

# EXPLORATORY STUDY OF STUDENTS' DECISION FOR ENROLMENT AT UNIVERSITI KUALA LUMPUR BUSINESS SCHOOL CAMPUS

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## Abstract

**Purpose of Study:** This research focuses on factors influence students' decisions making to enrol at private Higher Education Institution (HEI).

**Methodology:** The underpinning theory applied in this study was Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) applied for institution rankings, institution facilities, and employment opportunities. Questionnaire was used to collect the data over 100 of students in Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Business School Campus. Data were analyzed by employing exploratory factor analyses and reliability analyses.SPSS version 24 applied.

**Results:** The result revealed for factor loading all items above 0.5, institution facilities remarks the highest Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO) with .877 and for Cronbach's alpha with .924.

**Key words:** *Students' Decision Making, Factors Influence, Private Higher Education Institution, Malaysia.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Ministry of Higher Education launched blueprint of a new Malaysian Education 2013-2025 in October 2011. The blueprint initiated by the government has restructured the system of higher education in order to enable it to fulfil the need for Malaysian in accordance with plan for a rapid and sustainable transformation of education system through to 2025. In addition, the existence of private HEI encourages having a positive impact in contributed to the advancement of education in the country. The establishment of private HEI provides healthy competition in advancing the quality of education towards in realizing Malaysia as a Regional Centre of Excellence. Therefore, in Malaysia private HEI is considered to be the fastest growing segment(Asian Development Bank, 2012; Hamza and Kommers, 2018).

As matter of fact, it is vital in understand and assessing students' decision making to create an exchange between prospective students with private HEI, which is in term of prospective students select the private HEI, and private HEI get the prospective students as their students(Ming, 2010). The choice to register in HEI was truly vital because for the duration of years one's in HEI, future occupation is create. Hence, student look at some options offered by the HEI before make decision to further (Haron *et al.*, 2017).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Understanding the determinants of decision making it is vital nowadays especially for private HEI because students entering higher education institutions these days are different than those of previous generations(Haron *et al.*, 2017; Handa, 2018). As information, private HEI was chosen for this study for the reason that private HEI has grown strongly as cited byNaidu and Derani (2016). In an increasingly competitive HEI sector, private HEI at current struggling tough challenge in getting suitable number of students in order to sustain in the market. (Dennis *et al.*, 2016). In this study three factors namely as institution rankings, institution facilities, and employment opportunities will be focus on to as factor influence student decision making to enrol at private HEI.

### Institution Rankings

According toManiu and Maniu (2014), reputation for a HEI is derived from ranking; its reflection of good reputation is built by age, accreditation and competitiveness of admission and brand name. They stated the institutions with a respectable identity would derive the institution to have a better-perceived value to a target market than its rivals can provide. Ranking helps HEI to build up their reputation and where they stand in education industry. Yusuf *et al.* (2017)indicated institution ranking is something built based on a performance. Academic reputation is important for the PHEI to manipulate the status as part of their marketing gimmick and competitive advantage. Institution ranking at the same time to be used by the PHEI to portray their outstanding level in the market. Students may aim to join the ranked university in order to secure and satisfied themselves in the prominent universities.Migin *et al.* (2015) highlighted that high ranking in market contribute to the elements of decision making by students during the enroll process.

### Institution Facilities

Institution facilities can be dividing to some parts, which are academic and non-academic. According to Rachmadhani *et al.* (2018)facilities is referred as physical infrastructure that may benefit the students in their learning process whether it is related directly to academic or promote the lifestyle of the campus life. Institution facilities also not limited to soft skills services built in the study syllabus that may defer from one PHEI to another or between academies program. There are

many facilities available at the HEI to provide a conducive environment to student for physical aspects such as place, favourable learning environment, recreation and sports, cleanliness, safe environment and campus social life plays a vital role. All these factors act as an additional advantage for student decisions choice (Garwe, 2016). Khairani and Abd (2013) stressed that students make choice based on the institution facilities that they may require during the study period. Those facilities may contribute the positive result in the teaching and learning process by the students. Cubillo *et al.* (2006) also highlighted the important of other facilities that related to campus lifestyle that may create inner satisfaction to students with the positive surroundings.

### Employment Opportunities

In this competitive era, students are highly concerned about their career. Employment opportunity becoming one of the important criteria for selecting the PHEI. PHEI at the same time may attract students and influence their decision-making by promoting various statistics or testimonial from the alumni. Rachmadhani *et al.* (2018) highlighted that employment opportunities is part of the elements evaluated by students in making their choice before entering PHEI. Earlier before that Sanchez (2014) also commented that students will make decision based on their chances of employment and exposure to the on job study that may add more value to their education beside easier to get job after graduation. Aydm (2015) supported the statement from Sanchez (2014) although the respondent of the study was not similar. Based on all three research, it can be concluded that employment opportunities is very important as part of the influence factor that may lead student decision-making to enroll into their preferred PHEI. Every year, many of students enroll in HEI for reasons related to future job prospects. More than 85% of first-year students rated the ability to get employment opportunities as a very important factor in their decision to attend college (Eagan *et al.*, 2015). Regarding to research result by Jaradat and Mustafa (2017) they revealed the employment opportunities indicate a strong effect on their majors' selections with score means of 3.64.

### Students' Decision Making

Decision making process is a part of consumer behavior. Choosing a HEI is a critical stage for all high school graduates who have a plan to further their study at HEI level. Students are highly selective when deciding on which HEI they should to enroll, because the there is ample option available in the market. The competition among the PHEI lead to tough competition. That competition translated to high bargaining power of students in which, they have the power to choose. Decision making at the same time have been made easier by the current information technology. Students have the luxury to choose based on the comparison and reviews made by the alumni. Wadhwa (2016) and Mohamad and Hussein (2018). Meyer (2018) also highlighted that the decision-making by students will be based on their purpose and intention. PHEI in the industry need to understand the students' needs and wants beside the capability of them to pay for the fees. The influences that affect student decisions usually come from a variety of factors. Decision making process happen after a student satisfied with the evaluation on the factors that exists that meets with their need. According to Hossler and Gallagher (1987), the decision making process is simply defined as the process through which student decide whether to go to HEI or not. Furthermore, it also can be defined as the selection of an HEI to attend.

### THEORY OF REASON ACTION AND THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR

The underpinning theory used in this study was Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) applied for institution rankings, institution facilities, and employment opportunities. As information, the TPB is used to understand, anticipate and simulate the human behavior in different situations (Ajzen, 2012).

### PROPOSED RESEARCH MODEL

Fixed HEI Characteristics

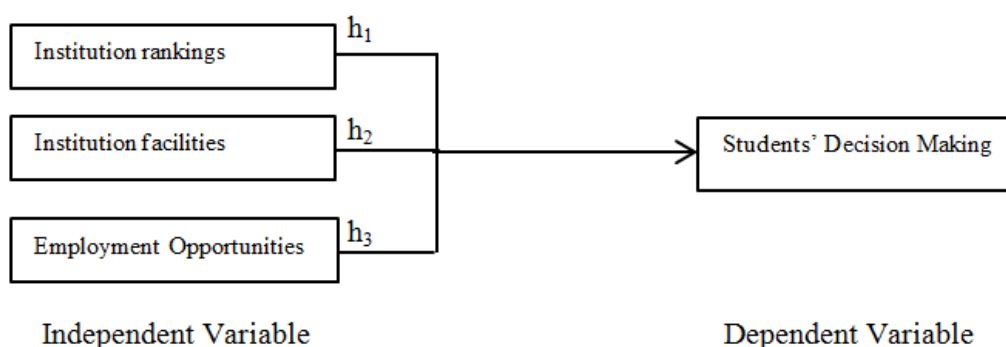


Figure 1: Research framework model

Figure 1 above show the theoretical framework adopted from Chapman (1981), Hossler and Gallagher (1987).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire for this study was developed based on previously validated measures. It is important to note that all the items in the questionnaire were modified to fit with Malaysia context. Before deciding on the actual questionnaire to be utilized in this study, a pilot study was conducted using 100 samples from undergraduate students (semester one). As information, 100 was responded completely and returned. The response rate was 100%. Sekaran and Bougie (2013) stated that a pilot study is performed to correct any inadequacies in the instrument prior to data collection and to identify difficulties in wording and translation.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULT

Factor analysis “is used to reduce a number of variables chosen to become an interpretable and manageable factors (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013; Kyrychenko, 2018). This is done by defining that the common underlying cut-off point chosen for significant factor loading is 0.50, which was suggested by Hair *et al.* (2010). In order to get solid loading, factor analysis was conducted based on original 24 items, which are four items on institution ranking (IR), 7 items on institution facilities (IF), 5 items on employment opportunities (EO), and 8 items from decision making (DM). Based on the result of analysis, it shows all 24 items were higher than 0.5 with range between .561 and .958 considered as acceptable as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2010) (see table 1.1).

The results also indicate the value of Kaiser Meyer-Olkin (KMO). The purpose of KMO is to assessing the strength of the relationships and suggesting factorability of the variables, Beavers *et al.* (2013). According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) and Hair *et al.* (2010) stated the KMO must exceed 0.50. For pilot test, results indicate the value of KMO has exceeded the minimum value 0.5 (institution rankings .801, institution facilities .877, employment opportunities .800) suggested by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007) also Hair *et al.* (2010) (see table 1.1).

Cronbach’s alpha can be considered as a perfectly adequate indication of the internal consistency, and thus of reliability (Sekaran, 2000; Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). They also stated if Cronbach’s Alpha is closer to one, the reliability of the measures is higher. Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.6 is considered poor, 0.7 is good, 0.8 is categorized as very good, and 0.9 is categorized excellent. According to table 1.1, results showed that all three factors Cronbach’s alpha values yielded .70 and above suggested by Sekaran and Bougie (2013). Hence, all the measures were highly reliable. Institution rankings with 4 items cronbach’s alpha was .887 indicates excellent reliability, institution facilities with 7 items cronbach’s alpha was .924 indicates excellent reliability, employment opportunities with 5 items cronbach’s alpha was .860 indicates excellent reliability, and decision making with 8 items cronbach’s alpha was .842 indicates excellent reliability. None of these factors were dropped from subsequent analysis since the value depicts in reliability is accepted for all variables. Lastly, table 1 presented summary of factor loadings, KMO and Cronbach’s alpha for all variables.

**Table 1: Summary factor loadings, KMO and Cronbach’s alpha for all variables (n=100)**

No Item	Item	Factor loadings	KMO	Cronbach’s Alpha ( $\alpha$ )
<b>Institution Rankings</b>				
IR1	Good reputation of the university	.747	.801	.887
IR2	University status	.750		
IR3	Prestige of the university	.779		
IR4	The value of my degree reflected by reputation of the university	.590		
<b>Institution Facilities</b>				
IF1	Campus safety	.739	.877	.924
IF2	Campus security	.697		
IF3	Quality of facilities	.638		
IF4	The campus looks attractive	.619		
IF5	University buildings are well maintained	.711		
IF6	The equipment sports facilities well maintained	.614		
IF7	The recreation facilities (e.g. student centre) look attractive	.775		
<b>Employment Opportunities</b>				
EO1	Career opportunity available for graduates	.706	.800	.860
EO2	Availability of working opportunity through this university	.682		
EO3	Studying at this university will make it possible to find a job after qualifying	.561		
EO4	Studying at this university will increase career prospects	.617		

EO5	University has a positive image with possible employers	.764		
Decision Making				
DM1	Variety of academic programme offered	.958	.730	.842
DM2	Tuition fees structure	.868		
DM3	Location of university	.939		
DM4	Good reputation of the university	.726		
DM5	Good facility provided by university	.805		
DM6	The future employment opportunities available for graduates	.718		
DM7	Advertisement in social media application done by university	.773		
DM8	Availability of financial aid at university	.621		

## CONCLUSION

As a conclusion, based on underpinning theory and previous research on HEI's choice, investigates the factors influence students' decisions making to enroll at private HEI was the main interest of this research. As mentioned before, a hundred (100) data distributed for pilot test and the respondent was first year students (semester one only) study undergraduate program at Universiti Kuala Lumpur Business School Campus. The data analysis conducted by applied SPSS version 2.4 for factor analysis, KMO and Cronbach's alpha reliability results. Furthermore, the study has outlined the specific components with named assigned accordingly matched with the framework that being proposed in the earlier stage of this study.

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