

# Course completion among the students in Public and Private Universities in Uganda.

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**Abstract:** *The study was on course completion among students in public and private universities in Uganda. It was conducted in 6 public and private universities in Uganda while balancing 3 regions: Central, Western and Eastern. The study was Qualitative in nature and used a Positivism philosophy backed with Health Belief Model (HBM) by Rosen stock, supported by the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which was proposed in 1975 by Martin Fishbein. Students perform behavior having reasoned about the positive and negative consequences. Unit of analysis was university students. The study used a sample size of 390 participants; 62 respondents (students) and 18 informants (teaching & non-teaching staff). The study found out: Course completion among students is low. According to administrators, most of the students get involved in risky behaviors expecting to enjoy life and experience what they have been foregoing when still under strict environment of parents and teachers. Many students don't think about negative consequences of being involved in risky behaviors. Students are suffering from consequences of their behaviors. Most of the students get involved in serious acts expecting to enjoy life and experience what they have been foregoing when still under strict environment of parents and teachers. The study recommended that there should be flexibility when handling students. Institutions should avail health services in universities because most of the students have health services. Confidentiality should be maintained at the highest order. Religious leaders should come down, physically or online, to the students to provide counseling services because most of the students have lost hopes.*

**Keywords:** Course completion, students, universities.

## Background:

In Uganda, the state of higher education in Uganda through the 2018/19 higher education publication, the total number of HEIs increased by four up from 233 in 2017/18 to 237 in 2018/19, Public Universities remained 9, Private Universities remained 44; Other Degree Awarding Institutions remained 10 and Other Tertiary Institutions increased by four from 172 to 176 (UNCHE, 20218). In 2018/19 total student enrolment increased from 261,087 to 275,254 representing a significant increase of 5.43%. Universities still take the highest number of registered students at 192,346. There was a slight drop in GER in Uganda from 6.85% in 2017/18 to 6.81 in 2018/19 representing 0.58%. In the year 2018/19, NCHE received a total of 1,206 programs, reviewed 1,141 and accredited 335 representing 29.4% (UNCHE, 20218).

The official school going age for Post-secondary is 19-24 years (Education Monograph Report, 2018). Overall only 11% of 3,858,753 of the population aged 22-25years completed tertiary education and higher. Dis-aggregation by gender shows that the course completions for males (11.3% of 1,749,786) was more than for the females (10.7% of 2,108,967) of the same age group (Education Monograph Report, 2017). Likewise, tertiary education course completions for urban (19% of 3,858,753) was far higher than for the rural (7% of 3,858,753) - (Education Monograph Report, 2018). By region, the rates for Kampala (24%) was the highest and for Karamoja (6.2 % Of 3,858,753) was the lowest among all the regions. Generally, the net tertiary education for population 22-25 is low (Education Monograph Report, 2017). When all the enrolled students complete their courses, it is assumed, they will be productive in the multi-innovative institutions rather than remaining consumers while staying long at the university. One asks himself why the course completion rates are low. Hence, the study intended to investigate course completion among students in public and private universities in Uganda.

## Findings:

The researcher interviewed key informants regarding course completion. Most of the answers were in agreement that course completion among students is low. According to administrators, most of the students get involved in risky behaviors expecting to enjoy life and experience what they have been foregoing when still under strict environment of parents and teachers. Many students don't think about negative consequences of being involved in risky behaviors. Most of them pretended to know everything about any risky behavior involved in. They thought that there is nothing they don't know concerning behaviors. According to interview with non-teaching staff, students are suffering from consequences of their behaviors. This is evidenced by most of their talks, when they are in their small groups where they trust each other; most of their stories were about youth livelihood. They were always heard sharing their past experience. Most of the students got involved in serious acts expecting to enjoy life and experience what they have been foregoing when still under strict environment of parents and teachers. Generally, as far as course completion is concerned, teaching staff on being interviewed, they narrated that many students don't mind about their course completion. To them, they have

already achieved their dreams by being at the university. Living a university life – being free from the outside of elders who could be restricted of their movements, wordings and others acts is living a heavenly world. Enjoying life as they term it.

**Recommendations:**

There should be flexibility when handling students. Being too strict brings students play expected behavior. Institutions should avail health services in universities because most of the students have health services. Confidentiality should be maintained at the highest order such that students build confidence when indeed of any services in university campuses. Religious leaders should come down, physically or online, to the students to provide counseling services because most of the students have lost hopes. Some are haunted, stressed, depressed and they don't trust any person. These students live a negligence and careless life. With religious intervention, such students can start minding about their wellbeing and complete their courses successfully.

**References:**

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