

FACTORS INFLUENCING COLLEGE CHOICE DECISION IN LTZ COLLEGE: CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this particular research is to decide the aspects inducing university or institution choice of decision in LTZ University, Bihar. Extreme market competition in the higher education sector in India has imposed many higher education institution to become “entrepreneurial” and apply promotion plans in hiring scholars from local, national and globally. To explore this research, investigator followed case studies, focus group discussion, content analysis and in-depth interviews. The causative factors which are identified on students’ institutional choice in Bihar include, location, university academic programs, university repute, instructive amenities, cost, accessibility of monetary assistance, occupational or placement opportunities, effectiveness of institutional promotion, representatives and university campus visit. Few of the factors like institutional marketing has been established as the most preferred factor for students to pursue admission in universities. The study has high practical implications with due consideration to students admission to LTZ university, during the Covid19 pandemic days, where the classes are running through online mode and several students are not joining back to campus for face to face sessions. The study have theoretical implications in advancement of the body of knowledge.

Keywords: College choice decision, higher education institution, marketing, academic program, course fees

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

From its humble inception in 2018, LTZ University, Bihar, India has grown from strength to strength and now offers a wide range of programmes from foundation to master degree level in Business, Accounting, Marketing, IT and Nursing, Paramedical, Medical, Pharmacy, Agriculture, as well as professional programmes. LTZ University, Bihar, India’s

track record is renowned throughout the Bihar region and parents continue to recommend their children to study at this campus. The campus is but located bit interior, rural areas of Bihar where students could not enjoy cosmopolitan living with easy access to all modern amenities, rail transport, buses, supermarkets, banks, cafes, tourist attractions, entertainment spots and more. LTZ University, Bihar has nurtured and groomed thousands of graduates who have gone on to become leaders in their chosen fields. The buses, shopping malls, banks, restaurants, tourist fascinations, entertainment spots and more. LTZ University also boasts having many lecturers with more than 10 years' experience. To date, the college has more than 3,000 scholars learning as full-time modes. The objective of this study is also to explore numerous reasons that stand out vital for scholars in institutional choice judgements. They study intent to categorize those causes that have a substantial effect on scholar's admission decisions. Several factors have been search around by numerous investigators across the sphere to look at the student's interest and direction on university admission decisions.

METHODOLOGY

One of the most appropriate methodology to explore the challenges of single unit of analysis is case study. Case study is a method under qualitative research methodology is widely used by the researchers in order to understand the causative factors linked to certain core issues. The core issue the investigator explore in this research is the student's interest and direction on university admission decisions. This study posed "how" research questions to address the admission issues of LTZ university, with due consideration to Covid period. Case study approach provide high insight into the core issues with the support of several tools of research like, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and content analysis. The study took 4 months to explore the causative factors linked to student's decision on university admission. The study followed coding, categorizing and theme building to understand the admission decision of new generation student's during Covid19 period.

OBSERVATIONS

Founded on the outcomes university or institution of higher education choice has been observed as a three-stage assessment procedure. For the period of the first stage – university aspiration realization - scholars cultivate the tendency or intention to endure their schooling further than secondary level. Sometime afterward, institution appreciation are molded, scholars arrive at the second stage - exploration and form submission. At this stage, scholars instigate to obtain facts concerning the institution attributes that are significant to them in determining which institution of higher education to consider registering. This stage finishes when scholars unambiguousness to put on to a specific set of institutions. After their application and the universities' receive the scholars, when the students fulfill the requirement, scholars come into the third-stage - real selection and appearance.

During this phase, scholars match and assess their favored options in terms of institution qualities. This phase culminate with the absolute appearance or registration judgment. Scholar selection is a basic and essential part of theory and investigation on higher education. The post-secondary students have the freedom to choose in accordance with their

aspiration in comparison with lower graded programs. They must choose whether to go to universities, which institution to enroll in, what to main course they should select, and so on. Scholars were established to choose those universities that match their decision criteria scholastically, communally, and monetarily. It is reported that the choice of which institution to enroll is depending on 5 constituents: educational programs presented, leadership chances in institutions, apparent good job after program graduation, financial assistance, and value for money (cost /benefit analysis).

KEY OBSERVATIONS

According to numerous investigators college choice decision of students and parents can be influence in 9 varied factors:

1. Location

Research indicates that student's decision to apply in colleges or universities highly depending on location (Sevier 1986). In order to get the convenience and better accessibility for studies, and its continuity, students usually prefer to be nearby to their home town (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Servier, 1994). Proximity to the home town and their residence is cited as one of the major factor in choosing the colleges is also cited by Kohn et al. (1976). It was established that a low-cost, adjacent university or institution was a significant stimulator of a scholar's choice to advance his or her learning. Hossler & Gallagher (1990) also established that the closeness to an institution does affect college attendance rates. Students who live close to an institution is more possible to be present at institution though they may not join the campus situated near home.

2. Academics Program

Study observations coming from Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Malaysia clearly indicates that the availability of the required programme is one of the major criteria with which students attracts for admission in colleges and universities (Yusof et al. 2008). Students faces several difficulties related to the availability of the programs such as range of academic curriculums of study, flexibility of degree program, major change options and range of degree choices are the utmost significant aspects for scholars to select higher education organizations (Ford et al 1999). Add to the point, Ismail (2009) also stated that scholars are happy with college options based on their evidence satisfaction with respect to academic recognition.

3. College Reputation

Institutional image and repute has a marvelous influence on institution choice. It is an authoritative impact on probable scholar and institution repute, is enormously convincing in the university hunt and selection procedure. Scholars worth the repute of an institution and it rates as an persuasive aspect by scholars in the college choice procedure (Lay & Maguire, 1981; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1986; Keling, 2006). Keling (2007) specified that the greatest significant factor that scholars will assess in choosing their choice of college or

university was repute of the institution.

4. Educational Facilities

Absher & Crawford (1996) specified that instructive facilities such as schoolrooms, laboratories and learning centers are important in a scholar's selection of an institution or college.

5. Cost

It was studied by Joseph & Joseph (2000) that cost-related matters appear to have more significance as years go by. For example, Houston (1979) stated that they were at the lowermost of the measure, while in Webb (1993) and Joseph & Joseph (1998) they are one of the greatest significant features. Jackson (1986) established that fee is an undesirable impact on institution select while monetary aid to decrease charges is a positive effect.

6. Financial Aid

Any financial assistance provided by the university to the scholars have great impact on student's institutional selection. Students have grate expectation from higher education institutions on financial assistance or support, since all students will be considering the institution has the affordability (Yusof 2008). Thus, scholars who obtain monetary aid rewards are more probable to arrive at institution (Jackson, 1988; Litten, 1982; Manski & Wise, 1983). In an another study, Ismail (2009) reported that the information on college choice, which acting as a mediator, between satisfaction and college choice with respect to financial factors, which comprises of financial aids and reasonably priced tuition fees.

7. Employment Opportunities

Attraction of students to several post-secondary education lies with the perception towards career opportunities. With due consideration to placement and employment opportunities students are often making the choice of education. New generation students are interested in major possibilities rather just spending time in colleges. Choice of graduates education as well as institution highly depends on their expected contribution to society and institutions (Sevier, 1997).

8. Advertising

Institutions are depending on offline and online advertisements tremendously for the past years with the advent of digital-medias. Television and radio advertising have been exposed to be predominantly active in creating college image and visibility, particularly in explicit geographical areas (Hossler et al., 1990).

9. Campus Visit

Wards make use of approaches like campus or university visit to look at the suitability of education. It is acting as a major recruiting tool and directly have its impact on decision-making process (Sevier, 1992). Students enrollment to various campus has its high impact on their visit so universities and institutions (Hossler et al. (1990)

Marketing Mix

A few of the important factor circled around student's choice to get admitted in colleges and universities include marketing Mix, marketing efforts and channels. Studies of the past clearly shown that marketing Mix, is a significant factor influencing student's enrollment decision (Felix 2006). One of the major influencing students choice of institutions include program and price attribute of marketing mix rather than other marketing mix factors. It is also reported that advertisements have severe impact on student college selection. Out of the media, radio and television advertisement are providing a good means of communication for educational marketers. Hossler (1990) which develop strong brand appreciation amongst students in an active way

PROBLEMS AND LIMITATIONS OF COLLEGE CHOICE DECISION

Several research observations have been made to explore and understand student's decision to go with educational institutions. Such explorative studies have provided several factors which have direct and indirect impact on student choice of institution of higher education or colleges. Some of the factors like individual ambition, performance at school and outside factors contributes student's choice to get enrolled in some of the institutions (Hossler & Gallagher 1987; Borus 1993). Specifically when consider the external factors, which comprises of every promotion efforts taken by the institutions (Hossler & Bean 1990), distinctive features of colleges (Kohn et al, 1976) and important individuals (Baharun et al, 2002). Out of all factors, a study conducted by several researcher s pointed out that (Carpenter and Fleishman 1987; Ariffin et al 2008) scholars learning ambitions established positive association with college choice. The scholar's individual aptitude and capacity also stated as one of the utmost contributor in choice of universities (Manski & Wise 1983; Hossler1984). In addition to student's ambitions, institutional location also observed to be an important forecaster of institutional choice (Kohn et al 1976; Servier 1986; 1994; Absher and Crawford1996). The proximity from their home is an important factor for their educational aspirations or enroll in specific colleges or universities.

Educational platforms assistances, its content range and period also observed to have an important relationship on scholar's university selection (Ford et al, 1999; Yousaf et al, 2008). University Reputation observed to be a very strong predictor of College choice (Lay & Maguire 1981; Murphy 1981; Keling2006). Another factor influence student's choice include the cost factor. How much the yearly tuition fees associated with the academic programs have severe impact on student decision to consider universities and colleges (Webb 1993; Joseph and Joseph 1998). Add to the cost factor obtainability of financial

assistance also has a convincing influence on scholar's university choice (Litten 1982; Manski 1983; Jackson 1986).

Paulson (1981) inspected the influence of occupation prospect and its association with college selection assessments and established that occupation prospects are the stronger predictor of admission judgments. In a new study (Sevier 1998, Garma & Moy 2003) also recognized and described a noteworthy relationship among occupation rate of former students in determining the university appearance conclusions. Last but not least, student's campus visit for admission also found a significant aspect in university selection procedure (Hossler 1990; Sevier 1992). Researchers established the observations in their study that scholars prior visit to a university or a college also persuade them to enroll in the college, have high impact on their choices whether to proceed with the same campus or look at the possibilities in another campus.

DESIGN/METHODOLOGY/APPROACH

Following a positivist research philosophy with content analysis, narrative analysis, trend analysis, and case study have been used in this research. In this research, primary data and secondary data have been used to analyze the student's interest in selection of academic institutions. Primary data has been used by interview method from students who are studying in the campus as well as aluminize of several institutions and universities. The secondary data has been used from research reports about the student's decision to join the campuses.

DISCUSSION

This particular case study tried to establish student's decision to take admission in several state and central universities in addition to private universities in the Bihar region of India. Several factors have come out to explore its association with students decision to enrol in various higher education institutions like scholar's own ambitions (Chapman 1981; Carpenter et al 1987; Ariffin et al 2008) and ability and capacities as specified by (Manski et al. 1983; Hossler 1984; Hossler et al. 1987; Borus 1993) that regulates scholar's decision to be with the academic institution or not. The additional facet is the elements that lie exterior to scholar's purview and impact on their choices (Chapman 1981).

The interior elements which inspires scholar fundamentally and lead them towards higher education institutions include i.e "the ambition." the scholar's aspiration and individual curiosity, his/her ability & aptitudes persuades them to achieve higher education. These outside elements mostly founded on the institutes like Program/Courses presented (Ford et al, 1999; Yousaf et al, 2008), Place (Kohn et al, 1976; Servier R.A. 1994; Absher et al, 1996), amenities, monetary assistance (Jackson 1986; Litten1982; Manski, 1983) supportive assistances by the institution, communication mediums like flyer, campaigns and university stopover (Hossler 1990; Sevier 1992; Felix 2006) repute of the university (Lay et al, 1981; Keling 2006, & Murphy 1981) program fee and fee structure (Webb 1993; Joseph et al 1998). These are the numerous aspects regulate scholar's decision to get into some institutions and universities.

In addition to these factors several social factors like peer-groups, parents and educators (Baharun et al 2002), also play a significant role in defining scholar's admission choice. A noble or bad word of mouth, might mark it very valuable for scholar choice.

IMPLICATIONS

Educators and policy architects must be cautious in their preparation and execution of national education policies so that we can endure to yield generations after generations of valuable, well-informed, honest and capable citizens. On a minor gauge, institution of higher education and universities, being the front-runners and executors of nationwide educational purposes, must be made conscious of their important roles and accountabilities in edging the new cohort of mavens, leaders, architects, technocrats, machinists, and more. Another significant mission in supporting national growth is to stalk the outflow of foreign exchange to back thousands of Indian, Bihar students. There is also robust likelihood of enticing overseas scholars to our shores, thus moving back the outflow of funds and reduce our amenity shortfall. In doing all these, university and institution establishments must be aware of scholars' desires and institution selection standards. Only then can their real requirements be supplied for. Through this study, scholars have exposed that they are friendly to and contented with local tertiary learning. Nevertheless, several of them articulated the wish to see enhancements in quality of education, public life, and amenities. Besides, the omnipresent factors of financial outlays, duration of education, and academic excellence are also significant contemplations for scholars and their families. Our policy designers should take these ubiquitous aspects into reflection in providing a improved deal for scholars in Bihar, India.

CONCLUSION

As schooling and learning sturdily echoes and affects the trustworthiness of the nation, we should therefore try to comprehend it well. The expanding industry that we now observe nowadays is the outcome of a greater consciousness and need for higher education and accomplishment. That better need and cognizance is very much a part of human endeavoring to flawless oneself and to self-actualize. As our country develop to its sought-after vision of advanced statehood, education (and in particular tertiary education) plays a main part in its actualization. Consequently, issues faced inside the existing system, such as the demands of cost, quality, creativity, and morality, must be resolved swiftly yet successfully.

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