

**PROMOTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AND STUDENTS' DECISION TO JOIN PRIVATE
UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF KUMI UNIVERSITY**

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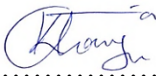


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Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation on “Promotional Communications and Students’ Decision to join private universities: a Case Study of Kumi University” is my work, out of my effort and it has never been submitted by anyone to Uganda Christian University or any other academic institution for any award.

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Approval

This dissertation “Promotional Communications and Students’ Decision to join private universities: a Case Study of Kumi University” was prepared and compiled by Khaukha John under my supervision. It is hereby submitted to the university with my approval.

Signature



.....

Professor James Tondo Kiwanuka

(Supervisor)

Date 9 May 2024

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family, sponsors and colleagues in the academic struggle.

Acknowledgement

With heartfelt thanks, I wish to acknowledge the intellectual guidance accorded to me by my academic supervisors, Professor James Tondo Kiwanuka and Mr Sempungu Godfrey throughout this research study and process. I wish to thank my course mates and colleagues in the academic struggle for their invaluable support during my interactions and discussions with them in my area of study. I also acknowledge the efforts of Mr Oloba Joseph who was my research assistant during this whole journey.

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List of Acronyms / Abbreviations

AMA- American Marketing Association

ANA-Association of National Advertisers

CAC-Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient

CBC-Competency-Based Curriculum

CIM-Chartered Institute of Marketing

DMI- Digital Marketing Institute
E-Markplan-Electronic Marketing Plan ERP-
Enterprise Resource Planning eWOM-
Electronic Word of Mouth
HEAS-Higher Education Admission System
ICTs-Information and Communication Technologies
IUIU-Islamic University in Uganda
KICD- Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KUMU-Kumi University
PDAs-Personal Digital Assistants
SEO-Search Engine Optimisation
SMS-Short Messaging Service
SPSS- Statistical Package for Social Scientists
TAFE-Technical and Further Education
TV- Television
UCU-Uganda Christian University
UGC-User Generated Content
WOM- Word of Mouth

Abstract

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities in Uganda, taking Kumi University as one of the private universities in Uganda focusing on establishing the influence of online promotional communications, offline promotional communications and other factors on students' decision to join Kumi University. This study employed a descriptive research design aimed at describing the relationship between variables. The sample size of the research was

comprised of 263 respondents from a total population of 846 Kumi University's selected students covering three years: Academic Years (AYs) 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/2020. The investigator successfully obtained data from 237 participants out of the targeted sample of 263 respondents. This represents an 89.8% response rate. From the research findings, it is evident that promotional communications pose a significant effect on students' decision to join private universities, but given the setting of Kumi University, and the findings in this study indicates that these strategies have not been well utilised. The findings also show that besides promotional communications, other factors play a vital role in influencing students to join the university. The researcher, therefore, recommends the university to step up a lively and up-to-date online presence, set up a vibrant department of marketing and adopt a Marketing Information System such as the University Marketing System. Further, a comprehensive survey should be carried out on students to discover the best strategy the university can use to increase the number of students in each of its intakes.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

In today's technological society, universities have to keep up with the pace of change as it is associated with break-neck fluctuations in technology and clients' behavioural habits (Chartered Institute Marketing, 2020). A student's decision to join the university is the choice of a future career by undertaking a course in an academic institution (Bullock et al., 2014). Harackiewicz et al. (2016) indicates that there has been growing interest in the scholarly community in studying the students' decision-making process in pursuing their academic institutions from different educational institutions world over. Student recruitment in private universities is a challenging process that involves various mechanisms of promotional communications by the dedicated university marketing team to attract students towards deciding to join the institution (Lucinnda, 2019). This chapter gives insight into explaining the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study, research questions, significance, scope and the conceptual framework for the study on the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities.

1.1 Background of the study

In promotional communications, technology is changing the way organisations deliver a consistent message across all components of the promotional mix (Fill & Jamieson, 2011). Offline promotional communications had for long dominated the universities' marketing space in Uganda, as these institutions have always taken advantage of the exposure and brand awareness that offline media such as newspapers, personal reach and billboards always promise (Mulyantina, 2019). With the advent of online marketing, there was a shift by

universities to reach out to their target customers (students) through the new communication channels such as social media and websites (Zwin, 2021). Generally, firms rely on numerous promotional activities, such as advertising, sales promotion and other forms of persuasion, to reach superior client performance (Webster & Lusch, 2013).

In promoting organisational products and business, one has to pay attention to the promotional communications mix (Shakeel, 2022). According to the scholar, the mix consists of advertising, sales promotions, direct marketing, public relations and publicity, sponsorships (events and experiences), social media and interactive marketing and professional selling. The scholar categorises promotional communications into offline and online methods. Often, decisions by students to join universities depend on how well the university utilises the promotional communications mix (Omboi & Mutali, 2011).

The concept of promotional communications started from the time marketing began during the time of the Industrial Revolution and this period spanned the late 18th century and lasted long into the 19th century (Hardy, 2016). Given that in our modern era of digitisation, globalisation and internationalisation, universities enter the online environment. The increase of competition is evident, resulting in a sort of mega competition among the universities (Balážiová, & Spálová, 2020).

From Bozkurt and Ergen's (2014) discourse, they point out that there were multiple shifts in promotional communications where the main role is played by strategic thinking that became the basis for planning the promotional communications strategy. Promotional

communications are defined as the use of different channels and tools in combination to create awareness about the firm's (university's) products and these can be either offline or online (Tomse & Snoj, 2014). And thus, the communication strategy adopted by an organisation is a combination of intuition, expectations, knowledge and experience of the promotional communications managers (Bogdan, et al., 2008). These promotional communications are met by corresponding customer decisions, as a response to an organisation's efforts.

It is recognisable that at one-time, cutting-edge technology was limited to just a small segment of the population and these advancements were slowly rolled out to the masses over decades. Now, adoption rates are faster than the speed of light and more widespread than ever and it's putting control back in the hands of consumers (Wainwright, 2011). Over the past three decades, promotional communication managers have had to keep up and contend with leaps in technology and our relation to it (Digital Marketing Institute, 2016).

In this study, the researcher attempts to look at the three major technological developments that have changed the way he looks at promotional communications: the internet, big data and smartphones and predict how they can set the scene for the future. And at the same time, the researcher focuses on the offline forms of promotional communications and how they still appear to be inevitable contributors and universities have been privy to this elongated history and they have had to make decisive adjustments to fit in with the most recent or current trends.

A student's decision to join the university is primarily an act of selection or choice of one programme from several alternatives (Sharma, 2015).

The study was guided by the consumer decision-making process theory. Introduced by the American Philosopher, John Dewey in 1910, it has been a widely accepted concept and still serves as the central pillar of a popular consumer behaviour model (Bruner & Pomazal, 1988; Stankevich, 2017; Dudovski, 2013). In this theory, consumer decision-making is a complex process which involves all the stages from problem recognition to post-purchase activities. The theory outlines a five-stage decision process that this study adopted in line with the students' decision to join private universities. In this study, for a student to join private universities, the researcher outlines five key steps: defining the goal, gathering information, considering alternatives, making and evaluating the decision.

In many countries, students' decisions to join universities depend on several factors and in Bangladesh, several stages must be undergone by the prospective students leading to higher qualifications, such as a Bachelor's degree (Bangladesh – Education, 2021). Based on this study, the decision to join university depends on one's career choice and the marketing information about universities offering the same courses.

In Nigeria, the number of years to be spent in university is mostly determined by the course of study and some courses have longer study lengths than others; all the same, the decision to join a particular university is influenced by several factors, one of which is the popularity of the university that is as a result of their promotional communications strategies (Amaghionyeodiwe & Osinubi, 2006).

In South Africa, education is based on the university rank in terms of quality and popularity. These are portrayed by the intensiveness of the university's promotional communications strategy (Craddock, 2017). Understanding the students' decision-making is very important for institution administrators in a competition situation (Nabakaaki, 2019).

Although Uganda has over 50 universities and Kasozi (2002) projected a rise of 92% in enrolments for 2008–2015, most students in Uganda decide to join public universities even when they are paying for themselves (Bisaso, 2017). Achan (2020) argues that there are many accredited private universities in the country (43) compared to public universities (11). According to the scholar, private universities take 59% of the total of students that make decisions to join the private universities which averagely implies that public universities take the highest number. This state of affairs prompted the researcher to investigate the influence of promotional communications on the students' decision to join private universities since many students preferred to join the few public universities more than the private ones, taking a case study of Kumi University, the private university in Eastern Uganda.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Out of the total university students' enrolment in Uganda, private universities take up 59% (Achan, 2020), despite them being about four times the number of public universities. Achan (2020) adds that there are only eleven public universities in Uganda, and they take 41% of the university student population as compared to the forty-three private universities. This shows that on average, the majority of students decide to join public universities instead of private universities.

Universities have attempted to avert the situation through various promotional communication strategies (Nabakaaki, 2019). Despite this fact, NCHE (2020) reports that there was an 11.4% increase in university enrolment from 162,299 students in 2016/2017 to 183,084 in 2017/2018. However, private universities had 108,096 students representing 59%, while public universities had 74,988, which is 41% of total enrolment at universities (NCHE, 2020). On average, about 250 students are enrolled in each private university in Uganda as compared to the approximate average of 8,300 in each public university.

Previously published research studies report that promotional communications influences student decision-making (Yamchuti, 2002; Ming, 2010; Shammot, 2011; Sakkamonvaree, 2011; Promwong, 2012; Maniu and Maniu, 2014; Dao & Thorpe, 2015; Lau, 2016), but these were not done in Uganda. These studies have focused directly on promotional communications and students' decision-making in joining universities since private universities take up low numbers of students that decide to join them despite engaging promotional communications strategies. Thus, this state of affairs prompted this study that seeks to investigate the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities in Uganda, taking Kumi University in Eastern Uganda as the case study since it is one of the private universities in Uganda.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to analyse the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities in Uganda taking Kumi University in Eastern Uganda as a case for this study.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To establish the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University.
- ii. To analyse the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University.
- iii. To establish the influence of other factors on students' decision to join Kumi University.

1.5 Research questions

- i. What is the extent of the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University?
- ii. How do offline promotional communications influence students' decision to join Kumi University?
- iii. What is the extent of the influence of other factors on students' decision to join Kumi University?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Content scope

The study focused on promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities. Promotional communications were the independent variable and students' decision to join private universities was the dependent variable. Promotional communications were conceptualised as online promotional communications and offline promotional communications, while students' decision to join private universities was measured by information search, comparing alternatives, application and registering.

1.6.2 Geographical scope

Kumi University is located in Ngero Parish, Ngero Subcounty, Kumi District, in the Eastern Region of Uganda, approximately 9 kilometres (6 mi), by road, west of the town of Kumi (Globofeed, 2018). Kumi University just like any other private university has not been able to meet its student recruitment targets and this prompted the researcher to investigate the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities: a case of Kumi University in Eastern Uganda.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study covered three years; Academic Years (AYs) 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/2020. This time scope was selected because it provided enough information for the study since the respondents were still at the university, which was the case in this study. Most of the university courses in private universities take three years and therefore this justified the Academic Years (AYs) 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/2020 selected by the researcher in the time scope.

1.7 Significance of the study

These study findings provide private universities with vital insights regarding the ways of improving the effectiveness of their promotional communications for better enrolment. The findings also provide literature to other researchers who would wish to perform a further study on promotional communications in private universities.

Further, findings from this study are expected to help private universities' administrations and the marketing staff and agents to adopt appropriate promotional communications that will drive higher enrolments due to many prospective students deciding to join the university. In addition, this study was to enable the researcher to obtain a Master of Arts in Strategic Communication from Uganda Christian University (UCU).

1.8 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is a representation of an expected relationship between variables (Swaen, 2015). In this study, the conceptual relationship between promotional communications and students' decision to join universities was portrayed. The conceptualisation was guided by the consumer decision-making process theory. In this theory, introduced by John Dewey, the American Philosopher, a consumer – commonly known as a customer or client (student) was said to follow through with a particular process before settling on a particular course of action.

To Blackwell et al. (2006), these stages were: recognition of need or problem, information search, comparing the alternatives, purchase and post-purchase evaluation. It was, therefore, conceptualised that for the student to decide to apply and register at the university, he/she needs to follow the process, although they can sometimes skip some steps. These decisions were considered as being influenced by promotional communications used by universities.

The conceptual framework in figure 1.1 below provides the depiction of the relationship between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities:

Independent Variable

Dependent Variable



Figure 1.1: Conceptual framework of the study

Adopted from; Dewey (1910), Dudovskiy (2013), Sharma (2015), Stankevich (2017), Shakeel (2022), and Modified by the Researcher.

Swaen (2015) points out that a conceptual framework defines the relevant variables for your study and maps out how they might relate to each other. In this study, promotional communications were covered as an independent variable consisting of online and offline promotional communications. On the other hand, students' decision to join private universities was covered as a dependent variable and was denoted by information search, comparing alternatives, application and registering.

1.9 Definition of operational terms

Promotional communications: are the detailed combinations of advertising, outreach and PR campaigns aimed at influencing the clients' decision to enrol at the university.

Online promotional communications: are referred to as forms of promotional communications that involve the use of the internet and other related information and communication technologies.

Offline promotional communications: are detailed combinations of promotional communications that do not involve the use of the internet.

Students' decision to join private universities: refers to the process of applying and registering for a particular university programme.

1.10 Conclusion

The introduction chapter of the study explored the background of students' decision to join private universities and focused on clarifying the study problem, purpose and objectives of the study. Research questions, the study scope, the significance of the study and the conceptual framework are also presented.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of literature related to this study from different scholars and writers. The presentation of the literature review took the order by which the study objectives were presented.

2.1 Theoretical framework

This study adopted the consumer decision-making process theory (Dudovskiy, 2013). This theory was introduced by John Dewey, the American Philosopher, psychologist and educational reformer whose ideas have been influential in education and social reform (Bruner & Pomazal, 1988). Since 1910, when John Dewey first introduced the five-stage decision process, it has been a widely accepted concept and still serves as the central pillar of a popular consumer behaviour model (Bruner & Pomazal, 1988; Dudovskiy, 2013). Consumer behaviour has always been a hot marketing topic, since knowing how and why consumers act in a certain way making their buying decisions helps companies improve their promotional communications and be more successful in the market (Stankevich, 2017).

Stankevich (2017) contends that the theory breaks down the consumer decision-making process into five (05) individual stages. In the theory, the first stage of the process is working out what exactly you or the customer needs, which is problem recognition. The second stage is information search, followed by looking at the alternative. The fourth stage is purchase: At

this stage, a customer has either assessed all the facts or come to a logical conclusion. Finally, there is post-purchase satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Consumer decision-making is a complex process that involves all the stages from problem recognition to post-purchase activities (Dudovskiy, 2013). All the consumers have their own needs in their daily lives and these needs make them make different decisions. These decisions can be complex depending on the consumer's opinion about a particular product, evaluating and comparing, selecting and purchasing among various types of products. Therefore, understanding and realising the core issue of the process of consumer decision-making and utilising the theories in practice is becoming a common viewpoint among many companies and people.

There is a common consensus among many researchers and academics that the consumer purchasing theory involves several different stages (Dudovskiy 2013). Depending on the different factors and findings, numerous researchers and academics have developed their theories and models over the past years. However, according to Gurbuz (2018), although these theories vary slightly from each other, they all lead to almost the same theory; the consumer purchasing theory, which states that it involves the stages of search and purchase of a product or service and the process of evaluating the product or service in the post-purchase product.

The Five-Stage Model initially proposed by John Dewey in 1910 is considered to be one of the most common models of the consumer decision-making process and it involves five various stages as quoted by Dudovskiy (2013). These stages are Recognition of need or

problem, Information search, Comparing the alternatives, Purchase and Post-purchase evaluation. This simple model clearly illustrates and explains how the consumers make a purchasing decision. Furthermore, Blackwell et al. (2006) highlight the argument that this model is more precise and clearer compared to the other similar models because this model's core focus is on motivational factors which helps the user to easier understand the reasons behind the purchasing decision.

However, the theory has been critiqued by some scholars who argue that the theory considers all customers to be the same in spending a lot of time in information search, choosing from the different alternatives and finally choosing the product that would satisfy their expectation. There are situations where the customer at times does not engage in all the stages of the consumer decision-making process (Bozinoff, 1982; Bhasin, 2010; Dwivedi et al., 2021). Another scholar indicates that the model has made purchasing a product a very complex process but there are situations where the customer would skip some stages and would decide by observing a product whether he/she should purchase the product or not and whether that product would satisfy their needs (Niosi, 2017).

The theory is related to this study based on the dependent variable, which was the student's decision to join the university. In the decision to join the university, the students outline the goal of joining the university which is the recognition of their needs and they can gather the information by researching the availability of universities through promotional communications implemented by the university he or she desires to join. The promotional communications range from online to offline promotional communications that influence students' decision to join university. The students in this process consider alternatives of the

availability of various universities; they are prompted to decide on joining any private university such as Kumi University.

2.2 Review of related literature

Literature was reviewed by various authors on the subject of promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities. The review of the literature enabled the researcher to identify the gaps in the study and advance knowledge on the different objectives of the study.

2.2.1 Online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities.

Promotion activities are essential for the long-term survival of business organisations (Nanteza, 2018). Promotion practices have been an area of investment since the first search engine was started in 1991 - with a network protocol called Gopher for query and search (Khan & Siddiqui, 2013). After the launch of Yahoo in 1994, companies started to maximise their ranking on the website (Smyth, 2007; Chauhan, 2016). The online era is characterised by extensive use of new technologies and permanent connectivity through the internet, all of which have led to significant changes in consumer behaviour (Labrecque et al., 2013). According to Menedez et al. (2020), users today seek out for themselves what they want to know, create content, also known as user-generated content (UGC) and share it altruistically on social media, thereby encouraging interaction and collaboration between anonymous users.

Online promotional communication is a generic term for promotional communication activities by use of the internet to achieve and provide a direction of change for customers and

retain them (Riyadi et al., 2019). Parker and Alstynne (2011), add that online communications are characterised by network effects and include Desktops, Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), network switches, multimedia and mobile devices like smartphones and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems that use the internet to link the demand side to the supply side of businesses. More broadly online promotional communication is the use of the internet and related information and communication technologies to accomplish marketing goals (Jovevski et al., 2010; Akinola & Okunade, 2016).

Online promotional communication still holds tremendous potential which can multiply the opportunities for universities seeking students (Kamal, 2016). In online promotional communications, universities can better divide the target customer groups with the help of big data technology, further improve services according to students' demands to meet their group's demands to the maximum extent and realise the real market positioning (Qianlin, 2018).

An online promotional communications strategy highlights how the internet makes marketing more effective because it allows for individual attention, better campaign management and better service, marketing design and execution (Mandal, 2017). The use of the internet to help marketing activities to improve students' knowledge by matching their university needs is online promotional communications (Chaffey, 2013). To be effective at online promotional communications, all universities need a strategy designed to meet their goals of influencing students' decisions to join them, however, these strategies are not easily measurable.

Online advertising is a very significant portion of online promotional communications through which universities convey messages about their services such as the courses available, scholarships and other opportunities (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2018). Social networking sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace and Facebook have proved to be popular online activities in relation to time spent (Hampton, 2011).

According to Pradiptarini (2011), Facebook is the most common social media site followed by Twitter, LinkedIn, Myspace and YouTube in popularity. Social media, which is user-generated communication, represents a widespread source of information (Michaelidou, 2011) and creates empowered clients who are more influenced by other clients than by advertising (Leeflang et al., 2014). Social media has changed the strategies and tools universities use to communicate, emphasising that information control lies with the students rather than the university administration (Aldahdouh et al., 2020). However, measurement of the scale of reach and a direct relationship between online promotional communications and students' decision to join universities is still lacking, a gap that this study intended to fill.

Social media has become significant as a means of internet promotion given its wider adoption (Pradiptarini, 2011). The effectiveness of social media promotional communications is highly subjective to content quality_{5.2}, involvement_{5.2} and integration with the other media platforms (Dolan, 2021). Based on the scholar's argument therefore, through social media platforms, universities can promote events concerning their services, run promotions and explore new opportunities to increase awareness and visibility of their brand and share information with students.

On the other hand, the mobile application for marketing implies the use of portable media as a means of online promotional communications (Bauer, et al., 2005; Doyle, 2011). Mobile applications are designed for quick messaging and are used for reminders, updates and confirmations and some universities use this form of online promotional communications to influence students' decision to join that very university. Furthermore, websites generate new ways of communication, cooperation and content sharing. Most universities have websites that define their core services and detail the information required by the prospective students (Enders, et al., 2008; Tremblay et al., 2012).

However, the numerous websites on the internet make it challenging to market university services on the websites and therefore Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy is extensively used to improve the visibility and thus the volume and quality of traffic to private universities' websites (Khraim, 2015). SEO focuses on image search, local search, video search, news search and industry-specific vertical searches. SEO provides a variety of strategies including increasing links from other websites to the university's web pages, editing the content of the website and restructuring the contents of private universities' websites (Khraim 2015).

Chaffey (2016) defines online promotional communications as the "application of online channels (web, e-mail, databases, plus mobile/wireless & online TV) to contribute to promotional activities aimed at achieving students acquisition and their retention in the university by improving students' knowledge and further delivering integrated communications and online services that match students' individual needs. All types of social

media provide an opportunity to present private universities or their services to dynamic communities and students that may show interest (Ansari & Khan, 2020). According to Gurau (2008) and Dwivedi et al., (2021), the online promotional communication environment raises a series of opportunities for practitioners. It allows easy interaction; it is traceable, and its effects are readily measured.

Mehrdad and Sahehi, (2012) suggest that the internet which is a global medium of communication is drastically gaining interest from the users and has fostered attraction as what they call a revolutionary promotional communications tool. It should be noted that there are limitations too that are associated with the use of online promotional communications where students have to get internet access and more so be familiar with the operation of various online promotional communications platforms. To this effect, the researcher sought to establish the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join universities in Uganda, taking the case of Kumi University.

2.2.2 Offline promotional communications strategies and students' decision to join private universities

Mwine (2009) suggests that companies and organisations are responsible for values, behaviours and decisions in the consumption of their products and services through their promotional campaigns. Offline promotional communications are forms of advertising used to promote goods and services without the use of the internet (Kumar et al, 2017). Offline promotional communications are used to demonstrate various ways of attracting students to join the university. In the recent past, however, organisations have moved towards adopting online promotional communications (King et al., 2014). Though, these institutions cannot

guarantee effectiveness of online promotional communications to developing countries where there is low internet access.

Offline promotional communications and these include product functional characteristics and superiority, narrow determinate product categories, point of view to the consumer as a rational thinker, application of analytical, quantitative and verbal methods such as mechanical standpoint to the consumer “Stimulus- Reaction” (Grundey, 2008). It is important to offer students what they are currently demanding and anticipate what they are likely to demand in the future and this can be achieved by providing multiple access channels for the students to use such as offline telephone and fax (Scullin, et al, 2004).

With the evolution of the internet, offline promotional call centres have evolved into econtact centres and the purpose of an e-contact centre is to provide a personal customer service experience that is individualised to each students’ needs and questions (Scullin, et al., 2004 quoting Deitel et al., 2001). The principle of offline promotional communications is “caveat emptor” meaning, “let the buyer and in this case, the student beware” (Chaudhury, 2017). With the high volume and speed of information and knowledge from different stakeholders in the new economy, however, the ‘beware’ approach may be the actual ‘be confused’ due to so much information available to the consumer.

The interaction between private universities’ offline promotional communication activities and the offline promotional communication activities of other competitors can influence the trade-offs in promotional communication planning (Naik et al. 2005). Given the nature of the dynamic competition, the synergistic effects between the offline promotional communications activities can vary over time (Kumar et al, 2017).

Promotional communications in the university also rely on offline promotional communication strategies to increase awareness and encourage students to apply for the courses available (Kumar et al., 2017). With the high volume and speed of information and knowledge from different stakeholders, this helps universities to build strategies to combine knowledge from both promotional communications and big data domains (Xu et al., 2016). Here, the researcher suggests that knowledge fusion to improve results is not automatic and requires strategic offline promotional communications choices to obtain its benefits.

Offline promotional communication campaigns often have the advantage of staying power. They can become iconic and instantly familiar to millions of people.

In the UK, 57% of people consider television advertising the most impactful (Wildner & Modenbach, 2015). The second highest is newspaper advertising, at just 15 per cent (Ahlers, 2006). Radio advertising generated more than \$17 billion in ad revenue in 2011. This form of advertising is also the least ignored, with nearly 70% of listeners keeping the station tuned in during commercials compared to the second-highest television, at just 20 per cent (Myers, 2011).

In some companies, particularly small businesses, the entire staff will contribute to planning and execution and larger companies often have marketing departments dedicated to creating advertising campaigns that use offline promotional communications (Wildner, & Modenbach, 2015). Given the above review, the researcher in this study found it eminent to find out the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join universities.

2.2.3 The other factors that influence students' decision to join private universities

Besides online and offline promotional communications, there are other factors that play a role in influencing students' decisions other than the promotional communications conveyed by the university. Researchers such as Connie & Rahman (2019), Rayfield (2008), Safarmamad (2019) and Phang and Misran (2012) have studied factors influencing the students' decision to join a particular university. Slide (2018) asserts that there are many ways to choose a college: One could choose one based on where they want to live, where their parents went to school, or even where their friends plan to attend. To this effect, joining a college in the 21st century is slightly challenging due to the high demands arising from the complexities of technology.

Connie and Rahman (2019) quoting Jaya, Nora and Naziz (2013), the quality of education, campus facilities and atmosphere and external and financial factors are some of the other factors that could affect the college choice decision among students. Furthermore, Haron et al. (2017) concluded that financial aid, program content and structure, facilities and resources and social influences influence students' decisions in selecting private higher education institutions.

Safarmamad (2019) contends in his findings in a study on "Factors That Influence Students' Decisions to Enrol in Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) Lyceums in Tajikistan" that parents are the most influential factors, while siblings, developing employment prospects and advice from friends also play a role in decisions to enrol in a School. Career guidance and development programs for students while they are in secondary

schools also play a role in their enrolment decisions (Gaunt & Palmer, 2005; Ginevra, Nota, & Ferrari, 2015; Stafford, 2014).

Additionally, tuition fees, scholarships and cultural background contribute to students' decision to join private universities (Phang, 2013). Also, studies that have investigated college choice factors for high-achieving students repeatedly cite academic reputation as one of the top indicators of choice (Theses & Schoenherr, 2009). These scholars add that students' individual and family characteristics, including ethnicity, gender, parents' education level and family income; institutional characteristics, including financial considerations and academic reputation; and the influence of others, including parents, relatives, teachers and counsellors influence students' decision to join a university. Although various studies have been done outside Uganda, not much has been done in the country towards establishing factors that contribute to the students' choice in joining private universities. Therefore, this study seeks to document other factors other besides promotional communications that influence the students' decision to join private universities in Uganda.

2.3 Summary of research gaps

This study adopted the consumer decision-making process theory, though the theory has been critiqued by some scholars as they argue that the theory considers all customers to be the same who spend a lot of time in information search, choosing from the different alternatives and then finally choose the product that would satisfy their expectation. There are situations where the customer at times does not engage in all the stages of the consumer decisionmaking process. Offline promotional communications are used to speak more and more, attracting students to join the university.

Though scholars tend to generalise promotional communications, the strategies for developing an effective promotional communications plan vary widely, according to the form of advertising used and the type of business. To be effective at online promotional communications, all universities need a strategy designed to meet their goals of influencing students' decision to join the institution; however, these strategies are not yet easily measurable.

Social media has also changed the strategies and tools universities use to communicate, emphasising that information control lies with the students rather than the university administration (Mangold & Faulds, 2009). However, measurement of the scale of reach and a direct relationship between social media and students' decision to join universities is still lacking, a gap that this study intends to fill.

While most people are online nowadays, offline promotional communications still have leverage in the marketing world. This is because not everyone is online all the time. From the reviewed literature, promotional communications have the potential to transform private universities through explosive long-term growth that can make them a powerhouse in the education sector. Given the state of affairs and importance of each of the identified promotional communications strategies (online and offline), the researcher also intended to identify other factors other than promotional communications that influence students' decision to join universities.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the research design, study area, sample size, data collection methods and data collection instruments and data management techniques and data analysis.

3.1 Research design

A research design is the strategy, plan and structure of a research project (Amin, 2005; Oso & Onen 2005). To address the specific nature of the problem identified, this study employed a descriptive research design aimed at describing the relationship between variables. The design was chosen since it aimed to accurately and systematically describe a population, situation or phenomenon (McCombes, 2019). In this design, the researcher did not control or manipulate any of the variables, but only observed and measured them and then reported the findings as they were (Amin, 2005). This design was useful when not much was known yet about the topic or problem (McCombes, 2019). Data was collected from students of Kumi University. A quantitative approach was adopted to provide for relationship measurement between variables.

3.2 Study area

The research study was conducted at Kumi University. Kumi University (KUMU) is a private non-profit university established in Kumi District - Uganda. The Institution was founded in 1996 by a South Korean missionary couple, Hyeong Lyeol Lyu and Min Ja Lee, under the name African Leaders Training Institute. In 1999, the name was changed to Kumi University. The university was fully accredited by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2004 (Kumi University, 2022). The university was chosen as a case study since it is among the private universities with low enrolment levels, which is the subject of an investigation by this study.

3.3 Study population

A population is considered to be a group of people, events or things that are of interest to the researchers and what they wish to investigate (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). The study population in this study consisted of Kumi University students to get their experience with KUMU promotional communications and how the strategies influenced their decision to join the university. Based on data obtained from the university registry, in 2021 Kumi University had a total population of 830 registered students (second and third year).

3.4 Sample size

A sample is a subset of the population in question and consists of members from a particular population (McCombes, 2003). The sample size of the research comprised 263 respondents. The sample size was determined using the sample size table by Krejcie & Morgan (1970). Therefore, 263 respondents participated in the study during data collection out of the total population of 830.

Table 3.1 below provides the summary of the study population and sample size.

Table 3.1: Population and sample size

Category of respondents	Population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Students	830	263	Purposive sampling
Total	830	263	

Source: Kumi University, 2021

Table 3.1 Shows the category of respondents, population, sample size and the sampling techniques which will be used to select the respondents.

3.5 Sampling technique

Purposive sampling technique was utilized in this study. A selection of participants from the population was chosen purposively. Here, the researcher got the information from the students he knew would provide him with the information during data collection. During data collection, a selected group of students were chosen to participate in the study.

3.6 Data collection methods

This study collected data through the use of the questionnaire survey. This survey method was used to collect detailed relevant information regarding the study problem and objectives.

3.6.1 The questionnaire survey

This study used a questionnaire survey method to collect data from the students of Kumi University. This method allowed the collection of information from a wide coverage of respondents within a shorter time (Banerjee & Chaudhury, 2010). This allowed them time to respond without disrupting their normal routines.

3.7 Data collection instruments

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire. This instrument ensured that the correct questions are asked, and that the information is accurate and reliable.

3.7.1 Structured questionnaire

The structured questionnaire design carefully followed the research objectives that guided the study. The questionnaires were semi-structured (close-ended) and the responses for the closed-ended categories were obtained on a “5” code Likert scale. Closed-ended categories help respondents make quick decisions and helps the researcher code the information for subsequent analysis and narrow down the error gap while analysing data (Amin, 2005). For example when a respondent was asked about the use of either online or offline promotional communications in the university, they were to provide a quick response by ticking the appropriate code.

3.8 Quality control

This subsection presented the steps that were followed to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments. After constructing the research instruments, the

supervisors and other experts reviewed the items and checked on language clarity, relevancy, content comprehensiveness and length of the questionnaire.

3.8.1 Validity of the instruments

Validity focused on the extent to which the instruments used to measure and perform to the expectations of the researcher (Oso & Onen 2005). To ensure validity, the instrument was refined based on expert advice. The following formula was used to test the Content Validity Index (CVI).

CVI = Content Validity Index

CVI = $\frac{\text{No. of items regarded relevant by judges}}{\text{Total No. of items judged.}}$

CVI = $\frac{29}{32}$

The CVI obtained for this study was 0.91. Interpretation of the CVI obtained was based on the George and Mallery (2003) scale whereby a value above 0.7 was considered acceptable validity.

3.8.2 Reliability of the instruments

A pre-test was done on a total number of 10 respondents who were not part of the final study and data was coded and entered into the computer. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients (CARC) were computed using the Statistical Package for Social Scientists

(SPSS) computer program to estimate the reliability of the questionnaire. From the analysis, a reliability of 0.832 was obtained in this study. Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients of above 0.7 was acceptable as suggested by Sekaran (2003). Thus, the higher the coefficient that was obtained, the more reliable the coefficient test was.

3.9. Data collection procedure

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from UCU, which was presented to the KUMU administration, which issued an acceptance letter to the researcher. After selecting the respondents, self-administered questionnaires were given to the respondents to respond to at their convenient time for two weeks. After the data was collected, it was coded, organised and analysed and a research report was compiled and submitted to Uganda Christian University for examination.

3.10 Data analysis

The statistical package was used for the analysis of quantitative data with Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) version 25.0. The analysis of quantitative data encompassed calculations such as averages and totals as compared to totals of responses expected. The process of data analysis involved editing and examining the collected raw data to detect errors and omissions and corrections.

The first editing was done in the field and scrutinising of the completed questionnaire. After fieldwork, central editing was also done to review and edit when all questionnaires had been completed and returned to the researcher. Corrections for wrong entries and omissions

were then done. After central editing, computer data entry was done into a statistical package for social scientist (SPSS) software version 25.0. The statistical software (SPSS) was used to analyse the data at a descriptive level.

3.11 Measurement of variables

To measure variables in research was to transform attributes of the conceptual framework of variables studied into numerical quantities (Amin, 2005). Promotional communications were measured by online and offline promotional communications (Stankevich, 2017). While students' decision to join private universities was measured by information search, comparing alternatives, application and enrolment (Sharma, 2015). Statistical measurement was done based on the Likert scale used in the study and the researcher's judgement.

Developed in 1932 by Rensis Likert to measure attitudes, the typical Likert scale was an ordinal scale used by respondents to rate the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with a statement (Likert, 1932; Bishop & Herron, 2015). The study's Likert scale was comprised of 5 codes. The Likert scale was conveniently used to obtain the attitudinal disposition of respondents on the study variables and measured the relationship between study variables. In this study, the Likert scale was given as 1. *Strongly disagree* 2. *Disagree*, 3. *Not sure*, 4. *Agree* and 5. *Strongly agree*.

3.12 Limitations of the study

The study faced some limitations most importantly, the sensitivity emanating from the information regarding an organisation's promotional communications. To overcome this limitation, the researcher reassured the respondents of two things: the confidentiality and

anonymity of respondents. The researcher explained to the respondents that names and identities were not exposed and that the major purpose of the research was academic.

Therefore, right from the first day, the researcher emphasised that this research had nothing to do with personal job interests in KUMU, but rather about rethinking and coming up with a more workable model of promotional communications that could enable the university to realise its enrolment expectations as well as set marketing goals.

3.13 Ethical considerations

A letter of introduction was obtained by the researcher from the university and submitted to the KUMU administration to authenticate the purpose of the study. The researcher received an acceptance letter from KUMU permitting him to collect data, views and opinions necessary for the study. Data and all the information obtained and received were used for this study purpose and it was to be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The respondents were thanked for their time offered during data collection.

The respondents were asked not to reveal both their names and positions held to keep their identities confidential and all responses were collected, coded and analysed to come up with an overall conclusion about the study. To ensure reliability and consistency, the researcher and research assistants met at the end of every session to edit the data and appraise their performance. This formative evaluation helped to reveal deviations and likely problems and corrective measures were taken.

3.14 Conclusion

This chapter addressed the methodology utilised in the study and laid out the structure of the systematic design that guided the study. The study population, sample size and sampling methods were stipulated. The quality control approaches utilised and data collection and analysis procedures were also addressed.

Chapter four

Analysis, presentation and interpretation of findings

4.0 Introduction

This chapter concerns the response rate, background information of the respondents, presentation, analysis and discussion of research findings for each objective and the conclusion of the chapter. The presentation of findings was guided by the research objectives and questions and the results were generated to appropriately address the research questions through findings from the questionnaires.

4.1 Response rate

Table 4.1 shows a summary of the response rate as below:

Table 4.1: Response rate

	Frequency	Per cent
Completed Questionnaires	231	87.8
Non-response	32	12.2
Total	263	100.0

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The investigator successfully obtained data from 231 participants out of the targeted sample of 263 respondents. This represents an 87.8% response rate. Out of these, 87.8% filled and returned questionnaires, while 10.2% did not return their questionnaires (accounting for the non-response).

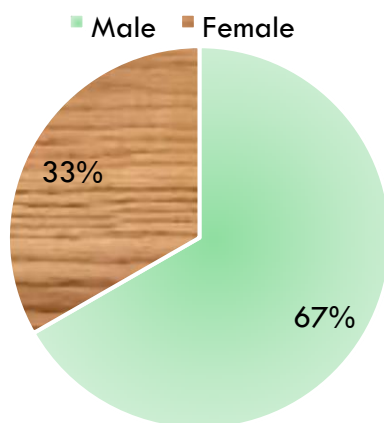
4.2 Background information of respondents

The background information of respondents analysed their gender, age, marital status and level of education of the respondents. All of these were considered essential in the study since they helped to know the characteristics of respondents that participated in the study. The results are described in figure 4.1 below.

4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

The gender of the respondents was considered one of the variables in the study and the findings are presented in figure 4.1 below:

Figure 4.1 shows the gender of the respondents



Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

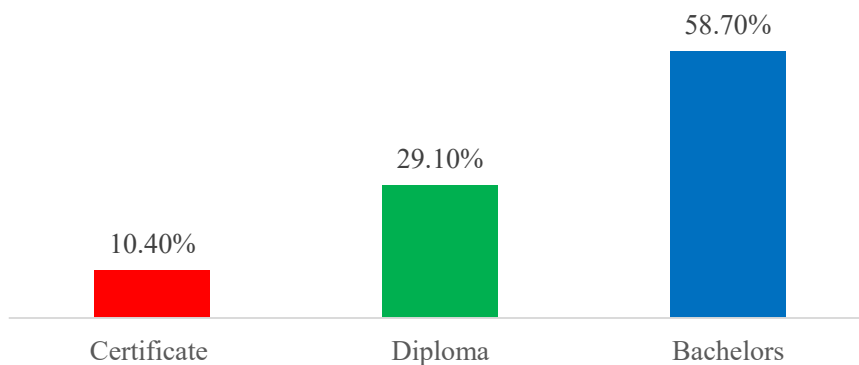
Figure 4.1: Gender of the respondents

From the findings represented in figure 4.1, 67% of the respondents were male and 33% of the respondents were female. The findings reflect that all gender was considered in the study and of course, more male students at Kumi University participated as respondents than their female counterparts.

4.2.2 Level of education

The level of education of participants was thought to affect study results. This is because participants' education highlights their ability to understand the research questions. Therefore, the results are presented in figure 4.2 below.

Figure 4.2 shows the level of education of the respondents



Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Figure 4.2: Level of education of respondents

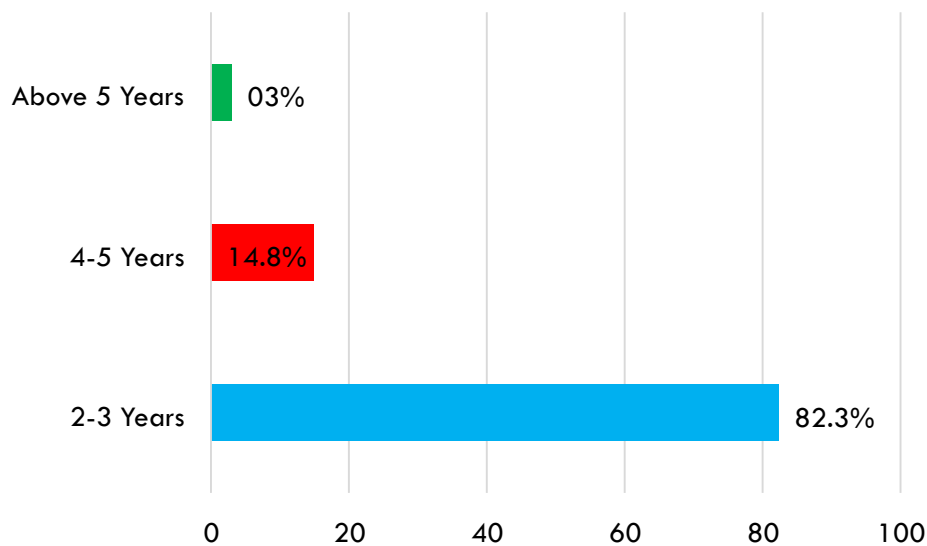
It is observed from figure 4.2 that the majority of the research participants were bachelor's respondents 58.7%. Meanwhile, 29.1% were diploma respondents and 10.4% were certificate respondents.

The above information implies that the majority of the respondents who were students were pursuing bachelor's degrees at 58.7%, followed by those who were pursuing a Diploma at 29.1% and Certificate at 10.4%.

4.2.3 Time spent at the university

The time spent at the university by the respondents was considered one of the variables in the study. It is believed that the more time one spends in a place, the more experience and knowledge of that place. And therefore, having people who have spent at least a year in the university means that they possessed pertinent information about their studies. The results are presented in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 shows the time spent at the university of the respondents



Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Figure 4.3: Time spent at the university.

From figure 4.3, the majority of the research participants (82.3%) had spent 2-3 years at the university, followed by 14.8% that had spent 4-5 years at the university and then 3% had spent 5 and above years at the university. This means that majority of the respondents had spent 2-3 years and the university and had the reliable responses the researcher was seeking.

4.3 Students' Decision to join private universities

To analyse the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities in Uganda taking Kumi University in Eastern Uganda, descriptive analysis of the students' decision to join private universities enabled the interpretation and discussion of the study findings. This revealed the current status of students' decision to join private universities in Uganda due to promotional communications as shown in table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2: Descriptive statistics of students' decision to join private universities

Students' Decision to Join private universities	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Students join the university due to online promotional communications	22.1	27.3	26.0	13.9	10.8	2.64	1.267
Students join the university due to offline promotional communications	25.1	29.9	19.5	19.5	6.1	2.52	1.230
Effective online promotional communications	34.2	38.1	19.9	6.1	1.7	2.03	0.971
Effective online promotional communications drive more students to join the university						2.81	1.269

Average Mean

2.50

Key: 4.1-5.0 = very high; 3.1-4.0 = high; 2.1-3.0 = moderate 1.1-2.0 = low; 0.00-1.0 = very low

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

To analyse the relationship between students' decision to join private universities and promotional communications, the study analysed the status of students' decision to join Kumi University. In table 4.2, the average mean rating observed was 2.50 for students' decision to join Kumi University. The highest mean rating was 2.81 where effective online promotional communications drive more students to join the university and the lowest mean rating of 2.03 was reported for students' decision to join Kumi University (i.e. deciding to join the university depends on how effective the online promotional communications are).

Thus, the study findings as portrayed in table 4.2 showed an average moderate mean from respondents towards variables on students' decision to join private universities (Mean = 2.77). The ratings of the items on students' decision to join Kumi University may infer that respondents were in moderate agreement that students' decision to join Kumi University was moderately dependent on promotional communications.

However, to analyse the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, the study subdivided promotional communications into online and offline, which formed the first two study objectives. Other factors were independently investigated. The findings helped to answer the respective related research questions.

Notably, based on the responses above, the findings indicate that participants strongly agree that students' decision to join Kumi University is dependent on other factors other than online and offline promotional communications.

4.4 Online Promotional Communications in private universities

The descriptive statistics of the findings on the status of online promotional communications are presented in table 4.3 below:

Table 4.3: Descriptive statistics of online promotional communications

Online Promotional Communications	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Advertising university programmes online	4.3	7.4	22.1	36.4	29.9	3.80	1.081
Using mainly online channels in promotional communications	7.4	10.4	16.9	48.1	17.3	3.58	1.116
Online adverts prompt students to find out more information about university programmes	8.7	9.1	17.7	30.7	33.8	3.72	1.259
More applicants as result of online promotional communications	5.6	13.4	31.6	29.0	20.3	3.45	1.125
Students get to know university programmes online	6.5	16.0	16.9	42.9	17.7	3.49	1.149
Online promotions easily make students decide to join the university	6.5	14.3	20.8	35.1	23.4	3.55	1.182
Average Mean						3.60	

Key: 4.1-5.0 = very high; 3.1-4.0 = high; 2.1-3.0 = moderate 1.1-2.0 = low; 0.00-1.0 = very low

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

To establish the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, online promotional communications were conceptualised as the dependent variable of this study and Table 4.3 represents the state of the online promotional communications.

In table 4.3, the average mean rating observed was 3.60 for online promotional communications. The highest mean rating was 3.80 i.e., the university advertises its programmes online and the lowest mean rating of 3.45 was reported for online promotional communications (i.e. the university receives more applicants as a result of online promotional communications).

Thus, the study findings as portrayed in table 4.3 showed that the research participants viewed online promotional communications as being at a high level (Mean = 3.60). The ratings of the items on online promotional communications may suggest that respondents witnessed a high level of online promotional communications at Kumi University.

4.5 Offline promotional communications in private universities

The descriptive statistics of the findings on the status of offline promotional communications are presented in table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics of offline promotional communications

Offline Promotional Communications	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Dev.
Offline promotional communications for university programmes	13.4	14.3	17.7	32.9	21.6	3.37	1.326

Offline communications attract more applicants	9.5	11.7	26.0	31.2	21.6	3.32	1.221
Offline promotional communications easily accessible to prospective students	10.4	16.5	17.3	35.5	20.3	3.26	1.267
Offline promotional communications more for enrolment	8.7	18.2	25.1	26.8	21.2	3.21	1.240
Average Mean							3.41

Key: 4.1-5.0 = very high; 3.1-4.0 = high; 2.1-3.0 = moderate 1.1-2.0 = low; 0.00-1.0 = very low

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

To analyse the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, offline promotional communications were conceptualised as the dependent variable of this study and Table 4.4 represents the state of offline promotional communications.

In table 4.4, the average mean rating observed was 3.41 for offline promotional communications. The highest mean rating was 3.37 i.e. the university advertises its programmes offline and the lowest mean rating of 3.16 was reported for online promotional communications (i.e. Offline promotional communications make students easily decide to join the university). Thus, the study findings as portrayed in table 4.4 showed that the research participants viewed offline promotional communications as being at a high level (Mean = 3.41). The ratings of the items on offline promotional communications suggest that respondents witnessed a high level of offline promotional communications at Kumi University.

4.6 Analysis of association and relationships between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

To establish the level of association between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities, as well as the relationships between online and offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities, correlation and regression analysis were conducted.

4.6.1 Correlation between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

This section provides the correlational results relating to promotional communications and students' decisions to join private universities. In the table below are the correlational results that depict the level of association between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities.

Table 4.5 shows the correlational results on promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities:

Table 4.5: Correlational results on promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

		Correlations		
		Online Promotional Communication	Offline Promotional Communications	Students' Decision to join private universities
Online Promotional Communications	Pearson Correlation	1	.229**	.522**

	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	231	231	231
Offline	Pearson		1	
Promotional	Correlation	.229**		.369**
		.000		.000
Communications	Sig. (2-tailed)			
	N	231	231	231
	Pearson	.522**	.369**	1
Students' Decision to join private	Correlation			
universities	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	231	231	231
Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

From table 4.5, there is a statistically considerable significant relationship between online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities. Changes in online promotional communications are correlated with changes in students' decisions to join private universities. In this study's first objective, Pearson's correlation was .522 for online promotional communications with a p value less than 0.05. For this reason, we can conclude that there was a strong positive correlational relationship between online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities variables.

Further findings showed that there is a statistically significant relationship between offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities. That is to say, changes in offline promotional communications are correlated with changes in

students' decisions to join private universities. As per the study's second objective, this is based on Pearson's Correlation results for the relationship between offline promotional communications ($r = .369, p < 0.05$). For this reason, we can conclude that there was a strong positive correlational relationship between offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities variables and there was a positive relationship.

The results, therefore, showed a statistically positive significant relationship between promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities. That is to say, changes in promotional communications are correlated with changes in students' decisions to join private universities. Considering the subsisting relationships, regression analyses were undertaken to establish the effect of the relationship between online and offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities.

4.6.2 Regression results for online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

To establish the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities, a regression analysis was undertaken as below:

Table 4.6: Model summary for online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.522 ^a	.273	.270	.67675

a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Promotional Communications

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Table 4.6 provides the R and adjusted R^2 values. The R value represents the simple correlation and is .522, which indicates a high degree of relationship. The R^2 indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable that's online promotional communications, can be explained by the dependent variable students' decision to join private universities. In this case, 27.3% can be explained, which is statistically a weak positive significant.

Table 4.7: ANOVA for online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

		ANOVA ^a				
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	39.354	1	39.354	85.927	.000 ^b
	Residual	104.880	229	.458		
	Total	144.234	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities
b. Predictors: (Constant), Online Promotional Communications

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The results in table 4.7 show a weak positive relationship between online promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities ($F = 85.927$), hence, an indication that online promotional communications are a significant predictor of students' decision to join private universities. In this case, the p value equals .000, which is less than the

level (.05). In answering the research question “What is the influence of online promotional communications on students’ decision to join Kumi University?” we can conclude that is a positive statistical significant influence of online promotional communications on students’ decision to join private universities.

Table 4.8: Coefficients for online promotional communications and students’ decision to join private universities

Model	Coefficients ^a					
	Unstandardized		Standardized	t	Sig.	
	Coefficients		Coefficients			
B	Std. Error	Beta				
1	(Constant)	1.949	.186		.000	
	Online Promotional Communications	.452	.049	.522	9.270	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Students’ Decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The study findings revealed that online promotional communications had $t = 9.270$; $p=0.000<0.05$), implying that a unit increase in online promotional communications affected a significant change of 0.452 units change students’ decision to join private universities, which shows a relatively weak positive influence of online promotional communications on

students' decision to join private universities.

4.6.3 Regression results for offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

To analyse the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities, a regression analysis was undertaken. This section provides the regression results for the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities.

The regression findings are as presented in table 4.9 below:

Table 4.9: Model summary for offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.369 ^a	.136	.132	.73773

a. Predictors: (Constant), Offline Promotional Communications

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Table 4.9 displays the R and R^2 values. The R value represents the simple correlation and is .369 indicating a moderate degree of correlation. The R^2 value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable 'students' decision to join private universities,' can be described by the independent variable 'offline promotional communications'. In this case, only 13.6 % can be explained, which is low but statistically positive.

Table 4.10: ANOVA for Offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model		Sum of Squares	Anova ^a df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.601	1	19.601	36.015	.000 ^b
	Residual	124.633	229	.544		
	Total	144.234	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities

b. Predictors: (Constant), Offline Promotional Communications

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Table 4.10 results in relation to the one-way, between-subjects analysis of variance were successful in revealing an existing influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities ($F = 36.015$, $p = 0.000$). In this case, the p value equalled 0.000, which was less than the level (.05).

From table 4.10, findings show that for students to decide to join private universities there is a need for management of these universities to rethink about their utilisation of effective strategies of offline promotional communications. Thus, there is some evidence that offline promotional communications explain students' decision to join private universities, though weak. This means that there is more than meets the eye, concerning the utilisation of offline promotional communications in pursuing students to decide to join private universities.

Table 4.11: Regression coefficients for offline promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	2.665	.167		15.975	.000
	Offline Promotional Communications	.278	.046	.369	6.001	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The favourable *Beta* weight of .278 (t=6.001) indicates improvement in students' decision to join private universities, meaning at a 100% improvement the aspect of offline promotional communications improves students' decision to join private universities by 27.8%, other factors held constant. This shows a weak positive significant influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities.

4.6.4 Multiple regression results of promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

To analyse the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities in Uganda taking Kumi University in Eastern Uganda as a case for this study, a multiple regression was used as shown in table 4.12.

Table 4.12: Multiple regression of promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate

1 .582^a .338 .333 .64696

a. Predictors: (Constant), Online Promotional Communications, Offline Promotional Communications

b. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

As depicted in table 4.12, The R^2 value indicates how much variation in the outcome variable is attributed to the predictor variable (promotional communications). Based on the model summary, the combined prediction of all the variables accounted for 33.8 % of the total variation in students' decision to join private universities output ($R^2 = .338$).

The analysis of variance is vital in analysing the significance of the variation brought by the explanatory variables on the response variable. It is through the ANOVA that random variability can be eliminated thus making it easier to identify significant differences as well as visualise the interactions between the variables of interest.

Table 4.13: Anova results of promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities

Model		Sum of Squares	Anova ^a df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	48.802	2	24.401	58.297	.000 ^b
	Residual	95.432	228	.419		
	Total	144.234	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities

b. Predictors: (Constant), Offline Promotional Communications, Online Promotional

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The Anova model showed that the joint prediction of all the independent variables as depicted in Table 4.13 was statistically significant ($F = 58.297, \rho = .000$ which is less than 0.05). Thus, the model was fit to predict students' decision to join private universities using online promotional communications and offline promotional communications as drivers.

Table 4.14: Coefficients of Promotional communications and Students' decision to join

Model		Coefficients ^a			t	Sig.
		Unstandardized		Standardized		
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.459	.206		7.096	.000
	Online Promotional Communications	.400	.048	.462	8.352	.000
	Offline Promotional Communications	.199	.042	.263	4.751	.000

private universities

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

As depicted in table 4.14, online promotional communications were found to have a significant effect on students' decision to join private universities (Beta value = .400) with a

Standard Error of Estimate of 0.048 at a 0.05 significance level. In other words, for each unit increase in online promotional communications, there was up to a 0.400-unit increase in students' decision to join private universities.

Similarly, offline promotional communications were also found to have a significant effect on students' decision to join private universities (Beta value = .199) with a Standard Error of Estimate of 0.042. This meant that, for each unit increase in offline promotional communications, it led to a 0.199 increase in students' decision to join private universities.

From the findings in table 4.14, online promotional communications had the highest influence on students' decision to join private universities when combined with offline promotional communications concurrently.

The findings, therefore, mean that promotional communications have a positive significant influence on students' decision to join private universities. These findings are correlated with the results of Vezi (2019) who stated that there was a positive significant influence of marketing communication on students' decision to enrol at Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges. Another study by Redmond (2017) found a positive significant influence of marketing communication on students' decisions to enrol at Durban University of Technology.

4.7 Influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities

To establish the influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities, a regression analysis was undertaken. This section provides the regression results for the influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities.

The regression findings are as presented in table 4.15 below:

Table 4.15: Model summary for influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.607 ^a	.369	.366	.63065

a. Predictors: (Constant), Influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Table 4.9 displays the R and R^2 values. The R value represents the simple correlation and is .607 indicating a moderate degree of correlation. The R^2 value indicates how much of the total variation in the dependent variable 'students' decision to join private universities,' can be described by the moderating variable 'other factors'. In this case, only 36.9 % can be explained, which is statistically positive.

Table 4.16: ANOVA for influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities

Model		Sum of Squares	ANOVA ^a df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	53.155	1	53.155	133.648	.000 ^b
	Residual	91.079	229	.398		
	Total	144.234	230			

a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join the university

b. Predictors: (Constant),

Influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

Table 4.16 results in relation to the one-way, between-subjects analysis of variance were successful in revealing an existing influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities ($F = 133.648$, $p = 0.000$). In this case, the p value equalled 0.000, which was less than the level (.05). Therefore, it can be stated that other factors possess a high-level interplay in influencing students' decision to join private universities.

Table 4.8: Coefficients for the influence of other factors and students' decision to join private universities

Model	Coefficients ^a		t	Sig.
	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	

1	(Constant)	2.147	.134		15.994	.000
	Influence of other factors					
	on students' decision to	.380	.033	.607	11.561	.000
	join private universities					
a. Dependent Variable: Students' Decision to join private universities						

Source: (Primary Data, 2022)

The study findings revealed that other factors had $t = 11.561$; $p=0.000<0.05$), implying that a unit increase in other factors affected a positive and significant change of 0.607 units change in students' decision to join private universities, which shows a strong positive significant influence of other factors on students' decision to join private universities.

4.8 Conclusion

Chapter four of this report focused on data presentation, analysis and discussion of findings on the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University. The response rate of 90% enabled the researcher to conduct reliable analysis and demographic data exhibited a balanced selection of the study sample. The details of study results for every objective of the study were presented.

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings

5.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the discussion of findings of this study is done. The findings were based on a response rate of 87.8%, which is above the recommended 80% (Fincham, 2008). The discussion was done according to the research objectives of the study, which included:

- i. To establish the extent of the influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University.
- ii. To analyse the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University.
- iii. To establish the extent of the influence of other factors on students' decision to join Kumi University.

5.1 Influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University

Answering the research question “What is the extent of influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University?”, the findings exhibited that online promotional communications were highly evident in Kumi University (Mean = 3.60). The high ratings of the items on students' decision to join the university may mean that respondents were in full agreement that there were proper online promotional communications at Kumi University.

As evident from the existing literature, studies view online advertising as a very significant portion of online promotional communications through which universities convey messages about their services (Pasquier & Villeneuve, 2018), which this study agrees with. This is because online promotional communication strategies such as SEO provide a variety of strategies including increasing links from other websites to the university's web pages, editing the content of the website and restructuring the contents of private universities' websites (Khraim 2015).

Furthermore, a study conducted by Batra and Keller (2016) suggests that with the challenges presented by new media, shifting media patterns and divided consumer attention, the optimal integration of online marketing communications takes on increasing importance. Whereas online promotional communications are being credited for effective marketing, at Kumi University, the strategy has not been so effective through long deployment as part of the attempts to increase the chances of more students joining the university.

5.2 The influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join

Kumi University

The study findings, in providing answers to the research question that “how do offline promotional communications influence students’ decision to join Kumi University.” Study results showed an average high mean from respondents towards variables on offline promotional communications (Mean = 3.41). The ratings of the items on offline promotional communications may infer that respondents were in high agreement that offline promotional communications were being conducted at Kumi University.

In the reviewed literature, Kumar et al., (2017) argues that offline promotional communications are credited for their ability to increase awareness and encourage students to apply for the courses available.

Furthermore, the final findings in the Study by Bilos et al. (2014) on “online and offline media effectiveness based on shopping centre communication objectives” indicate that offline channels contributed more in absolute numbers of customers than the online channels. This, therefore, indicates that offline promotional communications are an influential strategy in students’ decision to join a university.

5.3 The influence of other factors on students’ decision to join Kumi University

To answer the research question that concerns the influence of other factors on students’ decision to join Kumi University, a regression analysis conducted on other factors that influence students’ decision to join Kumi University and the ratings of the items were based on the participants’ responses. These factors include the parents’ influence on their children, quality of education, government policies, cultural influence, students’ peer referrals and financial conditions on students’ decision to join Kumi University. The regression analysis

was run and indicated that the factors mentioned above strongly play a vital role in influencing students' decision to join the university.

Based on the parents' decision to influence their children to join the university as one of the factors, the study findings are related to the results of Safarmamad (2019) in the study on "factors that influence students' decisions to join in initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) lyceums. In Tajikistan", the findings indicate that parents were the most influential factor that influences students' decisions to enrol in initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) lyceums in Tajikistan.

In the scholarly literature, as seen in the literature review, Slide (2018) asserts that there are many ways to choose a college: One could choose one based on where they want to live, where their parents went to school, or even where their friends plan to attend. This study concurs with Slide's submissions as these study's findings pointed in a similar direction. Additionally, Connie & Rahman (2019) quoting Jaya et al. (2013) cements this by opining that the quality of education, campus facilities and atmosphere and external and financial factors are some of the other factors that could affect the college choice decision among students.

In another study on "Factors Influencing Students' Choice of an Institution of Higher Education" by Moody (2020), the results indicate that quality performance and facilitating conditions such as classrooms, athletic facilities and academic reputation have a significant and positive relationship with behaviour in school choice. This, therefore, indicates that quality of education is one of the factors that influence students to join the university.

A study carried out on “Role of referral marketing in higher education with special reference to the private sector” by Gupta (2016) indicates that Referral marketing is being increasingly used in the marketing of services, like education where private universities are trying to woo students to pursue a variety of technical and non-technical courses offered by them. This, therefore, justifies the role of students’ peer referrals as a factor that influences students’ decision to join the university.

5.4 Conclusion

From the study findings, we can conclude that online promotional communications played a moderate role in influencing students’ decision to join Kumi University much as the strategy has been put in place by the university. It is also clear that offline promotional communications influence students’ decision to join Kumi University. Based on the findings, other factors apart from promotional communications such as parents’ influence on their children, quality of education, government policies, culture and students’ peer referrals influence students’ decision to join Kumi University. This conclusion is drawn from the discussions above where the findings of the influence of promotional communications to students’ decision to join private universities and other factors were compared to the literature review in this study. In some instances, the findings were in agreement with the literature reviewed in this study and the other findings were in centrally to the literature by various scholars reviewed in this study.

Chapter Six

Conclusions and Recommendations

6.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study, as derived from the findings on the influence of promotional communications and students' decision to join private universities in Uganda taking Kumi University as the case of study. The conclusions and recommendations have been presented below.

6.1 Conclusions

6.1.1 Influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University

From the study finding, online promotional communications were highly evident at Kumi University (Mean = 3.60). Therefore, whereas online promotional communications posed a considerable influence on the students' decision to join Kumi University, this strategy seems not to have been fully utilised in the university. The researcher, therefore, concludes that although there was a perceived significant influence of online promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, the online promotional communications channels were not being fully utilised as the means to influence students to join the university or, undertaken.

In establishing the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, the study found out that offline promotional communications were being conducted in Kumi University and offline promotional communications were being utilised in the university (Mean = 3.41). Therefore, this study's findings revealed that offline promotional communications were an important component that positively related to students' decision to join Kumi University. The university implemented this strategy to promote the university programmes. However, the programs were not intentional and were not yielding many results as evidenced by continuous low enrolment.

6.1.2 Influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University

In examining the influence of offline promotional communications on students' decision to join Kumi University, the study found out that offline promotional communications were being conducted in Kumi University and offline promotional communications were being

utilised in the University (Mean = 3.41). Therefore, this study's findings revealed that offline promotional communications were an important component that positively related to students' decision to join Kumi University. The University implemented this strategy to promote the University programmes.

6.1.3 The role of other factors in students' decision to join Kumi University

The findings of this study showed that other factors played a vital role in influencing students' decision to join the university. From the findings, for example parents, former students, current students, the popularity of the university, quality of education offered were among the key factors that were found to influence students' decision to join Kumi University.

Therefore, for Kumi University, the administration should emphasise other factors such as quality of education since the participants agreed that other factors apart from promotional communications such as parents influencing their children influence the students' decision to join Kumi University. With consideration of other factors apart from promotional communication, the university will realise its major source of attracting students to join and put more emphasis on such sources that would enable an increase in the numbers of students that join the university in its intakes.

6.2 Recommendations

From the study findings, the researcher fronted the following recommendations:

- i. First and foremost, the researcher recommends the university adopt and effectively utilise the online promotional communications strategy. Since there is now the availability of online platforms, which many of the university prospective students interact with most of these platforms such as Facebook, YouTube and the Website and therefore the university can effectively promote its programmes by use of the online

promotional communications channels. But first, the university website should be lively and up to date, as well as its Facebook pages.

- ii. The university should set up a vibrant department of marketing that will plan and execute various promotional communications on the university programmes that would enable students to access these programmes online and in other forms of communications to influence more students that would join the university.
- iii. Further, the university should run an assessment on various strategies used to influence students to join the university. The survey should be carried out on students to discover the best strategy the university can use to increase the number of students in each of its intakes.
- iv. The university should adopt a Marketing Information System to address the university's critical need for students' enrolment. The use of this system will address the needs of the dynamics and the competition posed by other universities. This will also generate the student leads by capturing the prospective students' contacts for follow-ups in persuasion to join Kumi University. A highly recommended system is the university Marketing System (UMS) which would work on university brand management, media outreach and student lead generation.

6.3 Areas for further research

Since in this study the researcher focused on promotional communications and their influence on students' decision to join a university, many other factors were not directly

investigated. As a result, the researcher suggests further research be done on the role of parents in influencing their children to join private universities in Uganda; the impact of proximity on students' decision to join a university. Alternatively, a study can be undertaken on determinants of students' choice of either a private or a public university in Uganda and the influence of financial conditions on the student prospects of joining higher education in Uganda.

Given that the study was centred on Kumi University, many other private universities were not involved. Therefore, a similar study can be conducted on the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join universities, taking at least five private universities in Uganda such as Uganda Christian University, LivingStone International University, ISBAT University and Uganda Martyrs University. This will help generate more generalizable insights regarding the state of affairs in Uganda's private universities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Krejcie & Morgan (1970) Sampling Table

Educational and Psychological Measurement

Table for Determining Sample Size from a Given Population

N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	220	140	1200	291
15	14	230	144	1300	297
20	19	240	148	1400	302
25	24	250	152	1500	306
30	28	260	155	1600	310
35	32	270	159	1700	313
40	36	280	162	1800	317
45	40	290	165	1900	320
50	44	300	168	2000	322
55	48	320	175	2200	327
60	52	340	181	2400	331
65	56	360	186	2600	335
70	59	380	191	2800	338
75	63	400	198	3000	341
80	66	420	201	2500	346
85	70	440	205	4000	351
90	73	460	210	4500	354
95	76	480	214	5000	357
100	80	500	217	6000	361

110	86	550	226	7000	364
120	92	600	234	8000	367
130	97	650	242	9000	368
140	103	700	248	10000	370
150	108	750	254	15000	375
160	113	800	260	20000	377
170	118	850	265	30000	379
180	123	900	269	40000	380
190	127	950	274	50000	381
200	132	1000	278	75000	382
210	136	1100	285	100000	384

Note: N = population size

S = sample size

**Educational and Psychological Measurement, Krejcie & Morgan (1970).*

Appendix II: Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

As part of the postgraduate degree study requirement, Khaukha John, a student of Uganda Christian University (UCU), is researching the influence of promotional communications on students' decision to join private universities taking Kumi University in Eastern Uganda as a case for this study. I therefore kindly ask for your cooperation in this study by answering the questions in this questionnaire which will help me to get the information needed.

This research is purely for academic purposes and the information obtained from you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

Please, take a few minutes of your time and answer the questions in the spaces provided.

Section a: bio-data

1. Please tick in the box of your choice.

S/N	Variable	Response
1.	Gender	Male <input type="checkbox"/> female <input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Level of Education	Certificate <input type="checkbox"/> Diploma <input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor's <input type="checkbox"/> Master <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> PhD Other (please specify) ... <input style="width: 150px;" type="text"/>
3.	Time Spent at the University	0-1 Year <input type="checkbox"/> 2-3 Years <input type="checkbox"/> 4-5 Year <input type="checkbox"/> s <input type="checkbox"/> Above 5 Years <input type="checkbox"/>

Section b: online promotional communications

1. Please tick the appropriate box depending on your level of agreement or disagreement as arranged in the 5 Likert Scale:

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree

NO.	Promotional communications	Rankings				
		5	4	3	2	1
	Online Promotional Communications					
1	The university programmes are advertised through online promotional communications					
2	The university uses mainly online channels in promotional communications					
3	Online adverts prompt students to find out more information about university programmes					
4	The university gets more applicants as a result of online promotional communications					
5	Students who join the university get to know its programmes online					
6	Online promotions have made students' decision to join the university easier					

	Offline Promotional Communications	5	4	3	2	1
--	-------------------------------------------	---	---	---	---	---

1	The university conducts offline promotional communications for its programmes					
2	Offline communications attract more applicants for the different university programmes					
3	Offline promotional communications are easily accessed by prospective students					
4	Offline promotional communications are more effective in getting more students enrolled on the university courses					
5	Through offline promotional communications, students easily make decisions to join the university					

Section c: students' decision to join private universities.

NO.	Students' Decision to Join private universities	Rankings				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Students who join the university do so as a result of online promotional communications					
2	Offline promotional communications have made many students decide to join the university					
3	Deciding to join the university depends on how effective the online promotional communications are					
4	Effective online promotional communications drive more students to join the university					

Section c: students' decision to join private universities.

NO.	Students' Decision to Join private universities	Rankings				
		5	4	3	2	1
1	Students who join the university do so as a result of online promotional communications					
2	Offline promotional communications have made many students decide to join the university					
3	Deciding to join the university depends on how effective the online promotional communications are					
4	Effective online promotional communications drive more students to join the university					
	Other Factors that influence Students' Decision to Join Private Universities					
5	Students' decision to join the university is majorly due to other factors other than online and offline promotional communications					

Thank you for participating in this study

Appendix iv: Research Letter



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7th December, 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTORY LETTER FOR KHAUKHA JOHN

Warm greetings from Uganda Christian University!

This serves to introduce the above named; **Khaukha John**, as our student registered number **RS19M54/025** pursuing a Masters degree of Arts and Strategic Communication.

John is conducting a research as a requirement for the award of the above mentioned degree entitled; *Promotional Communications and Students' decision to Join Private Universities: a Case Study of Kumi University*.

He has fulfilled all clearance requirements such as getting Research Ethics Approval from UCUREC which is accredited and regulated by Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST).

Any assistance given to him to achieving this goal will be highly welcome.

Thank you so much.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. Peter Ubomba-Jaswa
Head, Research, Grants & Publications
Uganda Christian University
pubombajaswa.ucu.ac.ug



cc. Executive Secretary, Uganda National Council Science & Technology

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SCHOOL OF RESEARCH & POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

DISSERTATION CORRECTION COMPLIANCE REPORT BY THE CANDIDATE (POST VIVA FORM)

Date: 15th April, 2024

Name of Candidate: John Khaukha Reg. No: Reg. No: RS19M42/040

Title of Dissertation: Promotional Communications and Students' Decision to Join Private Universities: A Case Study of Kumi University

SN	COMMENTS BY EXTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	New chapters usually begin on a separate page, but not always. The font in the body of the document does not match the font used for page numbers. The abstract is complete and reflects what is reported in the study for the most part.	This was taken care of and corrections were made	All chapters
	The research problem is very well stated on page 5 of the document. There is quite a bit of literature covered in the introduction that is not needed to establish the research problem, the purpose and objectives of the study, the research question(s) or hypothesis (/es), and the theoretical/conceptual framework. I	Thank you. This was noted.	Page 5 Page 1-4

<p>think it would be enough to describe the five-stage process model as a theoretical framework to build up to the research questions.</p> <p>Confusingly, another model of decision making (citing Blackwell et al.) is introduced on page 9, and this can either be moved to the literature review or deleted entirely.</p> <p>The description of operational terms is only marginally useful (p. 10) and would be better suited for the methodology section.</p>	<p>This formed the theoretical background.</p> <p>This is required as per the University format.</p>	<p>Page 9</p>
<p>The methodology employed cannot provide insight into those research questions.</p> <p>First, the author explicitly states that the research design is descriptive in nature but also relies on explicit causal language throughout the paper. These attributes are opposing and cannot mesh together.</p> <p>Second, the survey questions used in the study do not in fact reflect the objectives of the paper. The author has thus far presented two main concepts: students' decisions to join a private university and the use of online and offline promotional communications. The study is not able to assess students' decisions to join a university because the population under study are all students at the university. In other words, there is no variability in terms of making a "yes" decision and making a "no" decision. In order to investigate decision making as it is described here, the study would need to include students who decided NOT to attend the private university.</p> <p>The study also does not assess promotional communications. The survey questions ask students to report their perceptions of university communications but not the volume or quality of those communications per se. There are two alternatives here: an assessment of promotional communications could be carried out via content analysis and then related to student decisions, or the focus could instead be on students' levels of attention to promotional communications and how that relates to their</p>	<p>This was noted.</p> <p>This was addressed.</p> <p>The comments suggest changing the research tools to address those students who did not join the university, which is beyond the study scope. The study did not investigate the students' decision "not" to join the university. Therefore, no action was taken.</p> <p>The examiner suggests going qualitative, but the study is quantitative. The examiner is also suggesting new study objectives.</p>	<p>Pages 25-32, addressed</p>

	<p>decision making.</p> <p>All of this said, what can the data collected for this study be used for? The best-case scenario is shifting the focus on students’ perceptions of promotional communications and the relationship between those communications and students’ decisions. This focus will have less practical utility for making recommendations to the university, but it would be a more rigorous use of the data in a valid way.</p> <p>The validity of measured variables is assess with something called the CVI. I’ m not familiar with this, so more explanation would be useful.</p> <p>The measurement reliability of the variables seems to have been assessed on all variables at the same time. This is not a correct approach. The reliability should be assessed for online promotional communications, for example, and then again for offline.</p>	<p>This was taken into consideration.</p> <p>CVI is Content Validity Index. This is shown in the list of Acronyms.</p> <p>This was noted.</p>	
2	<p>The author reports descriptive statistics of all variables with summary statistics and frequency distributions. This is a good use of data transparency and enhances the credibility of the author as a social scientist.</p> <p>The descriptions of means for online and offline communications suggests that the author could use a t-test to see if one or the other is viewed as more effective.</p> <p>I am not sure how meaningful the correlations are. At the very least, the variables should be labeled in a more accurate way. Rather than “online promotional communications” the variable would be better described as “student perceptions of promotional communication effectiveness.” So here we are inspecting a correlation table that relates “student perceptions of promotional communication effectiveness” and “student perceptions of students’ enrollment decisions based on promotional communications.” What these correlations do</p>	<p>Comments were acknowledged, but the correlations and regressions were not eliminated from the study.</p>	Page 33-55


	<p>NOT show is how promotional communications related directly to student decisions.</p> <p>The use of correlations and regressions in this study is redundant. I would recommend eliminating the regression analysis unless it builds to a regression that accounts for online and offline communications in addition to other factors. However, the “other factors” variable needs to be split into multiple variables representing distinct concepts. It is not valid to simply combine “other factors” into a single variable, which appears to have been done here.</p>		
3	<p>Given my comments on the previous sections, this section would need to be revised along these lines:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish the extent to which students perceive online promotional communications as effective on students’ decisions to join university based on promotional communications. 2. To analyze the relationships between student perceptions of effective offline promotional communication and students’ decisions related to promotional communications. 3. To establish the extent of the influence of other factors on student perceptions of students’ decisions related to promotional communications. 	<p>The examiner introduced new study objectives which this study did not intend to investigate. The suggestions were acknowledged. This study was purely quantitative and the external examiner is introducing the research to qualitative research approach.</p>	Page 56
4	<p>Section 6.1 needs to be shortened considerably. Much of this information is redundant with the previous chapter. Most of the attention here should be paid to recommendations and, in my opinion, tying back the findings to the literature review. As stated earlier, the recommendations are not very sound considering the flawed methodology and need to be revised. The areas for further research is a good start, but it really needs to reflect how the study contributes to the literature.</p>	<p>This was adjusted accordingly.</p>	Page 61-64

5	Aside from not starting on a new page, the references and appendices are complete, well-formatted, and without flaw.	This was acknowledged with thanks	Page 65-83, I-VII
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SN	COMMENTS BY INTERNAL EXAMINER	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	On the Cover page, letters are not capitalized in the APA format	The corrections were made as per the comments by the internal examiner.	Cover page
2	All headlines should never be capitalized in the APA format	The headlines were changed from upper to lower case.	Entire thesis
3	All paragraphs have to be indented apart from the abstract	This issue was addressed by the researcher and made the corrections as it was guided by the comments of the internal examiner.	Entire thesis
4	In the references, doi should not be underlined	Underlines were removed as the internal examiner guided.	Page 65-83
5	Do grammar checks in your book.	This was taken care of.	

SN	COMMENTS BY VIVA VOCE PANNEL	ACTION TAKEN	INDICATOR
1	Ensure sources of extra information are clear	This has been addressed throughout the entire thesis.	Entire thesis
2	Rationalize inclusion of different studies.	This has been done.	Entire thesis

John Khaukha
Candidate's Name


Signature

...Professor James Kiwanuka-Tondo
Supervisor's Name

..........
Signature