

A study on Factors affecting choice of college selection decision A Students perspective (with reference to students opting management education at PG level)

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ABSTRACT The developments that have taken place in education in making it a more flexible, accessible and dynamic process thereby promoting the development of both individual and society at large is a big decision that every individual during his study stage has to infer upon. Seeing the turbulence in competition and emerging developments in different sectors demanding varied type of skills, knowledge and experience on part of future employees, selection of right course and institute which serves as a facilitator in transfer of learning is a must. The present paper attempts to determine the factors affecting selection decision of students while they opt a college with reference to management courses.

The study comprised of 150 students admitted in different management colleges in Faridabad region. The basic objective of study is to determine the significant factors the students prefer in selecting colleges and also to determine whether there is a difference in choice of students based on demographic profile. Different statistical tools like factor analysis, Leven's test for equality of variance, mean, S.D and variance are used to identify the choice of students. The study revealed six important dimension that affect the student's decision and also found that with exception to few factors there is hardly any difference in preference for factors with respect to demographic profile.

Key Words – Learning perspective, Decision affecting behavior, student satisfaction.

1. INTRODUCTION

The significance of management education in present scenario is worthwhile. Irrespective of the sectors size and nature of organization the demand for effective, efficient and result driven managers is a common feature. When the economy is growing at such rapid rate and competition is at its utmost in such situation the only component that makes a difference is “Availability of trained and skilled manpower”, though there is no scarce of resources in form of technological support, money, machine or exploring profitable market the plan that put all these things in synchronized manner is the trained and knowledgeable manager who could create a difference and thus bringing profits to organization. The corporate largely depend on how well the educational institutes are grooming the future

manpower to cater their needs and help in sustainable economy development

Thus, from beginning to end the quality and exposure that a student receives as a student from a college not only decides his own future in form of career but also to some extent mould the future of organization. Thus, selection of a, knowledge driven, information centred, well equipped in terms of faculty, resources and other factors are generally considered while selecting a college. It is the technical , conceptual , human and design skills which a student gets trained in from a institute which he applies to a workplace and either emerges as a rising career graph or keeps hopping and changing profile and organization.

Thus the present paper on the basis of literature available has selected certain dimensions which are commonly weighed by student as a customer while selecting his college. The selected dimensions include fee structure, quality of syllabus, type of faculty, soft skill development, behavior of staff members, patterns of communication, student teacher interaction, placement opportunity, corporate interface, management style, extra curricular activities, teaching style. The factors or dimension that was chosen to see the impact on decision behavior of students were reduced using factor analysis to identify the important factors. Further with the help of other test most preferred dimension opted by students was determined.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Spies (1978) found that academic reputation of the institution was more important than financial considerations. More recently, Liu, J. (2005). studied college-bound high school juniors and reported that availability of desired major and total cost of attending college were the most important factors)

(Mazzarol, T. (1998) noted that parents/guardians, friends, and guidance center materials were rated as most important in the college search process. Most recently, Murphy, P. E. (1981) found that students were most influenced by family input and finance-related factors

Randall G. Chapman (1986) found that the student is informed of the availability of financial aid amounts and mix the allocation of financial aid between grants/scholarships, loans, and part-time jobs, they consider it while selecting a college.

Joseph & Joseph (2000) concluded that course and career information, and physical aspects and facilities are critical issues that must be kept in mind when educational institutions are trying to create sustainable competitive advantages in marketing strategies while selecting a college.

LeBlance and Nguyen (1999) identified perceptions of price in the form of the price/quality relationship as most important factors, while Ford et al. (1999) recognized academic reputation, cost/time issues and program issues as the determinants of universities choice.

Sevier (1986) stated that research has consistently shown that college or university location can be a major factor for potential student's decision to apply and enroll. Some students may be looking for a school close to their hometown or place of work for convenience and accessibility (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Servier, 1994).

Students value the reputation of a college and it rates as an influential factor by students in the college choice process (Lay & Maguire, 1981; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1986; Keling, 2006). Keling (2007)

Absher & Crawford (1996) stated that educational facilities such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries are important in a student's selection of a college or university. It was reviewed by Joseph & Joseph (2000) that cost-related issues seem to have more importance as years go by.

Students are often attracted to post-secondary education because of the career opportunities it may provide Sevier (1998). Paulsen (1990) stated that students often make college choices based on existing job opportunities for college graduates. Students are interested in outcomes. They are influenced by what graduates are doing, what graduate schools they attend and contributions that they are making to society (Sevier, 1997)

3. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This study primarily aims at assessing the factors affecting decision of students in selecting college. Also the study aims to propose a framework of the major selected dimensions that have an impact on selection of the college. It also focuses on satisfaction derived and difference in importance attached to different dimension with respect to demographic profile.

Thus the objective of the study can be enumerated as –

- 1) To identify the factors affecting students decision for selecting college impact of factors affecting student satisfaction on students overall satisfaction
- 2) To identify the difference in satisfaction level of students with respect to different demographic variables like gender, annual income of parents, previous qualifications.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Sampling and sample size

In order to analyze student's perspective on factors they feel important while selecting college a structured questionnaire was designed to collect primary data from a sample of 225 students which were chosen on random basis from 3 different colleges in Faridabad Region. Random sampling was chosen to collect responses. Out of 225 questionnaire 182 were received and out of these received questionnaire 32 were incompletely filled leaving total filled questionnaire to 150. The primary data was collected through structured questionnaire consisting of 14 different attributes on the basis of literature review that are thought to be essential in decision making process of students.

The sample was chosen through random sampling. The questionnaire consisted of 2 different sub-questions. The first part dealt with determining the importance attached to different dimensions of decision in selecting a college. The second sub question dealt with identifying the difference in satisfaction level of students with respect to different aspects of demographic profile like gender, annual income of parents and academic background of student in earlier course. The response were measured on a 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 where 1 referred to highly important and 5 reflects not at all important.

B. Item selection

Student satisfaction with their educational institutes was measured on 14 attributes dimensions including different areas that have an impact on student satisfaction towards their college and also on basis of literature review like provision of soft skill development, extra curricular development, type of students, teaching styles, quality of syllabus, placement opportunities, type of corporate interface, quality of faculty, fee structure, different facility for study, management style in form of its policies, behavior of staff members, student teacher interaction and communication pattern in their educational institute etc.

The language of the questionnaire was kept simple to make it easy for students to respond. Factor analysis was used to determine the appropriate factor for measuring importance and satisfaction from different chosen dimensions. KMO and Bartlett test of sphericity was also used to check the appropriateness of factor analysis.

C. Tools used

The responses obtained from first sub-question were analyzed with the help of Factor Analysis and Principal Component Analysis. Variables that had factor loading more than 0.5 were grouped under one factor and factors that had Eigen values greater than one were considered and rest of them were not included in analysis. Further in order to validate the response and draw inferences mean, standard deviation and variance were used to see to what level the response differed and also to identify the most preferred dimension

The second question was analyzed with the help of Independent sample test and Leven's test to check equality of

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Checking appropriateness of factor analysis - In order to determine the appropriateness of factor analysis for the set of variables or dimensions for yielding satisfaction from different dimensions Kaiser-Meyer -Olkin and Bartlett test of sphericity was used. The results are shown in table 5. 1KMO measures magnitude of observed

H1-There is significant correlation between the variables.

variance with the help of SPSS916.0

correlation coefficients to the magnitude of partial correlation coefficients. Value of more than 0.5 is desirable. Bartlett' Test measures correlation of variables .A probability of less than 0.05 is acceptable. The following hypothesis can be formulated-

H0-There is no significant correlation between variables.

Table-5. 1KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Adequacy.	Sampling	.764
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1834.965
	Df	182
	Sig.	..000

KMO and Bartlett's Test

As can be seen from table that the KMO value is greater than 0.5 and the significance level is also seen to be less than 0.05 it shows that value is KMO is significant at 5% level of significance. Thus, null hypothesis is accepted that there is no significant correlation between variables.

Further factor analysis was used to reduce the different factors considered to affect decision making of students in selecting college. It was done through factor analysis. The output of Factor Analysis from **table 5.2** shows total variance explained, matrix, component and rotated component matrix. All the extracted components had Eigen values greater than 1 were considered to function as factors.

For this at first we look at Eigen values of factors extracted, cumulative percentage of variance and rotated component matrix, from the **table-5.3** it can be seen that seven factors whose Eigen value was greater than 1 were extracted. From **table-5.3** it can be seen that seven factors together represent 66.344 % of variance (information contained in original 14 variables) with a loss of around 44% of information.

The other important task is to determine what these seven factors represent, this can be analyzed by looking at component and rotated component matrix.

It is clear from Rotated component matrix (**Table-5. 2**) that in Factor 1 the factor loading of Soft skill development, Availability of extracurricular activities and impact of other students (colleagues or other) on self is having higher loading as .540, .453 and .387 respectively as we look for high loading close to 1). This factor can be

interpreted as '**Facility for student personality development**'. From Factor 2 it is clear that teaching skills and type of syllabus are having higher factor loading than any other dimension i.e .590, .451. This factor can be interpreted as '**Type of pedagogy**'. Similarly, for factor 3 opportunity for placement and corporate interface have higher factor loading than any other .540, .444 respectively, this factor can be interpreted as '**Scope for employability**'. Again in factor 4 quality of faculties in form of knowledge base and type of fee structure had higher factor loading .574, .529 respectively.

This factor can be termed as '**Type of Intellectual capital**'. Similarly for factor 5 provision of different facilities for study and style of management had higher factor loading i.e .579, .357 respectively. This factor is termed as '**Policies and leadership pattern**'. For factor 6 the only factor that had higher factor loading was **behavior of staff members towards students** which was .467. Finally in Factor 7 Communication and student - teacher interaction had higher factor loading .578 and .473, this factor can be termed as '**Type of openness in organization culture**'

Thus after factor analysis fourteen variables are grouped under 7 factors namely -

Factor -1 Facility for student personality development

Factor-2 Type of pedagogy

Factor-3 Scope for employability

Factor-4 Type of Intellectual capital

Factor -5 Policies and leadership pattern

Factor-6 Behavior of staff members towards students

Factor-7 Type of openness in organization culture

Table- 5.3 Rotated sum of squared loading

Component	Total	%of Variance	Cumulative variance
1	1.475	10.532	10.532
2	1.383	.877	20.409
3	1.351	9.652	30.062
4	1.291	9.225	39.286
5	1.278	9.131	48.417
6	1.261	9.006	57.423
7	1.249	8.921	66.344

Table –5. 2. Rotated Component Matrix

Component	Initial Eigen values			Extracted sum of squared loading		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative Variance	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative Variance
1	1.751	12.509	12.509	1.751	12.509	
2	1.618	11.555	24.064	1.618	11.555	
3	1.386	9.901	33.965	1.386	9.901	
4	1.263	9.019	42.984	1.263	9.019	
5	1.194	8.528	51.512	1.194	8.528	
6	1.061	7.577	59.088	1.061	7.577	
7	1.016	7.256	66.344	1.016	7.256	
8	.924	6.598	72.942			
9	.848	6.057	78.999			
10	.750	5.354	84.353			
11	.604	4.315	88.667			
12	.581	4.150	92.818			
13	.513	3.666	96.484			
14	.492	3.516	100.000			

Table -5.4 Statistical analyses for question 1 based on student's response on basis of Mean and Standard Deviation

S.n	Statement	Mean	Standard Deviation	Dispersion
1	How imp do you consider fee as a factor in selecting a college	4.160	.9036	.817
2	How imp do you consider student teacher interaction as a factor in selecting a college	3.564	1.034	.312
3	How imp do you consider communication pattern as a factor in selecting a college	2.56	1.032	.537
4	How imp do you consider quality of syllabus as a factor in selecting a college	3.68	1.1145	.465
5	How imp do you consider type of other students as a factor in selecting a college	2.78	.914	.451
6	How imp do you consider facilities for study as a factor in selecting a college	3.113	.868	.552
7	How imp do you consider management style as a factor in selecting a college	3.123	.326	.413
8	How imp do you consider corporate interface as a factor in selecting a college	4.270	.459	.234
9	How imp do you consider placement opportunity as a factor in selecting a college	4.386	.8147	.201
10	How imp do you consider teaching style as a factor in selecting a college	3.867	.9326	.470
11	How imp do you consider quality of faculty as a factor in selecting a college	4.374	.9652	.214
12	How imp do you consider Extra curricular activity as a factor selecting a college	3.15	1.02	.323
13	How imp do you consider behavior of staff as a factor in selecting a college	2.311	.994	.548
14	How imp do you consider soft skill development as a factor in selecting a college	2.45	.453	.2654

From above table it is quite clear that amongst the different variable student prefer while selecting a college the most preferred parameter are placement opportunities (Mean =4.386), quality of faculty (Mean= 4.374) and extent of corporate interface (Mean=4.270) and fee Structure (Mean = 4.160) college policies to enhance learning among students It is been followed by teaching style, quality of most now adays while selecting a management college.

Further with respect to second question which deals with personal detail of students as respondents like gender, annual income of parents and previous stream (subject background in graduation) difference in satisfaction level with different dimensions of college selection factors was assessed.

Among the respondents which were 150 in number total females were 61 in number (40.67%) and 89 males (59.34%). In terms of monthly income of parents 10% of students fall under category where parents annual income

In term of importance attached to different variable the following conclusions can be made- syllabus, student teacher interaction, type of their students, extra curricular facilities etc.

The only factor that showed minimum dispersion which shows that most of the respondents agree from it was opportunities of placement (Dispersion = .201) which shows that students want surity in employability and security in terms of getting placed well and is preferred

Demographic details for question –II

was between 20,000-30,000. 16.67% students fall under category 30,000-40,000, 23.34% of students parents had earning in scale of 40,000-50,000 and remaining 20% earning were under 50,000 and above category. On the basis of above in order to determine difference in satisfaction level with different dimensions with respect to selected demographic factors the following hypothesis were formulated

Hypothesis 2H(0) there is no difference in terms of gender in rating for a particular parameter

H(1) The gender makes a significant difference in rating a parameter

In order to check the above hypothesis t-test for testing equality of variance was used (at 5% significance level) From the (table-5.5.1) it can be seen that the p value (equal variance not assumed, sig,2-tailed) significance value of all the parameters is greater than 0.05 (5% significance level .In such situation where p value is

greater than significance level we conclude that the null hypothesis is accepted. Thus it can be said that there is no difference in rating for parameters with respect to satisfaction in terms of gender differences in students.

It shows that irrespective of gender the sensitivity of students while selecting a college is same and both of them takesuch decisions quite judiciously which indicates seriousness towards career and professional education

Table -5.5.1 Leven'sTest for equality of variance between gender difference and overall importance attached to a parameter

Factor	Variance	F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
Fee structure	Equal variance assumed	.121	.765	.189	149	.752
	Equal variance not assumed			.192	142.721	.749
Student teacher interaction	Equal variance assumed	2.653	.274	.080	149	.958
	Equal variance not assumed			.077	143.241	.956
Communication	Equal variance assumed	.267	.748	.658	149	.654
	Equal variance not assumed			.654	144.712	.651
Syllabus	Equal variance assumed	2.31	.685	.769	149	.453
	Equal variance not assumed			.772	143.734	.457
Corporate interface	Equal variance assumed	.826	.412	-.241	149	.567
	Equal variance not assumed			-.233	137.324	.874
Teaching style	Equal variance assumed	2.43	.532	-.243	149	.768
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.56	134.563	.760.
Other students	Equal variance assumed	.465	.478	-.670	149	.654
	Equal variance not assumed			-.654	135.512	.651
Facilities for study	Equal variance assumed	.099	.879	1.132	149	.675
	Equal variance not assumed			1.123	144.213	.678
Management style	Equal variance assumed	.012	.978	-.976	149	.445
	Equal variance not assumed			-.972	145.823	.441
Placement opportunity	Equal variance assumed	.756	.390	.567	149	.967
	Equal variance not assumed			.569	139.125	.961
Quality of faculty	Equal variance assumed	.178	.678	.225	149	.879
	Equal variance not assumed			.228	142.223	.874
Behavior of staff	Equal variance assumed	.215	.528	.217	149	.716
	Equal variance not assumed			.218	137.826	.710
Soft skill dev	Equal variance assumed	.178	.367	.318	149	.658
	Equal variance not assumed			.314	142.456	.651

The next hypothesis was framed to check if there is difference in rating of different parameters in terms of annual income of parents that affect their rating for overall importance for different parameters

Hypothesis-3

H(0)-There is no difference in rating of respondent with respect to income group

H (1) There is significant difference in rating for parameters with respect to income group

Table-5.5.2 Leven's Test for equality of variance between parents income and difference in rating of overall importance attached for different parameters

Factor	Variance	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
Fee structure	Equal variance assumed	4.277	.005	-2.874	149	.040
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.190	142.721	.062
Student teacher interaction	Equal variance assumed	.265	.651	-.870	149	.958
	Equal variance not assumed			-.877	143.241	.956
Communication	Equal variance assumed	.001	.985	-1.879	149	.044
	Equal variance not assumed			-1.675	142.712	.038
Syllabus	Equal variance assumed	.015	.734	-2.023	149	.043
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.012	143.734	.473
Corporate interface	Equal variance assumed	.724	.332	-.341	149	.667
	Equal variance not assumed			-.334	134.311	.664
Teaching style	Equal variance assumed	4.43	.632	-.443	149	.845
	Equal variance not assumed			-3.56	144.533	.760
Other students	Equal variance assumed	.535	.451	-.570	149	.754
	Equal variance not assumed			-.554	133.522	.751
Facilities for study	Equal variance assumed	.198	.659	-3.552	149	.575
	Equal variance not assumed			-3.521	138.113	.569
Management style	Equal variance assumed	2.543	.154	-1.154	149	.545
	Equal variance not assumed			-1.143	141.413	.536
Placement opportunity	Equal variance assumed	.198	.659	-3.553	149	.001
	Equal variance not assumed			-3.550	137.225	.001
Quality of faculty	Equal variance assumed	.001	.978	-2.034	149	.038
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.230	138.213	.027
Behavior of staff	Equal variance assumed	1.182	.228	.376	149	.745
	Equal variance not assumed			.365	134.526	.739
Soft skill dev	Equal variance assumed	.178	.367	.224	149	.556
	Equal variance not assumed			.215	141.236	.551

From the table-5.5.2 it was clear that for certain parameters the value of p was smaller than 0.05 which indicates that with respect to a few parameters like fee structure, placement opportunity, quality of faculty, quality of syllabus were the parameters where the respondents with different income category differed in opinion and importance attached, it may be because since the fee structure of different institutes are also higher end parents and students give special attention to these factors. Depending on type of fee the parents and students expect that chances for placement opportunities, quality of faculty and syllabus should be of better quality, but for all other

parameters the rating did not show any difference irrespective of income category.

The last hypothesis aimed at identifying the difference in rating of individuals with respect to academic backgrounds.

Hypothesis-4

H (0) -There is no difference in rating with respect to academic backgrounds of students

H (1) -There is significant difference in rating of students with respect to academic backgrounds

Table-5.5.3 Leven's test for equality of Variance between different academic background of student and importance attached to different parameters

Factor	Variance	F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
Fee structure	Equal variance assumed	.080	.779	-2.654	149	.011
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.644	137.721	.016
Student teacher interaction	Equal variance assumed	.038	.845	-.836	149	.958
	Equal variance not assumed			-.830	141.241	.952
Communication	Equal variance assumed	.046	.982	-1.779	149	.765
	Equal variance not assumed			-1.774	138.512	.756
Syllabus	Equal variance assumed	.280	.559	-2.767	149	.009
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.760	135.234	.017
Corporate interface	Equal variance assumed	.524	.232	-.241	149	.567

	Equal variance not assumed			-.234	143.312	.564
Teaching style	Equal variance assumed	4.58	.732	-.543	149	.745
	Equal variance not assumed			-3.56	136.511	.740.
Other students	Equal variance assumed	.435	.351	-.460	149	.654
	Equal variance not assumed			-.464	143.122	.651
Facilities for study	Equal variance assumed	.158	.559	-2.552	149	.675
	Equal variance not assumed			-2..521	141.123	.669
Management style	Equal variance assumed	1.543	.184	-2.154	149	.624
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.143	143.213	.616
Placement opportunity	Equal variance assumed	.102	.759	-2.553	149	.043
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.550	133.523	.041
Quality of faculty	Equal variance assumed	.006	.678	-2.014	149	.038
	Equal variance not assumed			-2.016	133.014	.035
Behavior of staff	Equal variance assumed	1.243	.318	.424	149	.641
	Equal variance not assumed			.421	136.123	.633
Soft skill development	Equal variance assumed	.238	.467	.324	149	.646
	Equal variance not assumed			.315	145.134	.6391

From the table-5.5.3 it is clear that in terms of different parameters the difference in rating for different parameter with respect to different academic background was found to be in few parameter like quality of teaching, teaching aids, type of student's etc. where the significance level was less than 0.05 (5% sig.level). It can be thus said that for above 3 parameters null hypothesis is accepted and it is due to the reason that students with science background preferred that a good educational institute should have a strong focus on generating analytical ability and logical reasoning among students thus focus on quality of faculty and content is much focused. For other backgrounds like arts and commerce students preferred type of other students, curriculum and other factors which they felt were more important. For remaining 11 factors null hypothesis is rejected that different academic background there is a different in rating of different parameter

6. IMPLICATIONS

The proposed research and the findings thus focus on role of different factors that are significant and play significant role in molding student's perspective while deciding and selecting academic institutions. It proposes that since overall improvement of quality of education focus should be on different factors like improving quality of intellectual capital and making the content useful not only in terms of enhancing quantity but followed by orienting students to develop practical understanding so that knowledge, interest and practical implications learned during course can be easily and innovatively be implemented at workplaces.

7. CONCLUSION

Thus, it can be concluded that selection decision of college on part of students is a multi-dimensional perspective. From the findings based on students response regarding importance attached to different parameters while selecting a college reflects that special focus of

students is on chances of getting placed, quality of syllabus and he intellectual capital an institute possess. Irrespective of different gender, backgrounds and ability to pay getting professional education is amongst the most preferred dimension for all.

For educational institutes the finding suggest that educational institutes should focus on improving dimensions like quality of intellectual capital, syllabus which should be as per corporate requirement, similarly the opportunities for personality development and focusing on improvement in soft skills which would enhance the chances of getting placed needs to be more emphasized.

It was also observed that depending on background in terms of streams students ad different perspectives towards preferred teaching methods of faculties, this should be made as per expectation by making pedagogy more interactive, participating , enhancing corporate interface and motivating students to enhance their learning , absorption and visualization skills for better concept development and application. This would not only help in making good brand of institute but will help in generating talented work force as per corporate expectations and enhancing the chances of employability

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