values to obtain the tabulated t

statistic; the corresponding value is 0.00. 97.955 is greater than 0.00. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected and the conclusion to be drawn is that there is a significant difference between the groups or measurement scales of the dependent variable (effect of the pandemic on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rate).

2. Independent Sample T-Test

H2.1: Different type of institution had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

	type of institution	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	public	201	4.16	.897	.063	-1.304	.193
	private	199	4.27	.821	.058		

The result indicated that different type of institution did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.2: Different level of education service offering had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

	level of education offered	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Sig
what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?	undergraduate	200	4.19	.903	.064	-.697	.486
	postgraduate	200	4.25	.818	.058		

The result indicated that different level of education service offering did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

3. One-way ANOVA

H2.3: Different adaptation of marketing strategy had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.080	3	.693	.936	.423
Within Groups	293.430	396	.741		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different adaptation of marketing strategy did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.4: Different channel of digital marketing had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.658	3	1.219	1.654	.176
Within Groups	291.852	396	.737		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different channel of digital marketing did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.5: Different solution to financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.104	3	.035	.046	.987
Within Groups	295.406	396	.746		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different solution to financial challenges did not different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

H2.6: Different adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges had different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

ANOVA

what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.243	3	.748	1.010	.388
Within Groups	293.267	396	.741		
Total	295.510	399			

The study indicated that different adaptation of marketing strategy towards financial challenges did not have different level of a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

4. Regression Analysis

Regression modelling is suitable for developing a model that will assess the impact of covid-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions. Regression analysis helps to indicate how much variance is present in one response as is explained by a predictor or explanatory variable. A regression model gives an explanation of the relationship between two or more variables. The key advantage of this model is that it

gives the exact extent and direction of effect. A regression model is also suitable for predicting or forecasting future occurrences. A regression model comprises of key values or statistics including: R statistic, R- squared and correlation

coefficients. The R-squared reveal how much variation in the response variable is explained by the independent variables. The regression model for this study considers the effect of the pandemic on student’s enrollment, recruitment and retention rates as the dependent variable and the independent variables are financial challenges, marketing strategies and effects of COVID-19. Accordingly, the hypotheses are as follows:

H3: COVID 19 impact on marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H4: COVID 19 impact on digital marketing strategy influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

H5: COVID 19 impact on financial challenges influence the negative effect of COVID 19 on student’s enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions.

Based on hypothesis drawing, analysis of variance (ANOVA) is also part of a regression model. ANOVA tests the significance of variables used in a regression model. ANOVA tests the hypothesis. The result produces a p-value that is compared against the standard level of confidence (0.05). A rule is made either to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.045 ^a	.002	-.006	.863

The R-squared for this model is 0.002. This shows that 0.2% of variation in the effect of the pandemic on student’s enrollment, recruitment and retention rates is explained by the explanatory variables.

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.603	3	.201	.270	.847 ^a
	Residual	294.907	396	.745		
	Total	295.510	399			

The p-value (denoted in the ANOVA model summary as Sig.) is 0.847, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore we fail to reject the null hypothesis and draw a conclusion that the model is significant.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
		1	(Constant)	4.079		
	Marketing strategies in response to COVID-19 pandemic	.032	.044	.037	.730	.466
	COVID-19 effects	.033	.058	.028	.563	.574
	Financial challenges as a result of COVID-19 pandemic	-.013	.053	-.013	-.251	.802

a. Predictors: (Constant), To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?, How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your institution's enrollment and retention rates?, extent to which an institution has adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

b. Dependent Variable: what extent of negative effects the COVID-19 had on students' enrollment, recruitment and retention rates?

The model coefficients show an extent of effect in the model. H3: COVID-19 impact on marketing strategy influence the positive effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. H4: COVID 19 impact on digital

marketing strategy influence the positive effect of COVID 19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. And, H5: COVID-19 impact on financial challenges influence the positive effect of COVID-19 on student's enrollment, recruitment, and retention rate of students in educational institutions. For every unit change in marketing strategies in response to COVID-19 pandemic, the effect on enrollment, retention and recruitment rates increases by 0.032 units. If the nature of COVID-19 effects changes by a unit, the effect on enrollment, retention and recruitment rates increases by 0.033 units. For every unit change in financial challenges as a result of the pandemic, enrollment and retention rates for institutions of higher learning decreases by 0.013 units.

4.4 Content Analysis

Content analysis determines the existence of particular concepts or ideas with regard to qualitative data (Stemler, 2000). Content analysis will be used to understand recommendations given to institutions of higher learning about adopting marketing strategies in response to COVID- 19 pandemic. Respondents gave different recommendations that are actually helpful. Some of the suggestions are; branding – this is representing the institution and the students and also showing the unique attributes associated with your institution. Livestreaming was also highly recommended. This method of marketing enables potential students to get first-hand information from their desired institution. Leveraging students and alumni; this mode offers a stream of marketing from actual partakers or members of the institutions thus high chances that prospective students can gain insight about a particular institution and actual enroll at the school. Another highly recommended marketing strategy is focusing on positive career outcomes. Students are mainly attracted to good performing institutions since they are interested in obtaining quality education which will in turn affect the jobs and pay they get in future. Using content that discusses careers positively and actually show cases success that is attributed to a particular institution, will automatically attract new students and maintain the existing ones.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions to the education sector worldwide. The sudden shift to remote learning and closure of campuses have forced educational institutions to rethink their marketing strategies to ensure that they can continue to attract and retain students. This research study aims to investigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. Specifically, it aims to answer the following research questions:

How have educational institutions adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

What is the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions?

How have educational institutions utilized digital marketing channels during the pandemic, and how has it affected enrollment and retention rates?

What are the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic, and how has it affected their marketing strategies?

What recommendations can be provided to educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

To achieve these research objectives, a mixed-methods approach was adopted. A survey was conducted to collect data from educational institutions in different parts of the world. The survey was designed to gather information on the marketing strategies employed by the institutions, the impact of the pandemic on their enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, the utilization of digital marketing channels, and the financial challenges faced by the institutions. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected institutions to gain more in-depth insights into their marketing strategies and the challenges they faced during the pandemic.

The results of the survey and interviews show that educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. The majority of institutions have increased their use of digital marketing channels, such as social media and email marketing, to reach out to prospective students. The institutions also reported a reduction in enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates due to the pandemic. Financial challenges, such as reduced funding and increased operational costs, have forced institutions to make changes to their marketing strategies.

The study recommends that educational institutions should continue to leverage digital marketing channels to reach out to prospective students, even after the pandemic. Institutions should also consider diversifying their revenue streams to reduce the impact of financial challenges on their marketing strategies. Furthermore, institutions should prioritize the health and safety of their students and staff, and communicate effectively with them to build trust and confidence.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The study findings provide valuable insights into the challenges faced by institutions and the strategies they adopted to overcome them. The study's recommendations offer practical solutions for institutions to adapt their marketing strategies and attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

5.2 Findings

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the educational sector, forcing institutions to adopt new marketing strategies to attract and retain students. This paper aimed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions, focusing on their adaptation to the new reality, enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates, digital marketing channels, financial challenges, and recommendations for adapting to the pandemic. The study used both qualitative and quantitative research methods, including surveys, interviews, and regression analysis, to answer the research objectives and questions.

Research Objective 1: Understand how educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The research findings indicated that most educational institutions had significantly and extremely adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This was confirmed by the hypothesis testing, which showed that the hypothesis that "educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic" was true. The institutions' adaptation strategies included the use of digital marketing channels, virtual open houses, online learning, and increased communication with students and parents. The study recommended that institutions should continue to adapt their marketing strategies to meet the changing needs of students and parents.

Research Objective 2: Investigate the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions.

The regression analysis showed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. The hypothesis that "the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions" was confirmed. The study recommended that institutions should focus on retaining existing students and finding new ways to attract new students, such as virtual tours, online learning, and communication with prospective students.

Research Objective 3: Analyze the utilization of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates.

The study found that the majority of educational institutions had increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic. The hypothesis that "educational institutions have increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic, and this has had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates" was confirmed. The study recommended that institutions should continue to invest in digital marketing channels to attract and retain students, such as social media, email marketing, and online ads.

Research Objective 4: Identify the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies.

The study found that financial challenges had an extremely negative impact on the marketing strategies of educational institutions. The data collected from institutions of higher learning showed that financial challenges affected their marketing strategies, forcing them to change their methods of marketing. The study recommended that institutions should find ways to manage their finances, such as cutting costs, seeking financial assistance, and exploring new revenue streams.

Research Objective 5: Provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students.

The study recommended that institutions should adopt a student-centered approach to marketing, focus on digital marketing channels, increase communication with students and parents, adapt to the changing needs of students, and find ways to manage their finances. The study also recommended that institutions should invest in training and development for their marketing teams to stay up-to-date with new marketing strategies and technologies. Finally, the study suggested that institutions should continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their marketing strategies to ensure that they are achieving their goals.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced educational institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to attract and retain students. The study found that the majority of institutions had significantly and extremely adapted their marketing strategies, increased the use of digital marketing channels, and faced financial challenges during the pandemic

5.3 Implications and Recommendations

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a global health crisis that has disrupted all aspects of society, including the education sector. Educational institutions have had to adapt to the new normal of remote learning, social distancing, and reduced physical interactions. These changes have had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. This study aimed to understand the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions and provide recommendations for effective adaptation to the new environment.

The study found that educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. This adaptation has been necessary to ensure that institutions continue to attract and retain students. The study found that a majority of educational institutions had considerably or extremely adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions that fail to adapt their marketing strategies may lose out on potential students to institutions that have adapted their strategies.

The study also found that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. This finding is in line with the current trend of reduced enrollment rates in many educational institutions due to the pandemic. Learning institutions need to understand this trend and find ways to mitigate it. One of the ways that institutions can mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates is by adopting effective digital marketing strategies. The study found that institutions that increased their use of digital marketing channels had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates.

Digital marketing recorded the highest percentage as compared to other types of marketing strategies, thus confirming the hypothesis. This finding suggests that institutions that invest in digital marketing strategies are more likely to attract and retain students. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions need to invest in effective digital marketing strategies to increase enrollment and retention rates. These digital marketing strategies should be targeted towards the needs of the students and should be effective in reaching them through various digital channels.

The study also found that financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to changes in their marketing strategies. Educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to accommodate the financial challenges they face. The implication of this finding is that learning institutions need to find innovative ways of marketing themselves while still managing their finances effectively. Institutions need to invest in cost-effective marketing strategies that can reach potential students without incurring additional costs.

Learning institutions that have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic have had better results in terms of enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates compared to those that have not adapted their strategies. This finding implies that institutions that fail to adapt their marketing strategies may lose out on potential students to institutions that have adapted their strategies. Learning institutions need to invest in innovative marketing strategies that can adapt to the changing environment and still attract and retain students.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions. Educational institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to ensure that they continue to attract and retain students. Institutions need to invest in cost-effective digital marketing strategies that can reach potential students without incurring additional costs. Institutions that have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the pandemic have had better results in terms of enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates compared to those that have not adapted their strategies. The findings of this study have implications for learning institutions and their marketing strategies in the post-COVID-19 era. Institutions need to find innovative ways of marketing themselves while still managing their finances effectively to attract and retain students.

5.4 Recommendations

Adopt Digital Marketing Strategies:

The pandemic has accelerated the digital transformation in the education sector, making it necessary for institutions to prioritize digital marketing strategies. Institutions should invest in online platforms and social media to reach out to potential students. They should also leverage digital tools such as webinars, virtual campus tours, and online events to attract and engage students. Digital marketing strategies can help institutions overcome the physical restrictions caused by the pandemic and reach a wider audience.

Enhance Student Experience:

The pandemic has disrupted the traditional learning experience, and institutions must prioritize student experience to ensure retention and satisfaction. Institutions should focus on providing quality education and personalized learning experiences to students. This can be achieved through online learning platforms that provide interactive and engaging

learning experiences. Institutions should also ensure that students have access to support services such as academic advising, mental health support, and career services to ensure that they succeed academically and professionally.

Strengthen Institutional Branding:

Institutions should focus on strengthening their brand reputation to attract and retain students. This can be achieved through effective branding strategies such as developing a unique value proposition and messaging that differentiates the institution from competitors. Institutions should also invest in creating a strong online presence and establishing partnerships with industry leaders to enhance their reputation.

Provide Financial Support:

The pandemic has led to financial constraints for both institutions and students. Institutions should provide financial support to students, such as scholarships, bursaries, and tuition fee waivers. This can help institutions attract and retain students who may be facing financial challenges. Institutions should also seek funding from external sources and explore cost-saving measures to address their financial constraints.

Collaborate with Industry Partners:

Institutions should collaborate with industry partners to provide students with real-world experiences and enhance their employability. This can be achieved through internships, co-op programs, and partnerships with industry leaders. Collaboration with industry partners can also help institutions develop relevant and marketable programs that attract students.

Leverage Alumni Networks:

Institutions should leverage their alumni networks to attract and retain students. Alumni can serve as brand ambassadors and provide testimonials about their experience at the institution. Institutions should also provide opportunities for alumni to engage with current students through mentorship programs, networking events, and career fairs.

Focus on Diversity, Equity:

Institutions should prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in their marketing strategies to attract and retain a diverse student population. This can be achieved through messaging that promotes inclusivity and equity and by providing resources and support

for marginalized communities. Institutions should also create a welcoming and inclusive campus environment that supports diversity and promotes equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented challenges to the education sector, but it has also presented opportunities for institutions to innovate and adapt their marketing strategies. Institutions must prioritize digital marketing strategies, enhance student experience, strengthen institutional branding, provide financial support, collaborate with industry partners, leverage alumni networks, and focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion. By implementing these recommendations, institutions can effectively adapt their marketing strategies to ensure enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students during and after the pandemic.

5.5 Limitations

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the education sector, causing many institutions to shift to online learning and adapt their marketing strategies. This study aimed to investigate the impact of the pandemic on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and provide recommendations for adapting to the changing environment. While the findings of this study provide valuable insights into the marketing strategies of educational institutions during the pandemic, it is important to consider the limitations of the study and how they may impact the interpretation of the findings.

Limitations of the Study: Sample Size: One limitation of this study is the sample size. The study only collected data from a limited number of educational institutions, which may not be representative of the entire population of educational institutions globally. The findings of this study may not be applicable to smaller institutions or institutions in different regions or countries.

Data Collection: Another limitation of this study is the method of data collection. The data for this study was collected through an online survey, which may have limitations in terms of response rate and representativeness. It is possible that the institutions that chose to respond to the survey may have different characteristics than those that did not respond. Additionally, the data collected through the survey was self-reported, which may introduce bias into the findings.

Generalizability: The results of this study may not be generalizable to institutions with different characteristics such as those with different levels of funding, student demographics, or geographic location. The findings of this study may also be limited by the fact that the study was conducted during a specific time period, and the marketing strategies of institutions may have changed since then.

External Factors: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on educational institutions' marketing strategies may have been influenced by external factors beyond their control, such as government regulations, social distancing measures, and economic conditions. These external factors may not have been accounted for in the study, which could limit the interpretation of the findings.

Self-Reporting: The study relied on self-reported data from educational institutions. The responses provided may not have been accurate or may have been biased. There may have been a tendency for institutions to provide more favorable responses to make themselves look better.

Causality: The study was not designed to establish a causal relationship between marketing strategies and enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates. While the study found a correlation between the two, it is important to consider other factors that may have influenced the results.

Impact on Interpretation of Findings:

The limitations of this study may impact the interpretation of the findings in several ways. First, the small sample size and limited geographic scope may limit the generalizability of the findings. The findings may not be applicable to educational institutions in other regions or countries or with different characteristics.

Second, the method of data collection may have introduced bias into the results. The self-reported nature of the data may have led to inaccurate responses, and the limited response rate may have further limited the representativeness of the findings.

Third, the findings of the study may be limited by external factors that were not accounted for in the study. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates may have been influenced by other factors beyond the control of educational institutions.

Fourth, the study did not establish causality between marketing strategies and enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates. While the study found a correlation, other factors may have influenced the results.

To address the limitations of this study and improve the interpretation of the findings, future research should consider a larger sample size that is more representative of the population of educational institutions globally. The study should also consider a range of different data collection methods to improve the response rate and representativeness of the data.

5.6 Future Research

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions worldwide. In response to the pandemic, institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to address the changes in student behavior, preferences, and expectations. While existing research has shed light on the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions, there are still many areas that require further exploration. This paper aims to discuss potential areas of future research related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions.

Potential Areas of Future Research

Impact of the pandemic on international student recruitment: The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the international student recruitment process, with travel restrictions and visa delays affecting the ability of institutions to attract and retain international students. Future research could explore the impact of the pandemic on the recruitment of international students and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to overcome these challenges.

Effectiveness of digital marketing strategies: The pandemic has accelerated the shift towards digital marketing strategies, with institutions increasingly relying on social media, email, and online events to engage with students. Future research could investigate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies and their impact on student enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates.

Role of brand reputation in student decision-making: The pandemic has highlighted the importance of brand reputation in student decision-making. Future research could explore the role of brand reputation in student decision-making and how institutions can leverage their reputation to attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

Impact of pandemic on student expectations and preferences: The pandemic has changed the expectations and preferences of students, with many now seeking more flexible learning options and a greater emphasis on digital learning. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on student expectations and preferences and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to meet these changing needs.

Financial challenges faced by institutions: The pandemic has created significant financial challenges for institutions, with many facing budget cuts and revenue losses. Future research could explore the impact of these financial challenges on marketing strategies and how institutions can overcome these challenges to continue attracting and retaining students.

Role of community engagement in marketing strategies: The pandemic has highlighted the importance of community engagement in marketing strategies, with institutions relying on local communities for support during the crisis. Future research could explore the role of community engagement in marketing strategies and how institutions can leverage community partnerships to attract and retain students.

Impact of pandemic on enrollment trends in different regions: The impact of the pandemic on enrollment trends may vary across different regions, with some regions experiencing greater declines than others. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on enrollment trends in different regions and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to address these regional variations.

Impact of pandemic on student mental health and well-being: The pandemic has had a significant impact on student mental health and well-being, with many experiencing increased stress and anxiety. Future research could investigate the impact of the pandemic on student mental health and well-being and how institutions can adapt their marketing strategies to support students' emotional needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the marketing strategies of learning institutions, with institutions having to adapt quickly to address the changing needs and preferences of students. While existing research has provided insights into the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies, there are still many areas that require further exploration. Future research could focus on areas such as the impact of the pandemic on international student recruitment, the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies, the role of brand reputation in student decision-making, and the impact of the pandemic on student expectations and preferences. By addressing these research gaps, institutions can develop more effective marketing strategies that will help them attract and retain students in the post-pandemic world.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about unprecedented challenges across all sectors, including the education sector. Learning institutions have been forced to adapt their operations to ensure the safety of their students and staff while also providing quality education. One area that has been particularly impacted is the marketing strategies used by these institutions to attract and retain students. In response to the pandemic, institutions have had to re-evaluate their marketing strategies and make necessary changes to continue to enroll, recruit, and retain students. This research has explored the impact of the pandemic on marketing strategies of learning institutions, and it is clear that adapting marketing strategies in response to the pandemic is critical to maintain enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students.

The first objective of this research was to understand how educational institutions have adapted their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The results showed that most institutions had considerably and extremely adopted marketing strategies. This indicates that institutions have recognized the importance of changing their marketing strategies to align with the new normal brought about by the pandemic. By adapting their marketing strategies, institutions have been able to continue to attract and retain students amidst the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

The second objective of this research was to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions. The findings showed that enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates of students in educational institutions have reduced as a result of the pandemic. This is not surprising,

given the challenges that institutions have had to face, including closures, remote learning, and reduced student support services. The reduction in enrollment, recruitment, and retention rates underscores the need for institutions to adapt their marketing strategies to continue attracting and retaining students.

The third objective of this research was to analyze the utilization of digital marketing channels by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected enrollment and retention rates. The results showed that digital marketing recorded the highest percentage as compared to other types of marketing strategies. This indicates that institutions have recognized the importance of digital marketing in reaching out to prospective and current students amidst the pandemic. The utilization of digital marketing has had a positive impact on enrollment and retention rates, further emphasizing the importance of adapting marketing strategies to align with the new normal.

The fourth objective of this research was to identify the financial challenges faced by educational institutions during the pandemic and how it has affected their marketing strategies. The data collected showed that financial challenges extremely affected the marketing strategies of learning institutions. This is not surprising, given that institutions have had to deal with reduced revenue, increased costs, and the need to invest in technology to support remote learning. Despite the financial challenges, institutions have had to adapt their marketing strategies to continue attracting and retaining students.

The fifth objective of this research was to provide recommendations for educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. Based on the findings, institutions need to embrace digital marketing, focus on personalized communication, develop a strong online presence, and leverage partnerships and collaborations to continue attracting and retaining students. These recommendations underscore the importance of institutions adapting their marketing strategies to align with the new normal brought about by the pandemic.

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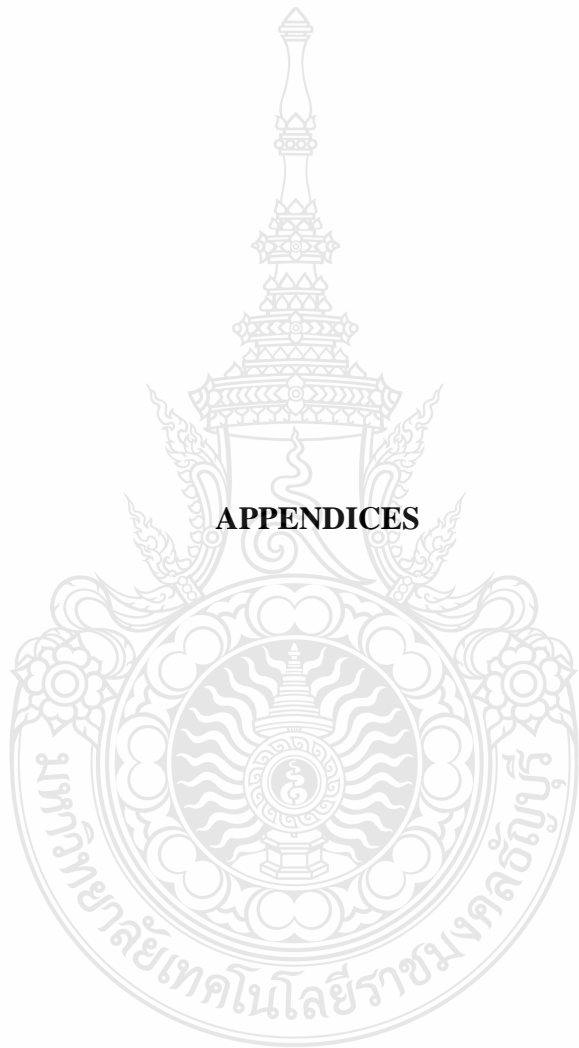
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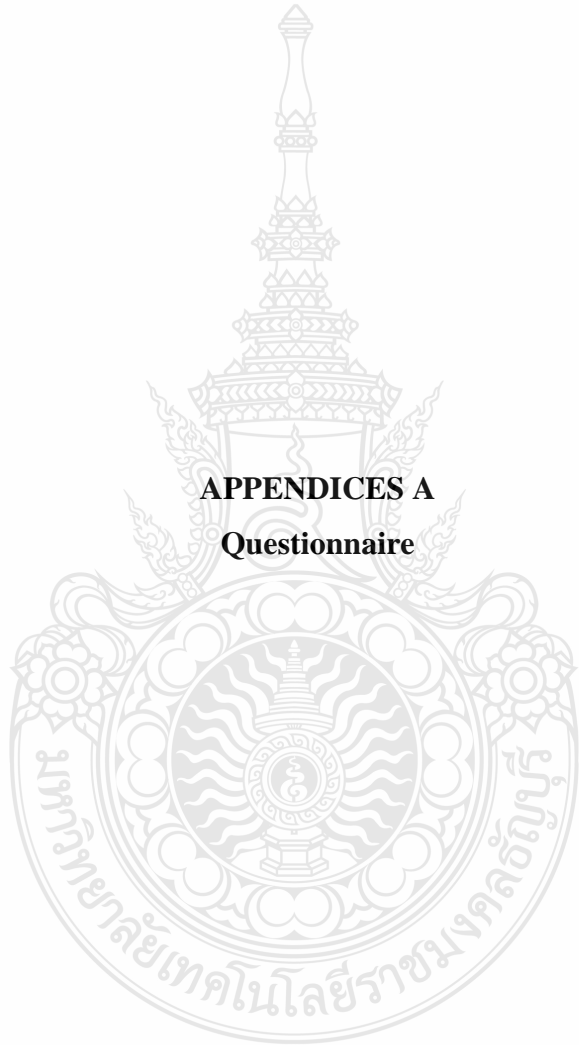
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APPENDICES



APPENDICES A
Questionnaire



Questionnaire survey

Research Title: Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on the Marketing Strategies of Learning Institutions

Dear Respondent,

The purpose of this survey is to understand the impact of COVID-19 on the marketing strategies of educational institutions and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students. The information collected from this survey will be used for academic research purposes only and will be kept confidential. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time.

Thank you for participating.

Ms. Zheng Lin

Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi Thailand

1. Demographic Information

1.1. Name of Institution:

1.2. Type of Institution:

Public

Private

1.3. Level of Education Offered:

Undergraduate

Graduate

2. Marketing Strategies in Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

2.1 To what extent has your institution adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

Not at all

Slightly

Moderately

Considerably

Extremely

2.2 In what ways has your institution adapted its marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- Increased use of digital marketing channels
- Changed focus of marketing campaigns
- Reduced marketing efforts
- Other (please specify):

2.3 How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected your institution's enrollment and retention rates?

- Positively
- Negatively
- No significant impact

2.4 To what extent has your institution increased the use of digital marketing channels during the pandemic?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- Extremely

2.5 Which digital marketing channels has your institution utilized during the pandemic?

- Website
- Social media
- E-mail marketing
- Online advertisements
- Other (please specify):

3. Financial Challenges and Marketing Strategies

3.1 To what extent have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?

- Not at all
- Slightly
- Moderately
- Considerably
- Extremely

3.2 What financial challenges has your institution faced during the COVID-19 pandemic? (Please select all that apply)

- Decrease in enrollment and tuition revenue
- Increase in operational costs
- Reduction in endowment income
- Others, please specify:

3.3 In what ways have the financial challenges faced by your institution during the COVID-19 pandemic affected your marketing strategies?

- Reduced marketing budget
- Changed focus of marketing campaigns
- Reduced marketing efforts
- Other (please specify):

3.4 How has your institution addressed these financial challenges?

- Reduced marketing budget
- Increased fundraising efforts
- Reduced operational costs
- Others, please specify:

4. Recommendations

4.1 What recommendations would you give to other educational institutions on how to effectively adapt their marketing strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects on enrollment, recruitment, and retention of students?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input is greatly appreciated.

Biography

Name - Surname	Mr.Zheng Lin
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Experiences Work	-
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