



A Short Study on the Awareness of UNICAF Health Programs among Potential Learners in Uganda

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1. INTRODUCTION

Students are the primary reason for the existence of learning institutions like Unicaf University in Uganda. Following a discussion with the Unicaf marketing department of Unicaf University in Uganda, it was convincing that there was need to reach out to potential learners as a team. In mind I thought of the health programs at Unicaf and its partner universities, in that the health service providers both in and out of school form a big percentage of potential learners. At the time of the study I had five running classes but with a handful of students from Uganda. During a meeting with Unicaf student support centre, 26th January 2022, it was clear that a one on one recommendation of the Unicaf programs has attracted more students than any other method. It is on this background that I needed to know how known to the potential learners were the health programs at Unicaf and its partner universities. A quick study in Masaka and Rakai districts and St. Elizabeth school of health professionals-Mukono.

2. STUDY OBJECTIVES

1. To determine the health-related programs at Unicaf and its partner universities that health service provider would like to pursue
2. To determine the mode of study preferred by health service providers
3. To determine how known to potential students is Unicaf and its partner universities

3. METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional study was conducted using a self-administered structured questionnaire. Randomly and whenever opportunity existed, the targeted participants were explained to the purpose of the survey for consent. There was no sample size estimation as it was not known of how many potential participants would be reached.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Number of Participants and their Locations

The survey reached out to 44 participants of which 24 (54.5%) were health service providers in the different public health facilities in Masaka and Rakai districts and 45.5% were students pursuing diplomas at St. Elizabeth school of health professionals. Some participants were from two health facilities belong to Prisons and Police departments.

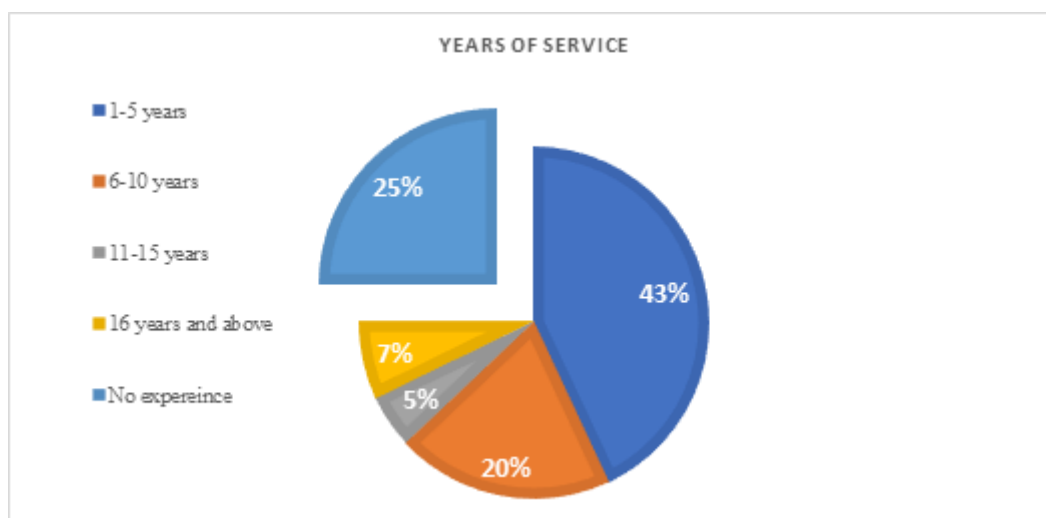
4.2. Gender and Age Composition of Respondents

The study had 50% male respondents and the other were females. The majority (70%) were between 25 and 50 years of age with 30% below the age of 25 years. This shows that employment opportunities are mainly for the 25 years and above, leaving the fresh graduates jobless. This may require some short courses to skill the fresh graduates to fit in the limited job market.

4.3. Health Professions of Respondents

The study observed that the health care system in Uganda has majority of the health service providers at lower health facilities being from the allied health and nursing professions. The majority (70%) of the respondents were from the allied health profession who are mainly diploma holders. This profession was followed by the nursing profession (18%), 11% other professions and none of the medical and dental practitioner’s profession participated in the study.

4.4. Years in Service

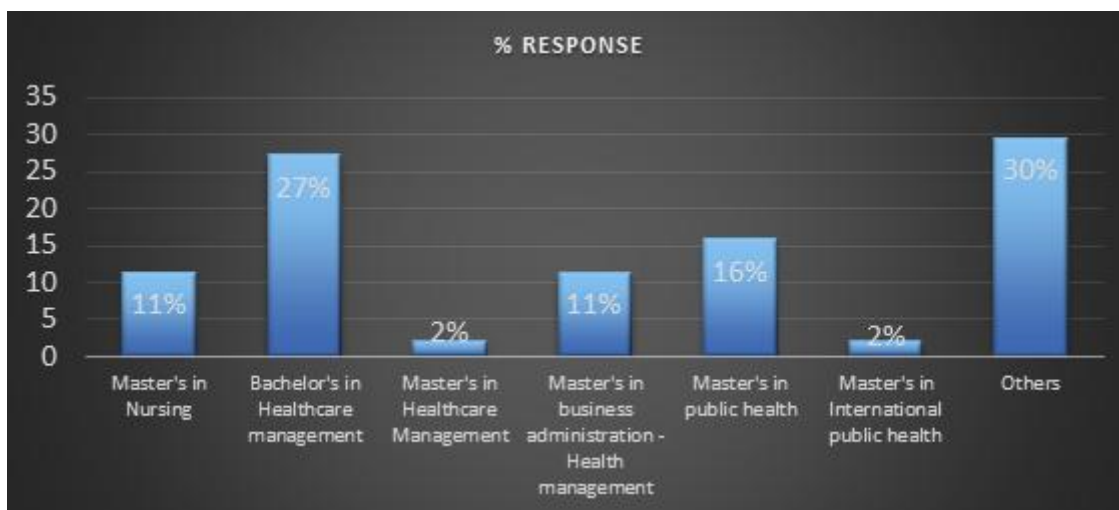


The majority (43%) of the respondents had been in service for just a period of not more than 5 years, with 20% having a working experience of 6-10 years. Note that 25% of the respondents had no experience at all as they were still at school and never worked before. It is possible that the majority with a short working experience may be interested in further education than those with many years of experience.

4.5. Level of Education of Respondents

The level of education of the respondents was important as Unicaf had no diploma courses and only diploma holders and above would be potential applicants for such programs. It was observed that the 18% were certificate holders and therefore not eligible for any UNICAF health study program. The opportunity for the participant to join the university degree and master’s program can be concluded to be high as the majority (66%) of the health workers who participated were diploma holders, only 11% had bachelor’s degrees and none had a master’s degree.

4.6. Unicaf Health Programs that Participants were Interested in



The majority (30%) of the respondents preferred other degree programs that were not available at the university, notably bachelor of medicine and surgery, bachelor of nursing, bachelor of health

education and promotion, and bachelor of medical Laboratory. Only 27% of the respondents would prefer pursuing bachelors in Healthcare management, and 16% a masters in public health. The other masters programs did not attract significant attention to be pursued by the respondents.

5. PREFERRED MODE OF STUDY

Uganda education system is mainly physical contact in a class environment. Unicaf University mainly promotes online mode of studying. With the long comfort with class room physical contact of the teachers and learners, the online education is a new approach. It was observed in the study that the majority (57%) of the respondents prefer the blended mode of both online and physical contact, 23% preferred physical, and only 18% completely online.

6. AWARENESS OF UNICAF AND ITS PARTNER UNIVERSITIES

Only 27% (12/44) of the participants were aware of the Unicaf University in Uganda. This call for more advertisement and publication of the school events to the potential learners.

7. SURVEY LIMITATIONS

- ▶ Limited proportion of the potential students that was involved in the survey, notably no medical officer participated in the study.
- ▶ The survey had limited indicators to comprehensively answer the study questions.
- ▶ Lack of indicators on attitudes and opinions of the different stakeholders like district and institutional leadership

8. CONCLUSION

There is a promising number of potential students out there whom when reach can pursue the available courses. However, there is need for the university to expand on the health programs being offered. It is also true that there is limited awareness of Unicaf university and its health programs among the potential learners. Lastly, the direct interaction with potential students at their places of work creates a feel of the University and trust.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ▶ The university administration should use team work approach to aggressively create awareness about Unicaf services to potential learners, institutions and the entire public including the use of one on one method.
- ▶ The university should partner with institutions like district local governments, and the armed forces as a potential source of learners and sponsorship.
- ▶ The university need to conduct a wide and more scientific market research on the available Unicaf programs in Uganda and also offer others that are currently preferred.

9.1. Actions on Recommendations Done during the Study

- ▶ Distributed photocopies of the UNICAF leaflets to 22 healthcare institutions
- ▶ Created awareness among health service providers interacted with after data collection.
- ▶ Referred 13 potential learners to marketing department for further interactions.
- ▶ Shared contacts of the marketing department on different WhatsApp groups.

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