School Branding and Student Enrolment in Private Secondary Schools in Iganga Municipality, Uganda

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Abstract

The study examined the relationship between school branding and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality guided by three specific objectives seeking to examine the relationship between 1) school image 2) school culture and 3) customer care, and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A sample of 100 student leaders, 3 head teachers and 33 academic heads of department was selected using simple random sampling and census inquiry respectively. Data collection was by use of a closed-ended Likert type questionnaire, interview guide and focus group discussion guide. Quantitative data was analysed using correlation and multiple regression as well as thematic content analysis for qualitative data. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients obtained for the study hypotheses were positive and statistically significant; school image and student enrolment (r= .290, p <003), school culture and student enrolment (r= .462, p <0.000) and customer care and student enrolment (r= .358, p <0.000). Overall, school branding indicates a positive weak effect on student enrolment (R^2 = .247, p <.000). It was concluded that school branding has a weak relationship with student enrolment. The study recommends piloting of strategies beforehand, improved information flow, government intervention in support of inclusive education, instituting a culture of strategic planning, improved responsiveness and creation of conducive learning climate. Further research is proposed on the same topic at national level as well as considering other factors influencing student enrolment since school branding only contributes 24.7%.

Keywords: branding, enrolment, school image, school culture, customer care

World over, student enrolment has remained a very big challenge to all education institutions, levels notwithstanding with government and private institutions both falling victim (Witte, 2000). It should however be noted that the survival of all educational institutions in the world entirely depends on

student enrolment. In Philippines, the "2013 Basic Education Act" which brought in free education in 12 elementary and secondary education cycles clearly targeted improved enrolment in the country (Macha, Mackie & Magaziner, 2018). In Kenya, after privatization and liberalization of education (1980 – 1990), the period that followed after 2000 was characterized by direct tuition payment and enrolment of the privately sponsored students in public and private institutions (Jowi et al. 2017). In Uganda, the government is committing itself to providing free education via Universal Secondary Education (USE) and Universal Post Ordinary Level Education and Training (UPOLET) participating schools. However, it was observed that there was a big number of students who dropped out due to different reasons (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2012). Similarly, the national schools' inspection report, Ministry of Education and Sports (2018) clearly showed declining enrolment in both government and private secondary schools in the country.

      In Iganga municipality, the situation has kept on worsening with some schools closing business (Iganga Municipality Education Quarterly Report, 2016). Indeed, basing on the Education quarterly report released every after Primary Leaving Examinations and Uganda Certificate of Education exams every year, it is clearly indicated that the number in secondary schools has kept on reducing year after year yet those completing primary level have kept on increasing (Iganga Municipality Education Quarterly Report March, 2017 & March, 2018). This situation has become more pronounced with private secondary schools which only look at contributions in form of school dues for their survival. The enrolment in ten private secondary schools for the period between 2014 and 2018 was in three categories; progressive enrolment especially in new schools and fluctuating in old schools while others had purely declining enrolment. First and second categories were schools which have existed for a good number of years while the last category was experienced by schools which have existed for five years and less. As a result, schools have tried to adopt several avenues to avert the situation. School branding such as school image, school culture and customer care packages have been sought by management of old private secondary schools to be one of the remedies to student enrolment. Many of them have carried out branding and re-branding strategies but are still grappling with low and fluctuating enrolment.

Problem Statement

      Student enrolment at all levels in the education sector is expected to be proportional to the available school resources (Ministry of Education and Sports Report, 2014). It should however be noted that the situation in private secondary schools is totally different. The new schools have steady enrolment, others have fluctuating enrolment while one school is completely closing business due to declining enrolment (Iganga municipality Annual Education Inspection Report 2018). School management committees have tried to deal with the situation through use of word of mouth, improving the quality of services and ranking, harmonizing school dues with stakeholders' abilities, offering a variety of

disciplines, opening up doors for both day and boarding students, constructing good school buildings, strategically establishing them in attractive places and above all coming up with re-branding strategies to improve on the school image, school culture and customer care but all in vain. The researchers were puzzled as to why student enrolment has remained low despite efforts at branding and re-branding in schools and thus, set out to examine the relationship between school branding and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality, Iganga District guided by four key objectives which gave rise to four null hypotheses thus:

1. There is no statistically significant relationship between school image and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality.
2. There is no statistically significant relationship between school culture and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality.
3. There is no statistically significant relationship between school customer care and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality.
4. There is no significant contribution of school branding to student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality.

Issuing from the above premise, therefore, a conceptual framework was developed to guide the study basing on information from the work of Chang (2014). In this case, the independent variable is school branding operationalized in terms of school image, school culture and school customer care. The component of dependent variable is student enrolment operationalized as number of students admitted and registered at a given period of time per level. While intervening variables were school fees structure, physical structures and school type. The researchers assumed that the independent and intervening variables had causal relationship and effect on the dependent variable. The justification of the study is derived from the fact that Iganga Municipality has 10 private secondary schools which have existed for over ten years but with an enrolment that has been fluctuating for years especially between 2014 and 2018 (the enrolment in school A had the following picture; 2014 (776), 2015 (674), 2016 (734), 2017 (696) and 2018 (784), school B was as follows; 2014 (914), 2015 (1046), 2016 (976), 2017 (952) and 2018 (1052) whereas school C had the following picture; 2014 had 1013, 2015 (1287), 2016 (1134), 2017 (1269) and 2018 (1207) despite branding and re-branding initiatives taken by school management committees. Moreover, the study is expected to help the Ministry of Education and Sports and the municipal and district authorities in Iganga as well as other parts of the world in regulating enrolment of students in senior one and five basing on available resources and infrastructure in schools.

Review of Related Literature

Literature was reviewed in relation to the specific objectives of the study. A plethora of studies in relation to school image and student enrolment can be encountered. Temple (2006) studied "Brand Related Factors Influencing Students' Choice in Higher Education" focusing on various elements like quality and equality, positioning, communication, long term perspective and internal marketing and outlined the elements of image without clearly showing how they influence enrolment while Belfield and Levin (2009) studied market reforms in education stating that a good number of aspects influence parents and students to choose schools, including but not limited to visibility, efficiency and quality of the services and above all the matching of the community demands with the supply of the school. The findings corroborate those of Chubb and Moe (1988), who asserted that due to ever increasing number of private schools, proprietors need to invest more in marketing so as to remain in business. Meanwhile, Shahaida, Rajashekar and Nargundkr (2009) revealed that Asians are more connected to schools in line with their family beliefs, traditions and norms which are totally different to Western people. This meant that ethical considerations and collectiveness is much considered by Indians when choosing schools for their children unlike Europeans who tend to be individualistic in nature (Chen, 2008). Several studies have been conducted on image and increased sales in business world for example Hsieh, Nickerson and Zenger (2007) studied opportunity discovery, problem solving and a theory of entrepreneurial firm in management studies revealing that appropriate package designs like label, packing cans, quality products as well as graphic designs increase sales. This was confirmed by DiMartino and Jessen (2014) who asserted that unique label, packing can, and product designs attract more customers in the long run. Similarly, Ahuja and Lampert (2001) stated that entrepreneurs need to come up with clear uniqueness of the commodity for increased sales. When a school packages itself with unique products, it is likely to attract students.

School culture is a powerful but invisible force that can either support continuous improvement of teaching-learning or thwart it thus making it positive or negative (Napompech, 2011). The culture painted on the school determines its enrolment appeal. In traditional public schools in Colorado, there is a seemingly low enrolment of students (Winters, 2015) as students hate the way dispensation of learning is done. That is why e-learning is the way to go in the modern world (Barbour & Reeves, 2009). The authors stated that as early as 2006, physical attendance in schools was no longer necessary in the computer era which was later confirmed by Finn and Fairchild (2012) who concluded that there was need for educational reforms for the digital era. On the other hand, Ahn and McEachin (2017) studied student enrolment patterns and achievement in Ohio's online charter schools revealing that enrolment in e-schools was steadily increasing especially with students from good economic status and those interested in part-time schooling and at the same time indicated enrolment

decline on the side of their counterparts who are still stuck in the old educational paradigm. Also, Brunsma and Rockquemore (1998) concluded that symbols of identification in schools minimize misdemeanours, promotes the sense of belonging and togetherness which are very vital in academic endeavours. Alan, Cheung, Vance and Man (2016) revealed that during the time of transformation, schools in both levels adopted the use of local language and practical skills in line with their cultural norms and traditions. Similarly, Chen, Xu, Zhao and Zhang (2017) concluded that in China, school proximity, and uniformity in culture such as language contributes to student enrolment. Teske, Fitzpatrick and Kaplan (2007), Witte, Wolf, Cowen, Fleming and Lucas-Mclean (2008) as well as Greene and Marsh (2009) stated that moral aspect as a culture of schools is becoming a key element in the choice of the parents.

Literature on customer care is abundant worldwide since education is regarded as a service to customers such as parents and students (Sferle, Gârdan, Gudei & Geangu, 2012). Therefore, it is better to link customer care with the enrolment of students in schools since this has an implication on perception of the school environment among the stakeholders including parents, students and well-wishers (Leko-Šimić & Štimac 2012). Parents and guardians in general always look for the best possible education for their children, and private education sector like any business would be expected to provide better services than government which is non-profit oriented (Diaconu & Amalia, 2011; Sebolao & Mburu, 2017). Accordingly, customer care considers customer needs and expectation in services development focusing on the welfare of customers and the society at large (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Therefore, customer care would focus on aspects that improve the students' learning environment such as provision of medical care, food, support as well as other aspects that enhance the bond between the student, teachers, parents and school administrators (Arsen & Ni, 2012). To this end, customer care in a secondary school is a branding aspect for the school i.e. promise, business values, personality and the way they communicate educational services to their customers (Loeb & Kasman, 2013). There is no gain saying that cost-sharing is an element of customer care practiced by private schools, world over as opined by Sampaio (2015). But Sebolao and Mburu (2017) distinctively revealed that private secondary schools were using high resource-based marketing approach with less competitive approach to ensure that they increase their schools' enrolment. Generally, school administration needs to enjoin teachers and the rest of the school staff to be able to take care of the students' welfare (Mutegi, 2015). Since the studies consulted never brought out the connection between school branding and student enrolment in terms of specific aspects like school culture, school image and customer care, coupled with an acute lack of studies conducted in a field setting yet the prevalent ones obtain in the developed world, made the current study a sine qua non.

Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design with both quantitative and qualitative approaches since it sought to examine the relationship between school branding and student enrolment. The qualitative approach sought to aid triangulation of findings through exploration of in-depth views of respondents. The total population of the study was one hundred thirty-five student leaders (135)**,** thirty-three (33) academic departmental heads and three (3) head teachers with a sample size of one hundred students (100) students, thirty-three (33) academic departmental heads and three (3) head teachers totalling to 136 respondents selected using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table in the case of student leaders. Accordingly, simple random sampling (student leaders), purposive sampling (the three private schools) and census inquiry (academic heads of department and head teachers) were used in the sampling process. Data was collected through, questionnaires, focus group discussion and Interview guide. The content validity index was 0.865 obtained through expert judgment. The Cronbach co-efficient index for reliability was 0.77 computed after piloting the instrument. Quantitative data was analysed using SPSS version 22.0 to obtain descriptive statistics including percentages, frequencies for variables like age, gender and parameters of the study. To test the hypotheses, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed. Further, multiple regression analysis was used to test the predictive ability of school branding on student enrolment. Qualitative data was transcribed verbatim, analysed using the thematic and content analysis method and triangulated with quantitative data based on objectives. Meanwhile, ethical issues in the shape voluntary participation, honesty with professional colleagues, right to privacy, gender sensitivity, bias, politeness, respect of the research site, respect of norms of indigenous cultures as well as originality were attended to through disclosure of the research purpose, seeking informed consent, protecting identity of respondents, conducting interviews from respondents' places of choice, plagiarism check and promising respondents access to the study findings once completed.

Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented in line with the major research objectives that underpinned the study. The study first drew on demographic characteristics of respondents, then presented descriptive findings on student enrolment, school image, school culture, customer care and later results of the correlation analysis for each of the elements of school branding against student enrolment. Then, multiple regression analysis results for the three elements (school image, school culture and customer care) on student are present. For each section however, appropriate qualitative information from interviews is presented. The demographic variables explored included gender, age, religion, class and leadership experience. As far as gender is concerned, 45 (45%) respondents were male while 55 (55%) were female. In terms of age, 18 (18%) were in age group 10 -15, 71 (71%) were in age group 16 -20, while 9 (9%) were in age

group 21 -25 and 2 (2%) had 26 years and above. Regarding religion, 47 (47%) were Muslims, 5 (5%) were Catholics, 19 (19%) were Protestants, while 29 (29%) were Born-again. There were no Advent respondents. As per class, 2 (2%) were from S.1, 12 (12%) from S.2, 20 (20%) from S.3, 44 (44%) from S.4, 10 (10%) from S.5 and 12 (12%) were from S.6. and in terms of leadership experience, 20 (20%) had 1 year, 22 (22%) had 2 years while 35 (35%) had 3 years, 23 (23%) had 4 years-experience. Tannenbaum, Greaves and Graham (2016), Mwanje (2010), Mazur and Bargłowski (2010), Basaza (2016), and Lutwama (2009), believe that demographic characteristics of respondents are critical to understanding dimensions of research findings and cannot be underestimated as a result.

Student Enrolment in Private Secondary Schools

The data obtained to ascertain the status of student enrolment was analysed using frequencies and percentages of responses. The responses were in line with the key elements of student enrolment as follows: increment in student admission in school, student enrolment in the school matching with available classrooms, student enrolment in the school tallying with available beds in the dormitories, the school having enough teachers in every department, the current student number being compatible with school's expected intake, student number being appropriate to the facilities available in the school library and student number matching with equipment in this school science laboratories. From the findings, there is increased enrolment felt by even students as represented by the 72% agreement among respondents. Education managers were prepared for increased enrolment and students are comfortable with classroom facilities since the biggest percentage of responses were in agreement (73%). Equally, education managers are well prepared with the boarding section as 66% of the respondents agreed that student enrolment tallies with available beds in the dormitories. But worth noting is the fact that schools are still struggling with the challenge of teacher-student ratio and students are aware of this challenge as only 55% agreed to the school having enough teachers in every department yet students are not aware of school plans. When asked whether the current student number was compatible with school's expected intake, a paltry 25% answered in affirmative. Equally, schools generally are not doing well in terms of library facilities due to average responses in agreement with the item (56%). The findings also indicate that educational managers need to aid practical subjects by equipping science laboratories with necessary equipment and chemicals to match the growing enrolment. This is because only 56% of respondents agreed that student numbers match the equipment in science laboratories. The major implication of the findings is that students are aware of the state of the facilities in their respective schools. This calls for steadfastness on the part of school authorities in order to satisfy the students. The quantitative argument was supplemented by qualitative data where all the key informants admitted overloading teachers under the disguise of preferring full time to part time staff. From the academic heads of department, one respondent stated that: *"Student*

number has increased but teachers in the department are still the same. Secondly, in order to improve our performance, we have now three sets of exams to mark every time alongside continuous assessment in classes."

Relationship between School Image and Student Enrolment in Private Secondary Schools in Iganga Municipality

Research objective one sought to examine the relationship between school image and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. The study first drew on the responses based on how issues of school image are handled in the schools studied. Consequently, the scores on all responses was used to compute the magnitude and direction of association to student enrolment. The responses were reflected in the key elements of school image as follows: the school having a website, the school having a clearly stated mission, the school offering vocational studies, the school being involved in community services, the school signposts being displayed in strategic positions, the school having branded items like vehicles, pens and books, as well as school fliers and brochures being displayed in strategic places. The findings indicate that schools have websites and even students are aware as reflected in the 78% agreement level among respondents. The findings also show that the school mission is visible and clearly stated as signified by the 88% agreement level. The study findings indicate that vocational studies are to a large extent offered in the schools as reflected in the 61% agreement from respondents. But generally, schools were limited by lack of good will as well as the belief that such vocational studies are meant for slow learners and those with no hope in academic fields. When asked whether the school is involved in community services, an overwhelming 96% agreement shows that schools are commendable in this aspect. The finding also signifies that the students know that the school is fully involved in community activities meaning information exposure. Basing on the findings, it is clear that private secondary schools put their signposts in strategic places and are visible to stakeholders particularly learners and parents as evidenced by the 84% agreement level. Whilst, schools have failed to own branded items like vehicles, pens and books as only 39% of the respondents agreed to the statement. Basing on the findings, it's very evident that fliers and brochures of different schools are not displayed in the strategic places as only 12% of the respondents agreed with the statement.

In order to test the magnitude and association of independent variable with the dependent variable, the researchers first transformed all the elements of school image and student enrolment before being analysed using bivariate correlation as presented in Table 1 which shows that there is a positive weak significant relationship between school image and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. From the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient analysis, the result obtained was (r =.290, p = .003). This implies that, the null hypothesis earlier on set is rejected. The researchers, therefore, accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between school image and student enrolment. The

findings of the current study are consistent with those of DiMartino and Jessen (2014), Hsieh et al. (2007), Chubb and Moe (1988), Chang (2014), Belfield and Levin (2009) and Temple (2006) who opine that school image commands a

Table 1

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between School Image and Student Enrolment (N =100)

		School Image	Student Enrolment
School Image	Pearson Correlation	1	.290
	Sig. (2-Tailed		.003
	N	100	100
Student Enrolment	Pearson correlation	.290	1
	Sig. (2-Tailed	.003	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is Significant at 0.01 level (2-Tailed).

strong place in the enrolment drive of the school. However, there is inconsistency with the findings of Ahuja and Lampert (2001) who found no specific ways in which the image brings about enrolment instead choosing to focus on drop-out issues as key determinants of the state of school enrolment.

The study conducted interviews to elicit more in-depth information regarding school image and student enrolment. The abbreviations KR and HT stand for key respondent and head teacher respectively. From the qualitative data, when asked whether the school had a website, one of the head teachers said; *"The school has a public relations officer, who manages school email and website on daily basis. This has enabled us to get students in far distant areas……"* (KRHT2). On whether the school offers vocational studies, one of the key informants noted; *"We welcome all students including those who happen not to perform well in primary leaving examinations because some of them may not do well in class but when they can perform better in Carpentry, tailoring brick laying and other vocational skills and become successful in future with such skills……".* (KRHT3). Regarding the view that the school has ever participated in community service, one interviewee observed; *"We participate in district Marathon like Cancer run, get involved in cleaning of Hospital and markets in the municipality, carry out outreach health camps by offering free medical services, HIV/ AIDS guidance and counselling as well as voluntary testing, blood donation to save life and above all through educate-Uganda, parents are taught how to make liquid soap, candles and jerry……"* (KRHT2). On whether schools have branded items like vehicles, pens and books, one of the head teachers remarked; *"Our students do not bring mattresses, books and pens. They find them at school. Day scholars are picked and dropped from and to main centres by school bus daily…"* (KRHT1). From the focus group discussion meanwhile, it was observed that teachers and school managers identify themselves with their schools on social media like Facebook,

twitter and WhatsApp which improves the image of the school as well as the trust vested in the school by the community which ultimately spells the decision by students to join.

Relationship between School Culture and Student Enrolment in Private Secondary Schools in Iganga Municipality

Research objective two set out to analyse the relationship between school culture and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. Like objective one, the data obtained was analysed using frequencies and percentages of responses. The responses were in line with the key elements of the school culture thus: the school culture reflecting religious traditions of the foundation body, the school organizing music, dance and drama with cultural attachments annually, the school having specific dressing code on special school days every year, the school having a culture of assisting students to speak English fluently, the school being technology-based in teaching-learning processes, the school promoting teamwork among students and the school catering for students with special needs. Findings indicate that on the school culture reflecting religious traditions of the foundation body, 84% of respondents agreed meaning majority of private secondary schools are religious based and clearly promote and uphold the religious norms of the foundation bodies. Meanwhile, 91% of respondents agreed that the school organizes music, dance and drama with cultural attachments annually implying that educational managers have grasped the relevancy of music dance and drama the curriculum. The findings however show that schools have not fully embraced the culture of unique dressing code on special days as only 49% agreed that schools have a specific dressing code for special days. On the question of the school having a culture of assisting students to speak English fluently 91% agreed which means that English language has become a medium of communication and instruction in schools. The findings also show that school managers have embraced the digital era and students are aware of the innovation since 68% agreed to the schools being technology-based in teaching-learning processes. Also, school managers have inculcated the spirit of teamwork and collegiality among learners as signified by the 74% agreement level whilst, schools are largely not inclusive and only cater for learners without disabilities since catering for students with special needs only attracted a 45% agreement among respondents. School culture among the schools studied is still a mixed venture as per the opinions of respondents.

In order to test the magnitude and association of independent variable against dependent variable, the researchers first transformed all the elements of school culture and student enrolment before being analysed using bivariate correlation as presented in Table 2 which shows that there is a positive medium significant relationship between school culture and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. From Pearson correlation coefficient, the result got was (r =.462, p =.000). This implies that the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant

relationship between school culture and student enrolment is accepted. The findings are consistent with the works of Teske et al. (2007), Greene and Marsh (2009) and Witte et al. (2008), Brunsma and Rockquemore (2001), Chen et al.

Table 2

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between School Culture and Student Enrolment (N =100)

		School Culture	Student Enrolment
	Pearson Correlation	1	.462
	Sig. (2-Tailed		.000
School Culture	N	100	100
	Pearson correlation	.462	1
Student Enrolment	Sig. (2-Tailed	.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is Significant at 0.01 level (2-Tailed).

(2017), Alan et al. (2016) who all seemed to find a close relationship between school culture and student enrolment opining that students are attracted to a school given the way they do certain things which distinguish them from other schools. Nevertheless, the findings are inconsistent with Winters (2015) who thinks that financial challenges are the most critical descriptor of student enrolment. Once students can afford the fees and other financial obligations of a school, then they can make the decision and vice versa.

The study equally sought qualitative information from the respondents via interviews and key highlights are as follows: On whether religious norms and traditions reflect the religion of the foundation body, one head teacher remarked; "*As a school, Wednesday and Thursday every week, are spiritual days for the staff and students respectively dedicated to our Lord and every member is expected to attend….*" (KRHT2). Regarding the view that the school organizes Music, dance and drama with cultural attachments annually, a head of department from one of the sampled schools remarked that MDD interlude on visitation day and school day attract both real parents and parents to be. On whether students Spoke English fluently, a head of department English from one of the schools noted; "*We have debate every Friday after lunch and inter class quiz every after fortnight for public speaking and critical thinking…….*". On the schools being technology-based in the teaching/ learning process, one head teacher through interview remarked; "*Some of these policies are quite costly to undertake in terms of financial resources and yet many of the schools lack such resource……*" (KRHT3). Head teachers were all silent on the issue of provision for special needs and when further probed by the researchers, they said that financial implications related to special needs education were beyond their means as private schools. But academic heads of department said; "with vocational skills extended to all learners even the "disadvantaged" ones are

catered for." From the focus group discussion, academic heads of departments unanimously remarked that speaking English at school by both teachers and students was their culture. Meanwhile, the argument that the school promotes teamwork among students was supplemented by views from the focus group discussion in which one heads of department stated that students take one another as brothers and sisters especially in upper classes like S.4, S.5 and S.6 which enables bonding and working together.

Relationship between Customer Care and Student Enrolment in Private Secondary Schools in Iganga Municipality

Research objective three sought to examine the relationship between customer care and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. The data obtained was analysed using frequencies and percentages of responses. The responses were in line with the key elements of the school customer care as follows: the school offers academic bursaries to academic giants, the school offering social bursaries to disadvantaged students, the school offering good learning environment to students, the school offering balanced diet to students, the school offering guidance and counselling to students regularly, the school handling students' issues and needs urgently and the school medical services being carefully delivered to the students. The findings clearly signify that private schools give bursaries to academic performers (giants) and students are aware of the offer as reflected in the 82% agreement level from respondents. The interpretation of the findings was that schools cater for students with financial challenges and the community including students are all aware of that program as signified by the 75% agreement elicited from respondents. It was also established that education managers have known the relevancy of creating good learning environment and stakeholders like students are convinced with the trend as evidenced by the 80% agreement to the item by the respondents. There is average offer of balanced diet in private secondary schools and education managers need to take keen interest in offering balanced meals as only 56% of the respondents agreed to the prevalence of balanced meals. Another finding was the clear evidence that schools have adopted guidance and counselling sessions in their programs after drawing 87% of the respondents' agreement with the item. But responsiveness to students' needs and issues is still wanting in schools and stakeholders like students are not really convinced given that only 57% of the respondents find it appropriate. The findings however, show that educational managers are trying their best to cater for the health of the learners though not yet up to required standard as represented by the 65% agreement level among respondents. Generally, therefore, the researchers believe that based on the findings, schools are doing their best to augment the customer care terrain but are hampered by both resources and technical ability. Moreover, some schools are a step ahead of others in terms of customer care packages offered.

In order to test the magnitude and association of independent variable against dependent variable, the researchers first transformed all the elements of

school customer care and student enrolment before being analysed using bivariate correlation as presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Customer Care and Student Enrolment (N =100)

		Customer Care	Student Enrolment
	Pearson Correlation	1	.358
	Sig. (2-Tailed		.000
Customer Care	N	100	100
	Pearson correlation	.358	1
Student Enrolment	Sig. (2-Tailed	.000	
	N	100	100

** Correlation is Significant at 0.01 level (2-Tailed).

Table 3 shows that there is a positive medium significant relationship between customer care and student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. From Pearson correlation coefficient analysis, the result obtained was (r =.358, p =.000). This implies that null hypothesis set is rejected. The researchers instead accepted the alternative hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between customer care and student enrolment. There is consistence of findings between the current study and Ford (2016), Sampaio (2015), Mutegi (2015), Arsen and Ni (2012) and Lovelock and Wirtz (2011) who support the notion that customer care is a strong determinant of student enrolment. The inconsistency in findings is with the views of Loeb and Kasman (2013) who discourage too much pampering of students saying it may waste them or develop a sense of laziness and laxity. To them therefore, what a school offers to develop a student holistically is much more fundamental as opposed to the one giving much care to students.

Qualitative information obtained from interviews and focus group discussion also offered a clinical perspective from which to conceptualize issues of customer care in schools as follows: On giving bursaries to students, one key respondent remarked; *"Every end of the term, academic committee sits and gives full bursaries to every student who scores 8 in 8 at ordinary level and 20 points at advanced level......"* (KRHT1). As per offering social bursaries to disadvantaged students, one of the key informants remarked; *"Socially, two biological children of staff member, are given half bursary and those proved to be from disadvantaged families are catered for in a special way discussed with the guardian on individual basis...."* (KRHT1). Regarding guidance and counselling being offered to students, one head teacher asserted;

> *"It's everyone responsibility to cater for learners, we have school nurses, senior man and woman, career office specifically to guide students in social, health and academic field. We also have academic*

parents among teachers who have weekly meetings with their children on Tuesday at 04:00pm. Students and academic parent share freely about the challenges….." (KRHT3).

On handling students' issues and needs urgently, one of the key informants stated;

"There is no assurance of good care to students by all stakeholders, three years back when I was still deputy in charge of administration and finance, I used to receive parents almost crying from the bursar's office and students used to intimately show their dissatisfactions with some teachers in classes and whenever they used to go for marks issues…" (KRHT3).

On delivery of medical services to students, one of the head teachers visited remarked;

"We have health scheme for both students and staff throughout the year. Every student is entitled to medical services worth 300,000/= quarterly and teachers have a co- pay of 5000/= every time they visit the school health centre and the balance is cleared by the school on condition that the case can be handled by the school health facilities……" (KRHT1).

Through the focus group discussion, it was noted that good services to staff in terms of prompt and reasonable pay, provision of good meals to staff and other motivational packages make them committed to their job and thus create conducive learning environment by attending to students objectively and honestly. This translates into trust and a feeling of proper identity. To this end, the researchers opine that students both old and new will be hooked and make a school their preferred choice.

Contribution of School Branding to Student Enrolment

The researchers computed a multiple regression analysis to determine the joint contribution of the three elements of school branding to student enrolment in order to draw on realistic conclusions especially for policy and action orientations. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis of School Image, School Culture and Customer Care on Student Enrolment

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error of the Estimate
1	.497a	.247	.223	.69739

a. Predictors: (Constant), Care, Image, Culture
b. Dependent Variable: Student Enrolment

Table 4 shows that all the three elements (school image, school culture and school customer care) remain statistically related to student enrolment (R^2 =.247, p =.000). It was further discovered that all the three elements contribute 24.7% to school branding. The null hypothesis earlier on set was rejected and the alternative hypothesis was accepted that there is a statistically significant contribution of school branding towards student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality. This therefore implies that, alongside school image, school culture and customer care, there must be other elements of school branding and other factors contributing 75.3%. Therefore, other factors like low school fees structures, attractive school buildings word of mouth and having mixed day and boarding section may be contributing the biggest percentage to student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga municipality. The above implication is in line with the findings of Agrawal and Swaroop (2011) who asserted that physical structures, location of the institution, nature of the school, and the school fees range attract more students to join such schools. Similarly, World Bank (2012) and Napompech (2011) outlined aspects not limited to location, physical structures, and low school fees, government intervention in terms of partnership and better performances in national examinations as major factors influencing students' choice of schools to go to.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Consequent to a thorough examination of the relationship between school branding (school image, school culture and customer care) and student enrolment, the study makes conclusions to the effect that in line with objective one, school image is significantly related to student enrolment in private secondary schools in Iganga Municipality. Schools that are creating image in the community in terms of use of website, clearly stating their mission, designing branded items and displaying signposts in strategic positions are able to create visibility in the community leading to increased student enrolment. Meanwhile, as far as objective two is concerned, the study concludes that when the school administrators design and develop a school culture like promotion of religious norms and customs, organizing music, dance and drama with cultural attachments, encouraging of English speaking, promotion of teamwork, inclusive education and e-learning it leads to increased enrolment because it creates a sense of belonging, which keep on attracting students to those schools. Equally, in line with objective three, the study concludes that provision of academic and social bursaries, creation of good learning environment, offering of balanced meals, regular guidance and counselling to students, responsiveness and provision of medical services increases school enrolment.

Recommendations for improvement of school branding and enrolment have been made in line with the major research objectives that underpinned the study as follows: for school image, there should be communication of new programs regarding school image to learners and parents to inform instant action. When delays are made in communication, the programs lose meaning. Indeed, there is need to sensitize students and parents about importance of

vocational studies and branded items in terms of school visibility. For school culture, school administrators need to include culture development in school strategic plans, since some projects like e-learning, music dance and drama as well as inclusive education are expensive to undertake yet are indispensable with student enrolment. In line with customer care, school managers ought to make sure that student issues and needs are handled urgently and transparently so that students get convinced with actions since as known, responsiveness to student issues is always the major point of contention in schools causing turmoil. The study proposes that further research be extended to national level to capture larger perspective as well as a study on other factors influencing student enrolment alongside school branding.

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