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The Effect of University Visibility on Students Enrolment in Private Universities: A Case Study of Muteesa 1 Royal University, Masaka Branch.

The study establishes the effect of university visibility on students' enrolment in private universities of Uganda. A case study design was used. The variable of the study was university visibility with dimensions of: web presence, academic publications, and University ranking. The other variable was students' enrolment with dimensions of number of applications, number of admissions, and number of registered students. The study was guided by the objectives: to establish the relationship between web presence and students' enrolment in the university, to determine relationship between university ranking and students' enrolment in the university and to determine relationship between academic publications and students' enrolment in the university. A simple random sampling methodology was employed to determine the 263 respondents from the University. The study applied a quantitative approach in which data were collected by using questionnaires. It was carried out for three operational years, that is, 2012, 2013 and 2014. The results of the study indicate that university ranking has the strongest significant relationship on students' enrolment though literature shows that it's often unclear why a particular indicator was chosen, by whom it was decided, and how open and reflective the decision process was, hence unreasonable to evaluate universities with a uniform standard: The findings indicate that, the increase in academic publications has the greatest influence on students enrolment leading to development of more higher education institutions and low academic publications reduces institutions relative visibility. The study findings also indicate that web presence has a negative significant relationship on students' enrolment. This might be due to expensive internet availability that limits users hence rarely used by prospective students and this gap calls for further research.

The study recommends that further research probably longitudinal in nature, should be conducted by university professors to validate the relationship between web presence and university visibility; University management should encourage academic staff to increase their publications since it explains university visibility. University management should improve their network with other local groups in order to provide networking opportunities. The study concludes that academic publications and university ranking have a strong positive relationship on students' enrolment because the prospective students become aware of the brand and services or products of the university.

Key Words: University Visibility, Students Enrolment, Muteesa 1 Royal University, Masaka Branch.