



Factors Influencing Selection of University by Working People in Pakistan

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to find out the factors, which working people rely on while selecting a university for higher studies. The study also finds how these factors are ranked according to their importance and how to highlight the universities in Pakistan to cater the importance of growing market segment of working people in Pakistan. The quantitative approach and self-administered questionnaire is used to examine seven factors extracted from relevant literature on the basis of five point likert scales by surveying 100 students of KASBIT, MAJU and FUUAST. The data are analyzed on SPSS and mean importance ranking is applied to find out the preferential ranking of working people to select a university. The analysis of research revealed that on the basis of mean ranking the ‘Timing of Lectures’ identified as 1st ranked factor followed by 2nd ‘Cost of Education’, 3rd ‘Convenience’, 4th ‘Value of Education’, 5th ‘Degree content/ Structure’, 6th ‘Physical Facilities’ and 7th ‘Recommendations’. It is recommended for universities in Pakistan to consider working people as distinctive segment and formulate marketing strategies to cater according to the priorities of the working people in Pakistan.

Keywords: Influencing factors, university selection, working people, self-administered

JEL Classification: M31, I20

Introduction

This study investigates factors influence selection of university by working people in Pakistan as it is considered as career making decision. Selection of university is a process which is undertaken by an individual who is taking into consideration different career alternatives for comparison and then select one of them (Gati and Asher 2001). The selection of university and career of an individual has very close relation as it creates a “mini-cycle” which is itself a part of the whole career development cycle and generates long term outcomes on the life of an individual (Germeijs et al 2012).

In Pakistan, around a decade ago individuals after completing their graduation used to start doing job or business career without perusing further studies but now individuals cannot survive in the job market without acquiring further qualification. Universities in Pakistan cater the needs of individuals by providing them full time, part time and executive classes. After identifying the importance of decision related to selection of a university and how it affects the entire career of an individual in the long term, this research will try to evaluate the factors influencing selection of university by working people.

Problem Statement

The central confront is begin to assessed the causal link as what working people follow as preferential criteria while selecting a university for their higher studies.

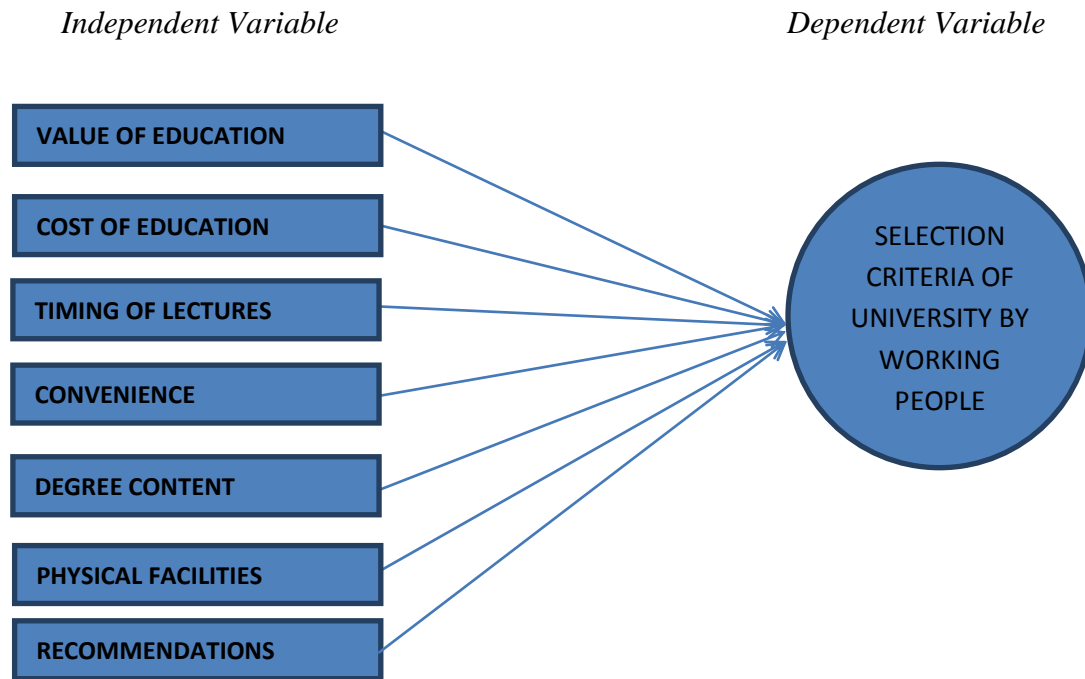
Research Objectives

- To find out the factors which working people rely on while selecting a university for higher studies?
- To identify the ranking of factors according to their importance.
- To highlight the importance of growing market segment of working people who want higher studies in Universities.

- To highlight the priorities of working people while selecting universities so that universities better cater their requirement.

Research Model

Model is based on seven (7) independent factors and one (1) dependent factor as per follows:



(Adopted from Wagner et. al 2009)

$$SCUWP = \alpha + \beta_1 TOL + \beta_2 COE + \beta_3 CON + \beta_4 VOE + \beta_5 DCS + \beta_6 PYF + \beta_7 REC + \varepsilon$$

1α = It is the constant effecting SCUWP, β_1 TOL= Timing of Lecture

β_2 COE= Cost of Education, β_3 CON= Convenience

β_4 VOE= Value of Education, β_5 DCS= Degree / content structure

β_6 PYF= Physical Facilities, β_7 REC= Recommendations

Hypotheses

Based on the review of literature and this study hypothesizes that following are significant factors that influences the selection of university by working people in Pakistan.

H_{A1} Value of education is important factor in selection of university by working people

H_{A2} Cost of education is important factor in selection of university by working people.

H_{A3} Timing of lecture is important factor in selection of university by working people.

H_{A4} Degree content and structure is important factor in selection of university by working people.

H_{A5} Convenience is important factor in selection of university by working people.

H_{A6} Physical facilities are important factor in selection of university by working people.

H_{A7} Recommendations are important factor in selection of university by working people.

Literature Review

There are number of studies that have been conducted on factors influencing university selection by students since 70s. Number of studies in past on decision making of students about selection of a college used economic framework and sociological theoretical framework to study the influencing factors of college selection (Jackson, 1978), (Tierney, 1983), (Hearn, 1984) and (Somers et. al 2006). Three theoretical and conceptual approaches have been developed by these frameworks namely: (a) Economic models, (b) Status-Attainment models, and (d) Combined models.

Hossler, Schmit, & Vesper, (1999) in their study state that economic models are based on econometric assumptions that while selecting a college, the prospective students make rational thinking by making careful cost-benefit analysis. Furthermore, status-attainment models are based on the assumption that while selecting a college a students go through a practical decision making process which includes variety of social and individual factors leading to professional and learning objective (Jackson, 1982).

As per Jackson (1982), the combined models are the combination of rational assumptions of economic models and status-attainment models. The combined models generally divided students' decision making process into three phases; a) Aspirations

development, b) Alternative evaluation, c) Options considerations and evaluation of the remaining options and then come up with final decision.

Some of the previous research studies are based on combined models and highlights the important factors affecting university selection. University location can be the major factor that influences student decision to select or enrolled in the university (Sevier 1986). Kohn et al. (1976) also concluded that higher education institution near to home is one factor that influence a student to select a college or university. Location convenience i.e. near to home or place of work is also considered major important factor in selection of a university or a college (Absher & Crawford, 1996; Servier, 1994).

The research study of Ford et al. (1999) revealed that study programs like flexibility and range of degree options are one of the most important factors to choose higher education institutions. In addition, Ismail (2009) stated that academic recognitions considered as choice criteria for students in selection of their university or college and students also value the reputation of university as one of the influential factor in choice of their university (Lay et al 1981), (Murphy 1981), (Sevier 1986) and (Keling 2006). Furthermore, the research conducted by Keling (2007) in Malaysia found a positive relation between college reputation and college choice with an average mean score of 3.730 and physical facilities at educational institute such as class rooms, labs and libraries are another important factor influencing student decision of a college or a university (Absher et.al 1996).

In 2000, Joseph & Joseph stated that cost related to education issues have become more critical factor in university selection over the year. Price has negative influence on selection of college while financial aid has positive influential factor in selection of college. (Jackson 1986). Yusof (2008) stated that financial assistance offered by universities is considered as one of the important factor to select higher education institution, (Litten 1982), (Manski & Wise 1983), (Jackson 1988) and (Ismail 2009).

Hassan et al. (2008) pointed out that factors such as age, income of family, reputation of university and location, physical facilities may influence the choice of university by students. However, Wagner et.al (2009) reported in their study that cost of education, value of education, degree content and structure, recommendation of family, friends and peers, physical facilities and resources, and institutional information as important factors.

On the other hand, Nicole, et al. (2003) stated that during the period of 1978-2000, the main important factors were academic reputation of the university, the desired major and total cost of attending university. Some of the studies prior to Nicole, et al. (2003) also indicated that parents, friends and guidance centre materials were considered as most important factor in selection of university.

After reviewing number of literature and international journals, regarding selection of university by students, the researcher come up with the conclusion that present study based on the conceptual frame work of (Wagner et. al 2009) with some reasonable amendments. The factors applied by Wagner et al. 2009 with some reasonable amendments to be used in this study are as under:

1. Timing of Lecture: This factor includes a) Weekend Program (3 days), b) Evening program (daily basis)
2. Cost of Education: This factor includes a) Fees per course, b) Discount in Fees, c) Installment in Fees
3. Convenience: This factor includes: a) Near to Office, b) Near to home, c) Spacious parking facilities, d) ideal Located within city
4. Value of Education: This factor includes: a) International value of degree, b) Well-designed Degree Program, c) Highly Qualified Faculty members.
5. Degree Content / Structure: This factor includes a) Reasonable Entry Requirement b) Wide range of subjects, c) Number of specialist programs

6. Physical Facilities: a) Well Equipped Computer Labs, b) Over Head Projector, c) Air Conditioned Rooms, d) Well Equipped Library, e) Spacious Auditorium
7. Recommendations: a) Parents, b) Friends, c) Colleague, d) Employer

Research Methodology

The research is carried out by reviewing existing literature on general students preferential criteria to select a university and particularly on working people preference to select a university, so that it provide a right direction for the area under study.

In this research working people means all students of institutes and universities who are working in field i.e. private service, govt. service, business, self employed etc. and simultaneously studying in part time.

The sample frame was chosen from three universities including Mohammad Ali Jinnah University (MAJU), Federal Urdu University of Science and Technology (FUUAST) and Khadim Ali Shah Bukhari Institute of Technology (KASBIT).

The questionnaire consists of two parts; one part is of demographic variables like name, institution, qualification, discipline, age, gender and occupation. In the second part covers 24 statement under the heading of 7 factors namely:

1. Timing of Lecture, 2. Cost of Education, 3. Convenience, 4. Value of Education 5. Degree / content structure, 6. Physical Facilities, 7. Recommendation

Data Analysis and Results

The data was collected by distributing 120 questionnaires in three universities during evening and weekend classes. The researcher self administered the distribution and collection of the survey, Questionnaire were collected approximately after 15 minutes after assuring that enough time was given to complete the questionnaire. Complete, acceptable and usable 100 questionnaires were used for statistical analysis indicating 83% response rate. The data is

analyzed as explained in the methodology part of this research and results are shown in the form of figures, tables to be easily understandable.

Descriptive Analysis-Respondents Profile by Gender:

In terms of gender, 100 sample respondents were evenly distributed between two major gender categories. The sample contained 67 percent males and rest 33 percent were females. Below Table and Figure show the gender statistics of the respondents.

Table 1: Showing Respondents Profile by Gender

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	67	67.0	67.0	67.0
Female	33	33.0	33.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

Descriptive Analysis-Respondents Profile by Qualification:

As the study was surveyed in different business universities of Karachi where five categories of respondents as far as qualification is concerned whether they were undergraduate, graduate, postgraduate, MS/M.Phil and PhD. Table 2 shows the qualification statistics of the respondents.

Table 2: Showing Descriptive Analysis-Respondents Profile by Qualification

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Under Graduate	19	19	19	19
Graduate	32	32	32	51
Post Graduate	28	28	28	79
MS / MPhil	19	19	19	98
PhD	2	2	2	100
Total	100	100	100	

Descriptive Analysis-Respondents Profile by Age:

The age of the respondents surveyed in universities are ranging in four different categories ranging from 21 to 36 & above. The range of age which is dominated in the respondents profile is 25-30 followed by the age range of 31-35. Table 3 shows the age statistics of the respondents.

Table 3: Showing Respondent Profile by Age

Description	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
21 to 24	17	17	17	17
25 to 30	40	40	40	57
31-35	27	27	27	84
36 and Above	16	16	16	100
Total	100	100	100	

Mean Importance Ranking of Variables

Table 4: Showing Mean Importance Ranking of Variables

Variables	Mean Value	Mean Importance Ranking
Weekend program.	4.82	1
Evening program	4.81	2
Instalment in fees	4.59	3
Fees per course	4.54	4
Near to office	4.53	5
Discount in fees	4.44	6
Near to home	4.43	7
Ideal located within city	4.25	8
Spacious parking	4.22	9
Well designed degree program	4.15	10
Reasonable entry requirement	4.12	11
Highly qualified faculty member	4.10	12
International value of degree	3.92	13
Number of specialist program	3.91	14
Wide range of subjects	3.82	15
Air conditioned rooms	3.70	16
Well equipped computer lab	3.65	17
Well equipped library	3.59	18
Colleagues recommendation	3.56	19
Employer recommendation	3.46	20
Spacious library	3.45	21
Overhead projector	3.42	22
Friends recommendation	3.38	23
Parents recommendation	3.27	24
OVERALL MEAN	4.01	

The main purpose of the study was to identify the factors influencing selection of university by working people in Pakistan and for this the researcher analysed all twenty four

variables on their mean value using SPSS and is arranged in descending order to find out the mean importance ranking of variable from highest to lowest. Table 4 of mean importance ranking of variables shows the ranking of variables on the bases of most important to least important variables.

The data analysis revealed that the five most important variables which affect the university selection by working people are 1st Weekend program (4.82), followed by 2nd Evening program (4.81), 3rd Instalment in fees (4.59), 4th Fees per course (4.54) and Near to office (4.53) considered as the 5th important variables.

The analysis of data further revealed that five least important variables on the basis of mean importance ranking are 20th Employer recommendation (3.46) followed by 21st Spacious library (3.45), 22nd Overhead projector (3.42), 23rd Friends recommendation (3.38) and Parents recommendation is considered as the least important variables in selection of university by working people as shown in table 5.

Five Most and Least Important Variables:

Table 5: Showing Five Most And Least Important Variables

FIVE MOST IMPORTANT VARIABLES			FIVE LEAST IMPORTANT VARIABLES		
Variables	Mean Value	Mean Ranking	Variables	Mean Value	Mean Ranking
Weekend program.	4.82	1	Employer recommendation	3.46	20
Evening program	4.81	2	Spacious library	3.45	21
Installment in fees	4.59	3	Overhead projector	3.42	22
Fees per course	4.54	4	Friends recommendation	3.38	23
Near to office	4.53	5	Parents recommendation	3.27	24

Discrimination of Major and Minor Importance Variables:

The Table 6 shows the ranking of variables on the basis of mean score to select a university by working people and as decided in methodology part of the study the research further elaborate the data analysis process by discrimination of variables as major and minor important variables on the basis of overall mean value of the variables. As decided in the methodology part of the research that distinction of major and minor important variables

based on the overall mean value of 24 variables, which is in this case is 4.01. Based on the above criteria, out of twenty four variables, twelve variables scores 4.01 and above mean value and can be labelled as major important while twelve variables scores below 4.01 and can be labelled as minor important as proposed criteria.

Table 6: Showing Discrimination of Major and Minor Important Variables

DISCRIMINATION ON THE CRITERIA OF OVERALL MEAN 4.01					
MAJOR IMPORTANT VARIABLES			MINOR IMPORTANT VARIABLES		
Variables	Mean Value	Mean Ranking	Variables	Mean Value	Mean Ranking
Weekend program.	4.82	1	International value of degree	3.92	13
Evening program	4.81	2	Number of specialist program	3.91	14
Installment in fees	4.59	3	Wide range of subjects	3.82	15
Fees per course	4.54	4	Air conditioned rooms	3.70	16
Near to office	4.53	5	Well equipped computer lab	3.65	17
Discount in fees	4.44	6	Well equipped library	3.59	18
Near to home	4.43	7	Colleagues recommendation	3.56	19
Ideal located within city	4.25	8	Employer recommendation	3.46	20
Spacious parking	4.22	9	Spacious Auditorium	3.45	21
Well designed degree program	4.15	10	Overhead projector	3.42	22
Reasonable entry requirement	4.12	11	Friends recommendation	3.38	23
Highly qualified faculty member	4.10	12	Parents recommendation	3.27	24

Mean Importance Ranking of Factors:

To argue the empirical analysis and to provide readers the complete view of the factors influencing university selection by working people, 24 variables are brought down to 8 factors namely Timing of Lecture (2 variables), Cost of Education (3 variables), Convenience (4 variables), Value of Education (3 variables), Degree Content / Structure (3 variables), Physical facilities (5 variables), Recommendations (4 variables). All these factors were already developed in theoretical model and also stated in the questionnaire to the respondent to respond easily.

Table 7: Showing Mean Important Ranking of Factors

FACTORS	MEAN VALUE	MEAN IMPORTANT RANKING
Timing of lectures	4.81	1
Cost of education	4.52	2
Convenience	4.36	3
Value of education	4.19	4
Degree content/structure	3.95	5
Physical facilities	3.62	6
Recommendation	3.42	7
Over all Mean	4.12	

The result in Table 7 shows that the first factor on the basis of mean important rank is timing of lecture (4.81) followed by Cost of Education (4.52), Convenience (4.36), Value of Education (4.19), Degree content / structure (3.95), Physical facilities (3.62) and Recommendations (3.42).

Major and Minor Important Factors:

As shown in Table 7 regarding seven summarize influencing factors of working people to select a university in Pakistan ranked on the basis of their mean important value. To discriminate between major important and minor important factors we used the same criteria as mentioned in the methodology section i.e. to take overall mean of all seven factors, which is in this case is 4.12. Based on above criteria out of seven factors, four factors score above overall mean value of 4.12 and are labelled as “major importance factors” while three scores are below the overall mean value and are labelled as “minor importance factors” as proposed criteria.

Table 8: Showing Major and Minor Importance Factors

DISCRIMINATION ON THE CRITERIA OF OVERALL MEAN 4.12					
MAJOR IMPORTANCE FACTORS			MINOR IMPORTANCE FACTORS		
Factors	Mean Value	Mean Ranking	Factors	Mean Value	Mean Ranking
Timing of lectures	4.81	1	Degree content/structure	3.95	5
Cost of education	4.52	2	Physical facilities	3.62	6
Convenience	4.36	3	Recommendation	3.42	7
Value of education	4.19	4			

Hypotheses Testing

Seven independent factors analysed by taking overall mean. Overall mean was used as a discriminating value between major and minor importance factors. Out of seven hypotheses four hypotheses were supported by the analysis so the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted for hypotheses H_{A1} , H_{A2} , H_{A3} and H_{A4} namely, Value of Education, Cost of Education, Timing of Lecture and Convenience. However, remaining three hypotheses were not supported by the analysis so alternative hypothesis rejected and null hypothesis is accepted i.e. H_{A4} , H_{A6} and H_{A7} , Degree content and structure, Physical facilities and Recommendations.

Table 9: Showing Summary Hypotheses Testing

S.No.	Factors	Hypothesis	Analysis	H_0 Status	Supported
H ₁	Value of education	Major	Major	Rejected	Yes
H ₂	Cost of education	Major	Major	Rejected	Yes
H ₃	Timing of lecture	Major	Major	Rejected	Yes
H ₄	Degree content and structure	Major	Minor	Accepted	No
H ₅	Convenience	Major	Major	Rejected	Yes
H ₆	Physical facilities	Major	Minor	Accepted	No
H ₇	Recommendations	Major	Minor	Accepted	No

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study covers approximately all aspects of selection employed by students to select a university that were identified in previous related studies which include: Timing of Lecture, Cost of Education, Value of Education, Convenience, Degree content and Structure, Physical Facilities and Recommendations. The data were analyzed on working people of Pakistan by descriptive analysis, and mean important ranking on data which were gathered by employing the technique of five point likert scale. Then, further researcher draw a line of discrimination on the basis of overall mean between major and minor important variables. To provide the practical understanding researchers have also done the same analysis on seven

factors under which all above twenty three variables grouped under seven factors and then discriminate them on the same method to identify the major and minor important factors.

It is very much necessary for university in Pakistan to understand the factors influence the selection of university by working people, which will help them to design strategies to match their preferences. This study focused on the factors influence the selection of university by working people in Pakistan, so this study identified the preference criteria of the working people while selecting a university and how these factors are prioritize according to their importance.

This study has multi-dimensional significance: a) theoretical contributions and b) practical implications. Theoretically, the study fills the important gap in the literature by exploring factors influencing the selection of university by working people. The findings of study make an addition in existing frame of the literature and can serve as an initial point on which future studies can be built.

On the practical side, this study can support university to identify the major influencing factors that may determine working people preference in selection of university in Pakistan. Such information will definitely support university in devising suitable marketing strategies for reaching and attracting working people segment.

The result of the study suggest that the timing of lecture is considered the prime important factor in selection of a university by working people, in which they consider weekend program (3 days) as most important then evening program. These two timing is available for working people but due to late sitting and other work related load they feel comfortable in weekend programs (3 days), so the university should focus on improving particularly target this distinct segment by providing weekend programs. The study identified that the second important factor for working people is cost of education and working people give its high importance that how much cost they incur in their degree

program and consider instalment in fees, fees per course, and discount in fees as second most important factors in their selection. The third preference factor for working people is convenience and they consider the university as important when it's near to his or her office or home and they also considered spacious parking facilities and ideal location of university within city.

Fourth important factor for working people is value of education which might be considered as the most important factor for full time students. This factor includes, well designed degree program followed by highly qualified faculty members. Furthermore, working people in Pakistan have not given much weightage to the factors such as degree content/structure, physical facilities and recommendations etc.

In light of above, all the universities have to do the following to cater needs of working people:

1. Consider working people as distinct segment.
2. Devise separate marketing plan to cater this segment.
3. Timing of lecture followed by cost of education and convenience are initial criteria for working people to select a university, so management should consider these points while devising marketing strategies.

Future Research Implications

There are some guidelines and implications for future study to come up with better outcomes;

1. Study has one of the limitation is that it is conducted on working people in universities and institute of Karachi. However, sample from other metropolitan cities is necessary for better generalization of the study.
2. This type of research requires the longitudinal types of studies, as influence of factors change from time to time and year by year for more update results.

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