

Students' Choice Of Private University: An Empirical Study On Private Management Institutes In Gujarat

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Abstract:

In order to discovering what factors affecting students' choice of private management institution or university, this study reviews the various factors that go into decision making regarding vis-à-vis university choice. A sample to 261 respondents from private management institutes in Gujarat contributed to the study. Initially, focus group study was conducted with management students of four major private universities in Gujarat and based on this information received from qualitative research approach, a survey questionnaire of 43 statements was constructed and the survey was then completed by remaining group of additional students of management institutes. All respondents were the higher education students who recently or first time join university of their choice. Majorly, five factors emerged from this study and that have significant impact on decision making regarding higher education institute to attend. These include Academic reputations, support facilities, Conducive Campus Environment, Sports Facilities, Student life and activities. This study shows that students use numerous factors in deciding university for higher education and above listed five factors have greatest impact on their choice.

Keywords: Private Management Institution, Academic reputation, Campus environment, Sports facilities.

Introduction

Today, Higher Education institutes are facing severe problems in attracting new enrolments. With the increase in post-secondary educational choices along with emergence of students' interest in international study, many educational institutes are facing huge competition for student's enrolment. For universities to increase the student attraction, admission team needs to more visibly understand the factors affecting students' choice and tailor job recruitment efforts and other marketing related procedures in increase the chances students in selecting university of their choice.

Numerous studies across the global platform of nations have revealed much about the factors which affect the choice student's while selecting universities of their choice. There are much common factors which normally extend across national territories and when reviewing particular nation, specific factors emerge.

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Evidently, there were major gaps in understanding factors especially factors related to private institutions as well as private universities, which focus on foreign education. Alongside these areas, it was also evident that these types of studies were limited in the nation India. With the use of criteria of private universities in our country, the study sought to deliver information to bridge this gap in the concerned research domain.

Review of literature

The factors such as University reputation, environment and atmosphere, convenience location to home of the student, good teaching facilities, provisions about financial aid such as fee structure, scholarship are the major factors considered by the student of Thailand. In addition to this, friends, peer pressure, parents decision, source of information are also having influence on students' choice of university (Kitsawad, Kamol,2013).

Drewes (2006) mentioned that proximity of location is important factor and students prefer universities closer to their home as they are able to save additional costs of living and such cost makes institutions less attractive. Transportation and re-location costs are major important choice factors for students with lower income families and may prevent other colleagues students from attending the university at all (Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009)

The review of literature study and result of the study shows that proximity to home, costs, school teacher's recommendation and parents are strongly influence the students' choice of university. This exploratory study concludes that university must have different marketing strategies for variety of students. For the students of social science and economics, individual factors are important and the university should arrange visit to the campus for these students (Raposo, Mário and Alves, Helena, 2007). Hagel and Shaw(2008) provide a similar type of attributes which include availability of course, academic reputation, cost of tuition, location, as well as campus facilities and support activities with the most important factors affecting the choice of university.

It is important to give opportunity to the students for choice of institute rather imposing the other people opinion in deciding the university of his choice. Moreover, universities offer range of courses and specializations instead of throwing them back into the pool of students who are still jobless(Ajibola, M. O. et al.,2017).

Harinder Singh Gill and Pooja Malhotra (2019) in their study revealed that the academic factors are main components in assisting students to choose higher educational institutes. Moreover, the larger institutes concentrate on the identification of programme offered, college account and academic factors with a view to entice the students.

Bezmen & Depken (1998) the main consideration for students is finances and the impact of institute fee varies. The studies reveal that the demand of private universities tend to be high than public university.

The students' choice factors such as job opportunities of the course, placement offered by institute, lectures, teaching practices were highly valued by both graduate and post-graduate management students. Similarly factors such as scholarships offered, provision for extra-curricular activities and

sports facilities were given more importance by undergraduate than the post-graduate management students (Pokhrel, S., Tiwari, A., and Phuyal, R., 2018)

Gender differences have also been identified as a vital determinant factor. Women students view safety at the campus as an important factor of choice. Contrary, men focus on scheduling and sports facilities at university (Baharun et al., 2011). Female give priority to those institutes which facilitate smaller size class but not by males (Drewes and Michael, 2006)

However, the study differs nation to nation and many cross-section results are found from individual countries. Research reported in Turkey, the location of the university, academic excellence of the university and language of instructions are top factors (Cokgezen, 2012). It is evidenced that English speaking country like Quebec, Canada, Reputation of the institution is considered one of the main factors of choice (Isherwood, 1991).

Academic quality, campus surroundings, facilities, and personal characteristics are most vital criteria in selecting university in Malaysia (Sidin Hussin, S. and Soon T., 2003). Indonesian students consider cost, proximity, reputation, parents and job prospects as major factors of choice of university in the country.

Research Methodology

The survey research designed was employed and self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection. To validate the questionnaire, items used in survey were based on theoretical perspectives from the literature review and focus group interview with 40 first year university students. From this qualitative study and literature reviewed, 53 survey items were identified to use in the survey. To determine the construct validity and reliability of the instrument, 30 preliminary group of respondents were tested with these survey items. The items received less than 0.3 Item Reminder Coefficient scale were removed. Such 10 items were removed from the survey items and now finalized questionnaire with 45 items.

Respondents were selected from first year students in private university or management institution in Gujarat. Total 445 students participated in the study and the author received complete unbiased responses from 261 respondents only. To measure the internal consistency Cronbach's Alpha test applied to the scale items.

Results Analysis

In this study to find which factor have major impact on decision making in selecting a university, and which factor counted for the high variance, the method of factor analysis through SPSS on 23 items self-administered questionnaire from 261 respondents.

In applying the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (MSA), a score of .878 was recorded which is in the acceptable range based on a KMO overall MSA greater than .60 being considered acceptable (Tabachnic & Fidel, 2013).

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha Measure of Internal Consistency

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Factors	Cronbach's alpha
Academic reputations	.72
Support Facilities	.80
Conducive Campus Environment	.60
Sports Facilities	.75
Student life and activities	.64

Collectively, these five factors account for 40.29 percent of the variance that affects decision-making for university students and potential decision-makers as it relates to choosing which university or college they will attend. This loading is small because there are almost 60 percent of the items that are still unknown.

Academic reputations account for 9.37% of the variance, Support Facilities account for 10.08% of the variance, Conducive Campus Environment account for 6.77% of the variance, Sports Facilities for students account for 9.27% of the variance, and Student life and activities account for 4.83% of the variance.

Table-2 shows the Loading of variables on these five factors. These variables are arranged, grouped and ordered by size of loading to facilitate interpretation.

As the larger the load is found the higher points 0.45 (Tabachnic & Fidel, 2013), those with loads less than 0.45 at the time were removed. The variant "there are too many curriculum decisions" and "teacher qualifications" have been removed. Interestingly, the presence of a bookstore ($r = .771$) and the presence of an administrative and advisory office ($r = .672$) have shown the highest load-related support. Having a modern learning environment ($r = .795$) and an institutional reputation ($r = .602$) has the highest load of learning nature which is a learning environment and career prospects. Having a sports complex ($r = .974$) and good sports facilities ($r = .497$) are decisive factors relating to sports facilities. International teachers ($r = .865$) and having in-campus health care services ($r = .797$) have the highest load on students' health and careers. Campus safe ($r = .744$) and auxiliary teachers ($r = .689$) have the highest load in a safe and friendly environment.

Table 2: Loading of Variables on Factors after Varimax Rotation

	F1	F2	F3	F4	F5
Quality teaching learning process	0.781	0.131	0.126	0.157	0.112
Counselling office and support	0.662	0.243	0.071	0.221	0.301
Research facilities	0.571	0.385	0.372	0.307	0.028
Syllabus and curriculum	0.513	0.168	0.015	0.239	0.045
Specialization offered	0.465	0.180	0.191	0.156	0.318
Required no. of qualified faculties	0.456*	0.076	-0.013	0.248	0.235
Good learning environment	0.376	0.796	0.214	0.193	0.091
Institute reputation is important	-0.072	0.612	0.179	0.112	0.134
Attractive campus	0.021	0.562	0.116	0.177	0.372
Latest facilities	0.272	0.548	0.029	0.377	0.316
Friendly behavior among students	0.107	0.513	0.222	0.276	0.296

Availability of books in library	0.193	0.494	0.131	0.245	-0.033
Job prospects	0.451	0.492	0.113	0.243	0.113
Advanced computer lab	0.326	0.468	0.294	0.275	0.138
Teachers' qualification	0.265	0.441*	0.183	0.164	0.092
Good sports facilities	0.118	0.123	0.975	0.102	0.101
Sports Equipment	-0.051	0.339	0.496	0.024	0.309
Highly qualified teachers from international	0.012	0.194	0.051	0.864	0.126
Health care facility	0.325	0.149	0.098	0.798	0.294
Other curriculum activities	0.491	0.192	0.312	0.574	0.118
Hostel facilities and accommodation	0.316	0.117	0.322	0.559	-0.222
Safe campus	0.226	0.167	0.141	0.293	0.745
Good supports from teachers	0.189	0.197	0.284	0.227	0.688

Subsequent analysis of the data sought to determine the feasibility of other items with a view to understanding whether some of the respondent's contributing factors were related to their characteristics. When respondents were collected as part of their own impact, further analysis was conducted to determine whether respondents' participation factors were related to (a) their student status, (b) gender. A X^2 chi-square test of independence was calculated by comparing the frequency of donations at each stage of student status and gender.

No significant relationship was found between contributing factors and student status (X^2 (4)= 9.489, $p= .205$). Contributing features of respondents appear to be independent in relation to student status.

No significant correlations were found between contributing items (X^2 (4)= 9.489, $p= .764$). Contributing features of respondents also appear to be independent in relation to gender.

Conclusion

This study highlights five factors that affect the final selection of students at a university. Learning environment and high job prospects at the top, highlighting the importance of features such as the modern campus, updated computer laboratories and multi-functional libraries. Included in this feature is the desire for graduate programs that lead to better job prospects once you have completed them.

Taken together, these changes have a profound effect on student choice in university. Institutions of higher learning who are interested in increasing their enrollment will do well to pay special attention to these things.

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