

## Factors Influencing Students to Select Institutions for Higher Education: Study on Narayanganj

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### ABSTRACT

Higher education broadens the student's view of the world, helps them acquire new skills, and conveys knowledge to the community. Through a flexible learning environment, higher education is perceived as an opportunity to contribute to the industry's growth and development and foster personal growth. Enough information must be available to make an informed decision to select an institution for higher education. For this purpose, this article tries to find out the most influential factors in selecting institutions for higher education. A well-prepared questionnaire was developed and forwarded to Narayanganj students studying inside and outside this city to obtain data. Descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, sample percentages, mean scores, standard deviation, and correlation were used to analyze the study participants' data. For inferential statistics, the chi-square test was used. A logistic regression was also used to find the causal relationships. IBM SPSS (version 22) was used for the data analysis.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A nation's progress has historically depended heavily on higher education. According to Sivakumar & Sarvalingam, 2010 for human progress and developing a society education is a must. Furthermore, higher education also has a significant impact on society's social and economic aspects (Brennan & Teichler, 2008). Building a workforce suitable for an advanced economy requires higher education (Febrice, 2010). After passing college life, every student's dream is to get admitted to higher education. But the process is not like a piece of cake. Many private and public universities are emerging to ensure that the enrolled students get the highest degree. Every year many students are looking for a perfect institution that can fulfill their long-cherished dream. Selecting higher education institutions across the globe are facing a variety of complex challenges. (Tilak, 2018). In this study, based on 100 samples of students we are trying to find out the influential factors based on geographical location, non-academic facilities, academic criterion, non-academic criterion, study cost, and future perspective.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous writers have highlighted the factors and expectations facing the higher education sector. (Whyte, 2001; Espinoza, Bradshaw & Hausman, 2002; Rindfleish, 2003; Van Louw & Beets, 2008). Higher education institutions (HEIs) in the local context face a variety of challenges, including globalization, expanding access to higher education, alterations in government funding and language policies, a growing focus on technology, transformation policies, mergers, shifting student demographics, and heightened competition. (Jansen, 2003; Van Niekerk, 2004; Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007; De Vries, 2007).

Higher education institutions will need to adapt to this shifting environment by becoming more focused on the market as they fight for financing and students. There are various reasons for the heightened rivalry in the HEI market. The first is that institutions will now admit students of any race as long as they fulfill the requirements for admission (Akoojee & Nkomo, 2007). According to the Ministry of Education (2002), HEIs are under pressure to change their student demographics to make them more representative of the general public. The third is a small group of matriculates who fulfill university entrance standards, mostly African students. The last aspect is modifications to the HEI financing system that prioritizes throughput more (Wangenge-Ouma & Cloete, 2008). This has highlighted how important it is for colleges to choose

applicants who will graduate in the shortest amount of time: high achievers (Smit & Schonefield, 2000).

The interest in the student recruiting processes of these universities has been piqued by these marketing problems. Institutions can more effectively target the student market if they have a deeper understanding of the decision-making processes used by students when choosing a HEI. The significance of student recruitment has grown, leading to a multitude of research studies that have scrutinized educational establishments' recruitment procedures to pinpoint the elements impacting students' decisions (Chapman, 1981; Litten, 1982; Kealy & Rockel, 1987; Espinoza et al, 2002; Hoyt & Brown, 2003; Gray & Daugherty, 2004; Punnarach, 2004). An institution can improve the fit between the student and the institution if it is aware of the elements that affect applicants' enrolling decisions. Institutions can create marketing strategies to draw in enough students with the required academic and non-academic attributes, (such as gender and ethnic orientation,) by using information from the student selection process. (Wiese, Van Heerden, & Jordaan, 2010)

According to Van Dimitrios (1980), the primary determinants of choice are media, institutional accessibility, academic and non-academic programs (Bradshaw, Espinoza, and Hausman, 2001) and Bajsh and Hoyt (2001) found five primary characteristics that students took into consideration when choosing a HEI. These include the staff's caliber and reactivity, the institution's size, social possibilities, research endeavors, and financial concerns. In addition to the characteristics mentioned in earlier research, Espinoza et al. (2002) highlighted campus safety and flexibility in course offering times as additional considerations. Three primary determinants were discovered by Arpan, Raney, and Zivnuska (2003): news coverage, athletic rating, and academic rating. Punnarach (2004) added stability, public relations, and university notoriety as other deciding considerations.

Understanding the multiple variations can help Higher Educational institutions design and manage their marketing mix to ensure effective recruiting. Students may assign varying weights to evaluation factors (Hawkins et al, 2004).

When selecting their universities, students want to consider some criteria like reputation, tuition costs, location, permanent campus, teacher quality, online services, IT facilities, advertising, and environment are some of the elements that students consider when making decisions. The ongoing exploratory investigation has determined that the most important factors that influence a student's decision to attend an institution for higher education are reputation and online service (Ahmad, Syed & Buchanan, F. Robert & Ahmad, Norita, 2016).

Students are aware of their options and assess them by weighing the projected expenses and benefits of investing in higher education to decide if attending a university is beneficial (Paulsen, 2001).

According to Jackson's model (1982), a pupil has three levels to choose from preference, exclusion, and evaluation stages. According to another study, three variables have been the focus of sociological theories of college choice: the identification and relationships between factors such as parental encouragement, the influence of significant individuals, and academic achievement as reported by (Coopersmith, Braxton, and Hossler in 1989). Subjective norms, which describe how much an individual think positively or negatively about other people's intentional behaviour, support the young people's intention to pursue education at higher educational institution (Ajzen, 1986).

### **3. OBJECTIVES**

The major objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing students to select higher educational institutions. To meet this objective, we have selected samples from Narayanganj area and generated some specific objectives such as identifying the background of higher education candidates, categorizing the selected factors, and finding the impact of those factors on their selection. In the same study, we also try to get insights into the influential factors of selection preference between male and female students.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **4.1 Research Design**

Several descriptive and inferential research methods have been used in this study. A custom-created questionnaire using combined qualitative and quantitative methods has also been forwarded to collect primary data for study purposes since there is not much previous study on this topic. Numerous articles, books, periodicals, websites, and other sources have provided secondary data.

### **4.2 Population and Sample Size**

Only students in Narayanganj City are the subject of the current study. The population standard deviation, allowable degree of error, and confidence level are used to get the sample size (n). Zikmund (2003) states that the sample size can be computed as follows; the sample size is  $n = p(1 - p)( Z/E )^2$ , assuming the maximum variability, which is equal to 50% ( $p=0.50$ ), adopting a confidence level of 95% and 10% desired level of accuracy. The sample size in

this case is  $n = .5(1 - .5) (1.96/0.10)^2 = 96.047 \approx 100$ . Thus, a sample size of 100 is needed.

### 4.3 Sampling Technique

To gather the data of respondents in this study, a random sample technique has been adopted. Using a questionnaire, 100 respondents were obtained using the convenience snowball sampling technique of the 500 respondents, and 100 respondents were chosen at random for additional study.

## 5. VARIABLES

Six scales named mean\_GC, mean\_NAF, mean\_AC, mean\_NAC, mean\_SC, and mean\_FP are computed from the components of Geographical Condition, Non-academic Facilities, Academic Criterion, Non-academic Criterion, Study Cost, and Future Perspective.

## 6. RELIABILITY OF THE DATA

Cornbach’s alpha reliability test was applied to a 50-item survey. For all of the variables, the predicted Cronbach’s alpha was 0.802. According to the standards established by Clark and Watson in 1995, the value of Cornbach’s alpha is both appropriate and sufficient for the analysis.

<i>Cronbach’s Alpha</i>	<i>N of Items</i>
.802	50

## 7. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

	<i>Sample size</i>	<i>Minimum value</i>	<i>Maximum value</i>	<i>Mean value</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>	<i>Skewness (β<sub>1</sub>)</i>	<i>Kurtosis (β<sub>2</sub>)</i>
<i>Annual_Income</i>	100	10,000	4,800,000	426,110.00	666,204.459	4.051	20.872
<i>mean_GC</i>	100	.00	5.00	3.2467	1.25652	-.867	.571
<i>mean_NAF</i>	100	.00	5.00	3.5325	1.28396	-.949	.613
<i>mean_AC</i>	100	.00	5.00	3.6122	1.12256	-.872	1.016
<i>mean_NAC</i>	100	.83	4.83	3.7633	1.09846	-.972	.256
<i>Mean_SC</i>	100	.00	5.00	3.2800	1.32550	-.444	-.285
<i>Mean_FP</i>	100	.00	5.00	3.6850	1.18774	-.887	.583
<i>F_HEIGHT</i>	100	60	77	66.54	3.570	.165	-.423
<i>M_HEIGHT</i>	100	49	68	62.04	40150	-1.496	2.721
<i>Valid N (listwise)</i>	100						

*Table for the descriptive statistics of the important variables*

During the descriptive analysis, the mean value of all scales indicates a significant positive tendency (mean > 3), highlighting the relevance of those aspects in the variables. The mean income level is 426,110.00. The distribution of income level is not symmetric as the skewness is far from zero. The distribution of father's height and mother's height are also not symmetric. where the father's height is showing positive skewness and the mother height is opposite. However, considering a large sample normality assumption is satisfied.

### Pearson Correlation structure of 06 scales

		<i>mean_ GC</i>	<i>mean _NAF</i>	<i>mean _AC</i>	<i>mean_ NAC</i>	<i>mean _SC</i>	<i>mean _FP</i>
<i>Mean_GC</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	1	.600**	.579**	.513**	.432**	.550**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>Mean_NAF</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.600**	1	.752**	.531**	.484**	.578**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
<i>Mean_AC</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.579**	.752**	1	.689**	.696**	.771**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
<i>Mean_NAC</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.513**	.531**	.689**	1	.460**	.594**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
<i>Mean_SC</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.432**	.484**	.696**	.460**	1	.620**
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
<i>mean_FP</i>	<i>Pearson Correlation</i>	.550**	.578**	.771**	.594**	.620**	1
	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There are only two pairs of strong correlations among the mean value of six observed variables at a significance level of 0.01. The relationship between non-academic facilities and academic criteria is strongly positive, with a correlation coefficient of 0.75. Similarly, there is a strong positive relationship (0.77) between academic criterion and future perspective.

### Chi-square Test of Association

<i>NAF_Cat vs AC_Cat Crosstabulation</i>				
		AC_Cat		Total
		Disagree	Agree	
NAF_Cat	Disagree	28	12	40
	Agree	8	52	60
Total		36	64	100

<b>Chi-Square Tests Results</b>					
	<i>Value</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>	<i>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</i>	<i>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	33.449 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000		
<i>Continuity Correction<sup>b</sup></i>	31.035	1	.000		
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	34.694	1	.000		
<i>Fisher's Exact Test</i>				.000	.000
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	33.115	1	.000		
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	100				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.40.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Null Hypothesis:** There is not any dependency between non-academic facilities and academic criterion

**Alternative Hypothesis:** There is dependency between non-academic facilities and academic criterion

Conducting a chi-square test to determine the relationship between non-academic facilities and academic criterion with a significance level of  $\alpha= 0.05\%$ . Indicates a significant dependency ( $p<0.05$ ) between these two variables ( $\chi^2 =33.45$ ,  $N=100$ ). Based on the p-value, this chi-square test indicates statistical significance and rejects the null hypothesis, suggesting a relationship between non-academic facilities and academic criteria.

The minimum expected value also satisfies the assumption for the test as no cell has an expected value less than 5.

<i>FP_Cat vs AC Cat Crosstabulation</i>				
		AC_Cat		Total
		Disagree	Agree	
FP_Cat	Disagree	29	9	38
	Agree	7	55	62
Total		36	64	100

<b>Chi-Square Tests Results</b>					
	<i>Value</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)</i>	<i>Exact Sig. (2-sided)</i>	<i>Exact Sig. (1-sided)</i>
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	43.237 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000		
<i>Continuity Correction</i>	40.461	1	.000		
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	45.365	1	.000		
<i>Fisher's Exact Test</i>				.000	.000
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	42.805	1	.000		
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	100				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have an expected count of less than 5. The minimum expected count is 13.68.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

**Null Hypothesis:** There is no dependency between Future Perspective and Academic Criterion.

**Alternative Hypothesis:** There is a dependency between Future Perspective and Academic Criterion.

Performing a chi-square test to assess the association between Future security and academic criterion at a significance threshold of  $\alpha = 0.05\%$ . There is a statistically significant relationship ( $p < 0.05$ ) between these two variables, as indicated by a chi-square value of 43.24 and a sample size of 100. The chi-square test, based on the p-value, demonstrates statistical significance and rejects the null hypothesis, indicating a relationship between Future security and academic criterion.

The minimum expected value also meets the assumption for the test, as there is no cell with an expected value below 5.



### Binary Logistics Regression

To see the causal relationship at the variable gender a binary logistic regression is used, as our dependent variable here categorical.

<i>Dependent Variable Encoding</i>	
Original Value	Internal Value
Female	0
Male	1

<i>Omnibus Tests of Model Coefficients</i>				
		Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step 1	Step	6.234	1	.013
	Block	6.234	1	.013
	Model	6.234	1	.013

### *Contingency Table of Observes vs Predicted*

	<i>Observed</i>		<i>Predicted</i>		
			<i>Gender</i>		<i>Percentage Correct</i>
			<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	
Step 1	Gender	Female	46	10	82.1
		Male	25	19	43.2
		Overall Percentage			65.0

a. The cut value is .500

### *Output of Model Coefficients in the Equation*

<i>Variables in the Equation</i>							
		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	Annual_Income	.000	.000	.351	1	.554	1.000
	F_HEIGHT	-.072	.063	1.277	1	.258	.931
	M_HEIGHT	-.006	.052	.015	1	.902	.994
	mean_Loc	-.060	.233	.066	1	.798	.942
	mean_NAF	.037	.265	.019	1	.889	1.038
	mean_AC	-.694	.447	2.414	1	.020	.499
	mean_NAC	.239	.283	.712	1	.399	1.270
	mean_Cost	-.283	.235	1.447	1	.229	.754
	mean_FS	.523	.330	2.511	1	.013	1.686
Constant		5.665	4.829	1.376	1	.241	288.655

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Annual\_Income, F\_HEIGHT, M\_HEIGHT, mean\_Loc, mean\_NAF, mean\_AC, mean\_NAC, mean\_Cost, mean\_FS.

An analysis was conducted using binary logistics regression to determine the primary factor that influences the selection of an institution for higher education. The model includes nine independent variables: Annual income, father's height, mother's height, Location, Non-academic facilities, Academic criterion, Non-academic criterion, Study cost, and Future perspective. The complete model, which included all the predictors, showed statistical significance ( $\chi^2 = 6.234$ ,  $N=100$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) at a significance level of 0.05. The entire model was able to accurately predict approximately 65% of the cases. Only two variables, academic criterion, and future perspective, have a statistically significant impact on the dependent variable. Based on the statistical analysis, it has been found that females tend to prioritize future perspectives less than males when it comes to selecting an institution for higher education. This finding is supported by a significant level of  $p<0.05$  and an odds ratio of 1.6. When it comes to academic criteria, it is interesting to note that men place less importance on selecting the institution for their higher education compared to women. The odds ratio for this difference is 0.5. The other factors show insignificant effects for our group of analyses.

## 8. FINDINGS

- Among six variables, academic criterion and future perspective has significant impact on selecting higher studies institutions.
- Transportation, security, accommodation as well as internal facilities of a university under the 'Non-academic facilities and university ranking with academic and research recognition, entrance and credit transfer policy, available degree, and program quality under 'Academic Criterion' has a positive correlation.
- There is a connection between academic criteria and future perspectives like career counseling, job opportunities, academic-industry collaboration and so on.
- Male students consider future perspectives more than female students.
- On the contrary, academic criterion seems more important to female than male students in considering higher education.

## 9. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the above findings, it is recommended that Students are more concerned about universities' social status and future economic possibilities. So

all concerned authorities of higher educational institutions should invest in their academic facilities and research areas as well as create a positive image in the placement area.

## 10. CONCLUSION

One of the main objectives of education strategies in emerging nations is the growth of higher education. Having completed high school is no longer seen as adequate to sustain a reasonable standard of living in today's world of globalization and rapidly increasing technical breakthroughs. After completing the secondary school, students find that choosing a higher education institution is the most difficult assignment. In this article, annual income, father's height, mother's height, geographical criterion, Non-academic facilities, Academic criterion, Non-academic criterion, Study cost, and Future perspective have been considered as independent variables and tried to look forward is there any relationship between these variables with selecting higher educational institutions or not. Interestingly, academic criteria and future perspectives creates a special domain in selecting higher educational institutions. As this study is based on a specific area due to time and resource limitations, more possibilities are here to work on this platform to get better insights.

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