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A STUDY ON FACTORS DETERMINING THE SELECTION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS AFTER SCHOOLING AMONG STUDENTS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Education has a vital role in the life of an individual and as well as for the society. It helps the individual to discipline the mind, sharpens the intellect and refines the spirit. It is the nourishment of the mind with knowledge and as such it helps in the formation of an integrated personality of an individual. The Indian higher education is no longer a dreams and plans. In the increasing global competitions and information technology, people are aware about the options and opportunities available and try to utilize the most to choose best among the institutions of higher education. The research is based on the primary data collection approach. For this purpose, a survey using self-administered questionnaire was carried out. The collected data were then analyzed and discussed by using percentage analysis, descriptive statistics, and chi square test. This study is to gain more insight into the factors which determine the selection of institutions for higher learning. It has been observed that teaching quality is the most important factor that influences a student to select his/her higher educational institutions followed by institution facilities, environmental friendly place and placement. This study has also found that high standard teaching influences the students' interest followed by knowledgeable faculty, helpful academic staffs and knowledgeable admission staffs.

KEYWORDS

higher educational institutions, information technology, global competitions, faculties.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education means "the education beyond the level of secondary education". It is often assumed that education imparted by the colleges or universities are higher education. It includes professional Schools in the field of Law, Theology, Medicine, Business, Music, Teacher training schools, technological institutions and Arts. Moreover, institutions for training of highly skilled specialists in the field of economics, science, technology and culture of various types of higher schools are also treated as higher educational institutions. Thus in general, the term "Higher Education" refers to the education at the degree level and above.

As world is filled with wider scope in educational fields due to higher globalization and technological advancement, there are many options for students in evaluating the colleges based on different criteria such as placements, hostel facilities, infrastructure, ranking, etc. to take a decision. By the use of advance technology, the required data or information can be obtained by the students very easily. They also seek recommendations from family and friends in selecting the institutions. Few are willing to migrate to the nearest location, in order to get the quality higher education.

Higher education institutions in India are broadly classified as (1) university, (2) Colleges affiliated to Universities and (3) Standalone Institutions. As the options have increased to students, the selection criteria become wider and complicated. "Which university is the best? Am I doing the right course? Which university tops for specific program?" Lingering questions like these are enough to create confusions in student's mind. With higher educational institutions in India, choosing the best is never an easy task. The choice may shape the trajectory of the rest of their life; its significance can't be underestimated.

A number of websites provide a student to evaluate a Higher Educational Institutions, based on different factors like anticipated major to be selected, (or future opportunities), resources including financial aid, location (proximity to home), climatic conditions suitable for study and job prospectus courses. Changes in demography, economy, and public policies of India have increased the demand for more sophisticated and knowledgeable workforce to synchronize with the rhythm of the business world. Higher educational qualification has not only become mandatory to ensure employment but also to ensure the success and marketability in an ever evolving job market in India.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There can be unlimited reasons why students' choices are different in selecting the higher educational institutions. According to Glasser (1998), "behavior is chosen in continuing attempt to make life the kind of experience that everyone wants it to be – a **good life**", Relating with the concept of "Choice Theory", students also engage themselves in various activities to get better life. Choice is an iterative concept which is clearly a complex and multi-factorial process involving a wide range of influences that stand upon a decision (Foskett, 1999). Ryrie (1981) elucidated choice in the context of institutional, economic and cultural constraints based on individual's perspectives.

Hemsley-Brown (1999) indicates while pupils often give practical reasons for making choices, these were usually filtered through layers of preconceptions emanating from influences in family background, culture and life history.

Chapman (1991) developed a Model of Student-College Choice, in which he identified the three major external influences as (i) Significant person like friends, parents, and high school personnel. (ii) Fixed college characteristics like cost (financial aid), location, and availability of program and (iii) College efforts to communicate with students like written information, campus visits and admissions/recruitment.

Joesph and Joesph (2000) emphasized on the quality of education which is very difficult to define. It may vary from student to student. It is considered that the traditional importance/performance paradigm is the most appropriate way of measuring service quality in education. However, it is an important factor in selection of the higher educational institutions.

Veloutsou et al., (2005) indicates that the cost of study can act as a crucial factor for mature candidates who have other financial commitment in selecting the higher educational institutions.

Steffen and David (2011) investigated social selectivity in access to higher education in Germany to understand which factors influence most, found that monetary cost influences the preferences for most of the students.

Research conducted by LeBlanc and Nguyen (1999) observed that price, quality, satisfaction, corporate image along with affective and social response are strong drivers of value in a business education setting.

Meyer(2007) stress the most probably the strongest influence in our lives is the family we grew up in. A candidates decision-making process is often influenced by "significant others", for example friends and family.

Soutar and Turner (2002) believed that due to the readily available sources of information, the influence by family and friends has changed among the school leavers on the selection of higher educational institutions.

RESEARCH GAP

Many research articles are available for the selection of higher educational institutions after schooling which is based on other than Indian context. Attempt has been made to identify the factors that Indian students are considering while selecting their higher educational institutions.

OBJECTIVES

1. To understand how students' evaluate higher educational institutions after schooling.
2. To find the relationship between family & friend's influence in selecting the higher educational institutions.
3. To understand the effect of internet in evaluating the higher educational institutions.
4. To identify the different factors that determines the selection of higher educational institutions.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study is descriptive. The research is based on primary data collection approach. For this purpose, a survey using self-administered questionnaires carried out by using cluster sampling techniques. The sample size for the study is 54. The nature of the respondents was drawn from students. The tools used for the study are percentage analysis, ranking and chi square test using SPSS 17.0

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

Null hypothesis: There exist no relationship between the gender and influence of family/friends in selecting the higher educational institutions.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The socio economic profile, reasons for selecting the higher educational institutions, influence of internet and financial issues in choosing the higher educational institutions are discussed here.

TABLE 1: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS

S.No	Gender	No. of respondents	Percentage
1.	Male	46	85.2
	Female	8	14.8
	Total	54	100
	Age	No. of respondents	Percentage
2.	18	1	1.9
	19	13	24.1
	20	25	46.3
	21	13	24.1
	22	1	1.9
	23	1	1.9
	Total	54	100
	Residence	No. of respondents	Percentage
3.	Urban	37	68.5
	Semi urban	13	24.1
	Rural	4	7.4
	Total	54	100
	House-hold income	No. of respondents	Percentage
4.	1-1,00,000	11	20.4
	100001-500000	17	31.5
	>500001	26	48.1
	Total	54	100
	First generation to Higher education	No. of respondents	Percentage
5.	Yes	25	46.3
	No	29	53.4
	Total	54	100

TABLE 2: REASONS FOR SELECTING THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Reasons	No. of respondents	RANKING
Placement	29	4
International programs	16	9
Faculty	35	1
Environmental friendly place	30	3
Hostel facilities	20	8
Best ranking school	22	7
Infrastructure	33	2
Different culture of students	26	5
Sports and extracurricular activities	07	10
Digital way of learning	24	6

TABLE 3: INFLUENCE OF INTERNET TO CHOOSE THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	45	83.3	83.3	83.3
	No	9	16.7	16.7	100.0
Total		54	100.0	100.0	

TABLE 4: INFLUENCE OF FINANCIAL ISSUES IN CHOOSING THE HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Yes	19	35.2	35.2
	No	35	64.8	64.8
Total		54	100.0	100.0

TABLE 5: RANKING ON ACADEMIC FACILITIES THAT HAVE AN IMPACT ON THE SELECTION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	RANK
Student service	19	4
Library resources	31	2
Campus maintenance	40	1
Computer labs	14	5
Tutoring services	29	3

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ON FACTORS WHICH DECIDE THE TEACHING QUALITY

FACTORS	FREQUENCY	RANK
Knowledgeable faculty	41	1
Academic staff are helpful	31	3
High standard of teaching	29	4
Friendly faculty	37	2

Inferential statistics

Ho: There is no association between the influence of friends/family members and gender.

v/s

H1: There is an association between the influence of friends/family members and gender.

The Chi square test statistic value is 0.225. Since the p value is greater than the level of significance (0.05), there is no sample evidence to reject the null hypothesis, which indicates that there is no association between the influence of friends/family members and gender.

TABLE 7: CHI SQUARE STATISTICS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.225 ^a	1	.635
Likelihood Ratio	.245	1	.621
Fisher's Exact Test			
Linear-by-Linear Association	.221	1	.638
N of Valid Cases	54		

FINDINGS

- 85.2% of the respondents are male and 14.8% are female.
- 46.3% of the respondents are in the age of 20.
- 68.5% of the respondents are from urban
- 48.1% of the respondents annual family income are above five lakhs
- 46.3% of the respondents are first generation to enter into higher education.
- 83.3% of the respondents revealed that internet’s influence in selecting the higher educational institutions.
- 35.2% revealed that financial issues influence in choosing the higher education institution.
- Faculty, infrastructure, environmental friendly atmosphere and placement are the important factors which determines the selection of higher educational institution.

CONCLUSION

Education is the backbone of every society to sustain economic growth. The selection of a good higher educational institution plays a vital role in the education career. Care has to be taken while selecting the cordial environment learning atmosphere to get proper employability. The main objective of the study is to find the factor which influences the most in selecting the higher educational institutions among the students in India. The effort that students put into their studies matters more than the institution that they choose to attend.

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