
BALANCED SCORECARD PERSPECTIVES AND PERFORMANCE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN KENYA

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Abstract

Background of the study: Private universities play a key complementary role in provision of knowledge and relevant skills which are critical in fostering sustainable economic and social development of a country. As the numbers of private universities continue to grow, competition gets stiffer in the market as Universities fight for survival intensifies.

Objectives: This study sought to determine the influence of balanced scorecard perspectives on the performance of private universities in Kenya. The specific variables were customer processes, internal business process, innovation and strategic employee growth.

Methodology: The study was informed by Resource Based Theory and Stakeholders Theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was 30 private universities in Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used to select the 190 respondents from the 30 private universities in Kenya. Correlation and regression analysis was used to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

Results and Findings: The regression results showed that customer processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related. The results further indicated that internal business processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related. The results further indicated that innovation and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related. Lastly, results showed that strategic employee growth and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related.

Conclusion and Recommendations: The study concluded that balanced scorecard perspectives had a significant effect on performance of private universities in Kenya. The study recommends that the private universities should focus on meeting the needs and expectations of their customers, including students, alumni, and donors. This can be achieved through metrics such as student retention rates, alumni satisfaction, and donation amounts. The private universities should measure and monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of their internal processes, including academic and

administrative processes. This can be achieved through metrics such as student-to-faculty ratios, time-to-graduation, and administrative process cycle times.

Keywords: *Balanced Scorecard, Performance & Private Universities*

1.1 INTRODUCTION

With the rise in globalization many countries have had to review their institutions of higher learning and the entire education system (Kibuku, Ochieng & Wausi, 2020). There is also rise in virtual learning, distance learning and joint programs, exchange programs and an increased investment in research and innovation activities in Institutions of higher learning. With the collaborations with International Universities, there is a higher level of cooperation among universities (Rehber, 2019). The balanced scorecard is a management tool that can help private universities to measure and manage their performance by looking at the organization from different perspectives of customer processes, internal business process, strategic employee growth and innovation. Thompson and Martin (2018), defines balanced scorecard perspectives as the art and science of formulating, implementing, and evaluating cross-functional decisions that enable an organization to achieve its objectives. The authors argued that balanced scorecard perspectives involve formulating organization's objectives, implementing, and controlling cross-functional decisions focused on achieving these objectives in the present and future environments. Balanced scorecard perspectives and organizational performance in higher learning institutions goes together, but studies show that most private universities around the world place less emphasis on making effective strategy for improved performance (Stahl, Sharplin, Peter & Grigsby, 2018).

Private universities in Kenya are key institutions in the society which must be restructured in order to compete with the leading public and international universities (Nayeri, 2019). According to the Commission for University Education (CUE, 2017), private Universities in Kenya are established in accordance with the Universities Act 1985 (CAP 210B) and the Universities Rules, 1989 (Establishment of Universities, Standardization, accreditation and Supervision). The private universities offer both undergraduate and postgraduate programs and CUE is mandated with responsibility of ensuring that private universities adhere to the standards of a university (CUE, 2017). It is considered that implementation process of the increasing expectations from private universities can be made possible by good management of these institutions, and this can be achieved when private universities adapt and implement a more professional management style along with the concept of strategic management (Nzuki, 2018).

The growth of private Universities has been brought about by many factors including; the increase in the number of qualified secondary school leavers seeking higher education which creates a demand that cannot be filled by public Universities alone. The private universities have arisen due to the inability of the public universities to absorb all university-qualifying students. There is also the need for improved quality of education and emerging global trends which create a market Private Universities (King'oo, Kimencu & Kinyua, 2020). The Private Universities therefore serve as a strategic partner to the government to ensure that the demand for higher education is matched with supply in service providers. To fulfil this goal effectively, private universities needs to adapt to the ever-changing demands in the education sector and the changing political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and legal environment so as to remain competitive.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Private universities play a key complementary role in provision of knowledge and relevant skills which are critical in fostering sustainable economic and social development of a country (Nair & Munusami, 2020). The huge proliferation of the universities across the globe is therefore critical to propel nations towards becoming knowledge-based industrialized economies. However, despite the unprecedented boom in growth of higher education, private universities, like any other higher education institution face a number of challenges which deter their success (Mwiria *et al.*, 2017; Onsongo, 2017) and consequently fail to contribute towards fostering economic and social development of a country at large.

Universities are service industries and therefore are required to make different planning in their strategic planning from business enterprises. According to Lerner (2019), business-oriented strategic planning models show differences in terms of time frame, consensus, value system, customers, conditions and organizational structure when compared to university-based strategic planning models (Luhanga *et al.*, 2017). Strategic planning enables the organization to take full advantage of the opportunities for the future of the universities and establish a more appropriate relationship with its important stakeholders out of university (Rowley & Sherman, 2017). Thus, the studies do not focus on how customer processes, internal business process and strategic employee growth influence the performance of private universities in Kenya.

While the rapid dynamism and changes in the environment are a major force to reckon, problems with growth and performance of universities have been closely linked with the way institutional balanced scorecard perspectives are carried out (Quazi, 2019). The long established view of strategic development and management in universities is reflected in Mintzberg and Rose (2003) which tracks the realized strategies of a prominent university over a century, bringing forward that there was remarkable stability in the aggregate, however nothing revolutionary change in strategy ever occurred. Further, universities are expected to play a leading role in the production and dissemination of information, conduct researches and trainings on the issues that will meet social demands and needs and provide community outreach programs. Therefore, this study sought to determine the influence of balanced scorecard perspectives on the performance of private universities in Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the study was to determine the influence of balanced scorecard perspectives on the performance of private universities in Kenya.

The study was guided by the following research questions;

- i. To determine the influence of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya.
- ii. To establish the effect of internal business process on performance of private universities in Kenya.
- iii. To determine the influence of strategic employee growth on performance of private universities in Kenya.
- iv. To establish the influence of innovation on performance of private universities in Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions;

- i. What is the effect of customer processes on the performance of Private University in Kenya?
- ii. What is the influence of internal business processes on the performance of Private University in Kenya?
- iii. How does strategic employee growth impact the performance of Private University in Kenya?
- iv. To what extent does innovation affect the performance of Private University in Kenya?

2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Resource Based Theory

This theory was developed by Birge Wenefeldt in 1984. It is a method of analyzing and identifying a firm's strategic advantages based on examining its distinct combination of assets, skills, capabilities and intangibles as an organization. The resource-based theory of competitive advantage argues that the long-term success of any business (in our case a University) will be determined by the firm's internal resources and capabilities in using those resources to develop a competitive advantage, and the innovation's contribution to financial performance of the firm in a market. We know that organizations differ in fundamental ways and that each firm possess a "unique" set of resources. A firm must then develop unique competencies from these resources, and when developed especially well, these become the source of the firm's competitive advantage (Pearce & Robinson, 2014). The Resource based view theory is therefore used to explain how private Universities gain and sustain competitiveness through being innovative to deliver superior value to customers and develop a sustained competitive advantage.

2.2.2 Stakeholders Theory

Stakeholder theory is based argues that businesses draw their success from delivering value to their stakeholders. According to Freeman, "businesses must create value for customers, suppliers, employees, communities, and financiers (or shareholders)." (Freeman, 2009). According to Leisyte, Westerheijden, (2014), a stakeholder in higher education can be defined as anyone with a legitimate interest in education who thereby acquires a right to intervene. External stakeholders may include employers. Thus according to Preston, teleological ethical approach could be applied to the stakeholder theory in which the consequences of any actions taken by the managements are judged whether they benefit more stakeholders of their organizations.

2.3 Empirical Review

The existing literature has clearly demonstrated that managing strategies successfully is about matching balanced scorecard perspectives which together aim at reaching the organizational vision. Bokor (2015) did a random sampling on 30 private and public universities in the United States of America (USA) with the main objective of establishing the influence of management style on the performance of learning institutions. The findings of the study indicated that balanced scorecard perspectives differ depending on the style of organization and management that exists in the firm. The study concluded that superiority of an organization means that the firm performs a given function distinctly from the way other firms perform the same function. Consequently, the

study recommended two distinct performance yardsticks that a firm may use to measure its success, that is, financial performance and strategic performance. Financial performance is concerned with factors such as sales revenue and profitability, whereas strategic performance is considered in terms of competitiveness, technical progress, and market position.

Steiner (2013), in his study about the relationship between employee growth and company performance, conducted a census within the service industry in Kenya. The findings revealed that strategic employee growth was treated as a premise to realize commitment and consensus. The study concluded that strategic employee growth is an important factor, and managers should make decisions that take the interests of the company's stakeholders into consideration. Similarly, a cross-sectional survey conducted by Jossiah (2014) aimed to establish the impact of customer processes in the banking sector in Kenya. Findings showed that organisations do not care about both internal and external customers. Additionally, the study concluded that trying to meet the needs of different stakeholders' interests can lead to managers being unaccountably for their actions.

Gitau (2015) conducted a descriptive survey which sought to assess the adoption of balanced scorecard perspectives in Kenyatta University. The study found out that Kenyatta University was faced with various challenges in the strategic management at the different levels. The study also found that commitment of top management affects strategic management in Kenyatta University. The study concluded that organizational structure influenced strategic management at Kenyatta University. Watuka and Mbondo (2014) did a census on all the 43 commercial banks in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of balanced scorecard perspectives on the growth of commercial banks in Kenya. The study established that commercial banks practice environmental scanning to a large extent and on specific environmental scanning customer analysis was indicated first as most practiced of the analysis.

Kakunu (2012) in his descriptive study, sought to achieve two objectives: to investigate the current balanced scorecard perspectives in the Kenya's banking sector; and to identify factors that influence the banks balanced scorecard perspectives in Kenya. The most significant factors that were found to influence balanced scorecard perspectives were technological environment, economic environment, global environment, political and legal environment, bank structure, bank resources, and socio-cultural environment. The study recommended that there is need for firms to stress on strategic evaluation process as much as they do planning and execution.

Kivuja (2013) conducted a descriptive census on all service firms in Kenya, aimed to investigate the influence of internal business processes and the performance of SMEs at Kariobangi light industries. The findings indicated that managers face difficulties when trying to understand the business environment because the environments consist of so many different influences. The study concluded that managers of any organization are human beings that can make errors and therefore, the need to reduce the complexity of the internal business processes by the use of environmental analysis methods.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

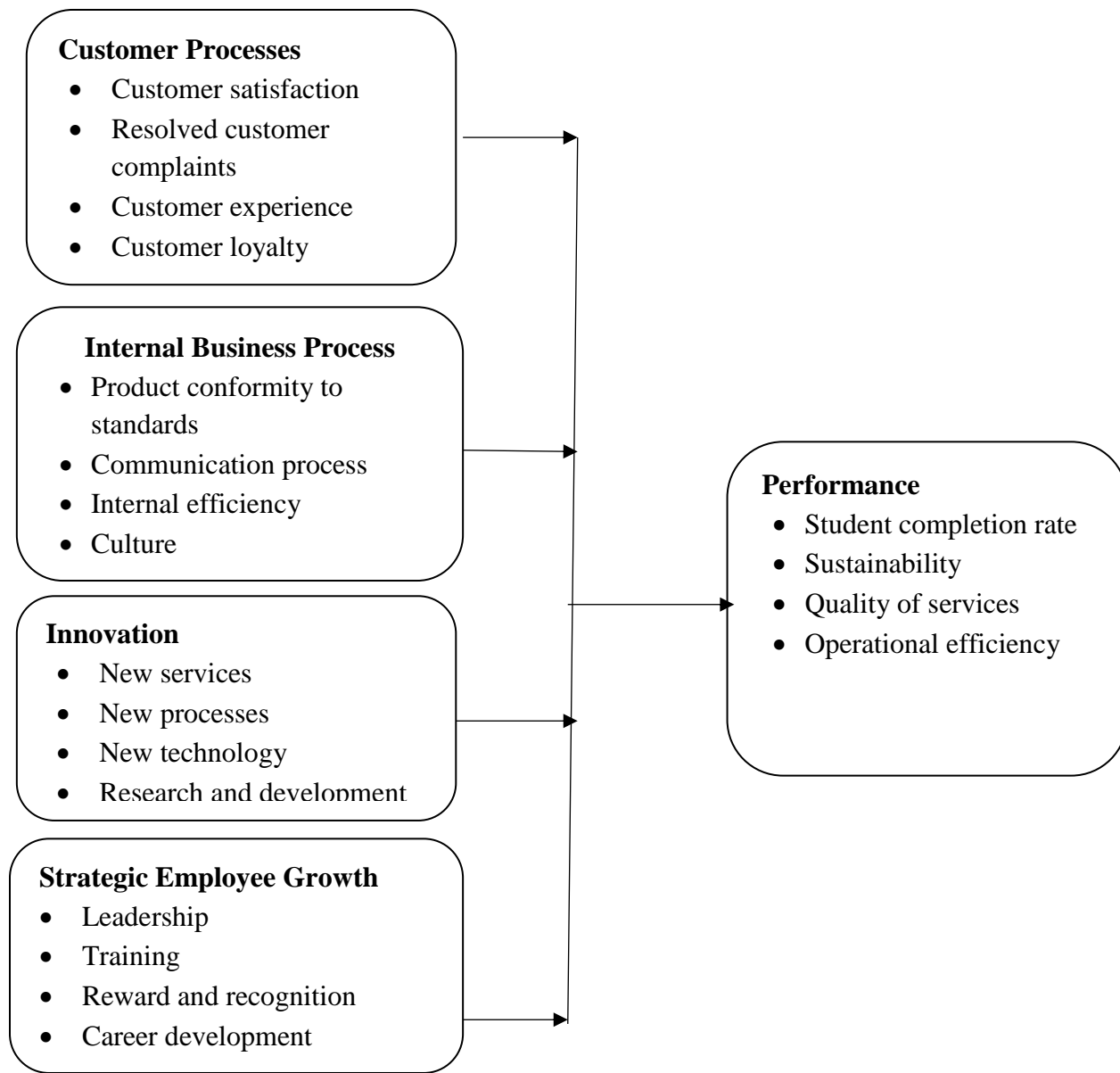


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.1 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. The target population was the 30 private universities in Kenya. Stratified random sampling was used to select the 190 respondents from 30 private universities in Kenya. Data was collected using a questionnaire. Correlation and regression analysis was used to show the relationship between the independent and dependent variable.

4.1 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study administered a total of 190 questionnaires and 141 questionnaires were filled. Thus, the response rate was 73.68% which was adequate for the study.

4.2 Correlation

Correlation analysis was conducted to establish the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Correlation Outputs

		Performance	Customer Processes	Internal Business Process	Innovation	Strategic Employee Growth
Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)					
Customer processes	Pearson Correlation	.737**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000				
Internal business processes	Pearson Correlation	.734**	.523**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000			
Innovation	Pearson Correlation	.764**	.557**	.433**	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Strategic employee growth	Pearson Correlation	.739**	.471**	.520**	.354**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	

The results revealed that customer processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= 0.737^{**}$, $p=0.000$). The results further indicated that internal business processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= .734^{**}$, $p=0.000$). Innovation and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= .764^{**}$, $p=0.000$). Lastly, results showed that strategic employee growth and performance of

private universities is positively and significantly related ($r = .739^{**}$, $p = 0.000$). This implies that an increase in customer processes, internal business process, innovation, strategic employee growth leads to an increase on performance of private universities since the coefficients are positively related.

4.7 Regression Analysis

The study carried out regression analysis to establish the statistical significance relationship between customer processes, internal business process, innovation and strategic employee growth on performance of private universities. The results presented in Table 2 present the fitness of model used of the regression model in explaining the study phenomena.

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.828a	0.686	0.677	0.47754

The variables customer processes, internal business process, innovation and strategic employee growth were found to be satisfactory variables in explaining performance of private universities. This is supported by coefficient of determination also known as the R square of 0.686. This means that customer processes, internal business process, innovation and strategic employee growth explain 68.6% of the variations in the dependent variable, which is performance of private universities. This results further means that the model applied to link the relationship of the variables was satisfactory. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: ANOVA

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	67.874	4	16.968	74.407	.000b
Residual	31.015	136	0.228		
Total	98.888	140			

The findings further confirm that the regression model is significant and supported by $F = 74.407$, $p < 0.000$ since p -values was 0.000 which is less than 0.05. The study conducted a regression of coefficient analysis to establish the statistical significance relationship between the independents variables customer processes, internal business process, innovation and strategic employee growth on the dependent variable that was performance of private universities. The regression of coefficient results are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Regression of Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.636	0.115		14.171	0.000
Customer processes	0.131	0.061	0.185	2.156	0.033
Internal business processes	0.168	0.056	0.237	3.011	0.003
Innovation	0.216	0.061	0.299	3.525	0.001
Strategic employee growth	0.141	0.060	0.201	2.357	0.020

The fitted model was;

$$Y = 1.636 + 0.131X_1 + 0.168X_2 + 0.216X_3 + 0.141X_4$$

The regression of coefficients results show that customer processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.131$, $p=0.033$). The results further indicated that internal business processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.168$, $p=0.003$). The results further indicated that innovation and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.216$, $p=0.001$). Lastly, results showed that strategic employee growth and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.141$, $p=0.020$). The strongest variable was innovation as it had the highest coefficient of 0.216.

4.8 Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to determine the influence of customer processes on performance of private universities in Kenya. Correlation results indicated that customer processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= 0.737^{**}$, $p=0.000$). The regression of coefficients results show that customer processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.131$, $p=0.033$). This implies that a unitary increase in customer processes leads to increase in performance of private universities by 0.131 units holding other factors constant. The results are in line with Doyle and Roth (2013) who established that customer processes management enables any organization to work in a competitive environment and manage to take the place of its competitors by ensuring that their strategy focus on the customer satisfaction. The findings also agree with Andereson (2020) who emphasize on the need to monitor customer processes through the balanced scorecard in order to understand their customers' perceived value, service quality, delivery time and costs, and customers' satisfaction.

The second objective of the study was to determine the influence of internal business processes on performance of private universities in Kenya. Correlation results indicated that internal business processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= 0.734^{**}$, $p=0.000$). The regression of coefficients results show that internal business processes and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.168$, $p=0.003$). This implies that a unitary increase in internal business processes leads to increase in performance of private universities by 0.168 units holding other factors constant. The results agree with Harrington

(2016) who established that a higher level in total organizational involvement during internal business processes had positive effects on the level of implementation success, firm profits and overall firm success. This is also in line with Cakmaka (2013) who emphasize that inability to learn new skills because of inadequate basic education or lack of opportunity slows the transfer of all factors of production from lower to higher value-added activities.

The third objective of the study was to determine the influence of innovation on performance of private universities in Kenya. Correlation results indicated that innovation and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= 0.764^{**}$, $p=0.000$). The regression of coefficients results show that innovation and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.216$, $p=0.001$). This implies that a unitary increase in innovation leads to increase in performance of private universities by 0.216 units holding other factors constant. The findings are in tandem with (Hecklau et al., 2016) who established that innovation has a significant effect on performance. In addition, organization needs new strategic approaches for holistic human resource management to cope with knowledge and competence challenges related to new technologies and processes. Such innovation exposes the University to the global audience and improves the ranking. It is also an opportunity to attract international students and academic staff who are a much-needed value add to the University.

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the influence of strategic employee growth on performance of private universities in Kenya. Correlation results indicated that strategic employee growth and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($r= .739^{**}$, $p=0.000$). The regression of coefficients results show that strategic employee growth and performance of private universities is positively and significantly related ($\beta=0.141$, $p=0.020$). This implies that a unitary increase in strategic employee growth leads to increase in performance of private universities by 0.141 units holding other factors constant. The results agree with Ghemawat (2014) who established that employee growth focusing on the intangible assets of an organization, mainly on the internal skills and capabilities of the employees that are required to support the value-creating internal processes improved on organizational performance. This is also observed by Mintzberg, Quinn and Ghosal (2014) that successful organizations actively create flexibility for employees.

5.1 CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, the study concluded that balanced scorecard perspectives had a significant effect on performance of private universities in Kenya. The study concluded that customer processes significantly influences performance of private universities. By focusing on customer processes, private universities can improve their overall performance in several areas. This can lead to a positive and significant influence on the university's success and long-term viability. By focusing on the student experience and providing students with the necessary support and resources, private universities can increase retention rates. This can result in a stable and engaged student population, which can improve the university's reputation and attract future students

The study also concluded that internal business processes significantly influences performance of private universities. Effective internal processes can help universities operate more efficiently, increase student satisfaction, and improve the bottom line. Implementing effective processes, universities can operate more efficiently, provide better services to students, and achieve their goals more effectively.

The study also concluded that innovation significantly influences performance of private universities. Therefore, innovation have a positive and significant influence on the performance of private universities by improving academic programs, streamlining administrative processes, creating new revenue streams, and increasing research opportunities.

Finally, the study concluded that strategic employee growth significantly influences performance of private universities. The strategic growth and development of employees is thus significant factor in driving organizational performance. By investing in their employees, organizations can create a more productive, innovative, and engaged workforce that is better equipped to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing business environment.

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made;

On customer perspective the private universities should focus on meeting the needs and expectations of their customers, including students, alumni, and donors. This can be achieved through metrics such as student retention rates, alumni satisfaction, and donation amounts.

On internal business processes perspective, the private universities should measure and monitor the efficiency and effectiveness of their internal processes, including academic and administrative processes. This can be achieved through metrics such as student-to-faculty ratios, time-to-graduation, and administrative process cycle times.

On growth perspective the private universities should measure and monitor the learning and growth of their employees, faculty, and students. This can be achieved through metrics such as faculty and staff development, student engagement, and research productivity. By using the balanced scorecard, private universities can ensure that they are measuring and managing their performance effectively across all aspects of the organization. This can lead to improved outcomes and long-term success.

On innovation, Private universities should encourage a culture of innovation by rewarding and recognizing innovative ideas and initiatives. This can be done through innovation challenges, hackathons, and innovation awards. Private universities can create innovation centers that bring together students, faculty, and industry experts to collaborate on research, development, and commercialization of new ideas. Private universities should establish partnerships with industry to identify research and development needs, and collaborate to develop innovative solutions.

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