

[University Selection Program for High-school graduates]

Study 1: Semi-Structured Interview

Background

This project is still in early stages, and is directed towards fresh high-school graduates with above-average performance, to help them decide on choosing one of the many possible tracks and opportunities offered to them past their high-school graduation. We expect feedback provided by users that would incredibly help us in narrowing down the possible tracks they might undertake, and to get a more focused domain that will be of assistance in delivering a very concentrated and direct experience that will guide these students into follows the paths that suit them most

Research Goal

The goal of this research study is to help narrow down the possible paths that students might embark on, and understand the reasoning behind it. High-school students have a varying range of paths and careers that they might choose, the goal of this study is to focus on graduating students, look at their preferences, and provide an experience specifically tailored for them, and designed with their most likely tracks and paths in mind, to help them decide on which track they will follow, using detailed information that was gathered after determining what these students usually seek.

Research Questions

- Where do the universities these students apply to fall, in terms of ranking (Both nationwide and globally)?
- What programs / majors are these students generally interested in? Engineering? Medicine? Computer Science?
- Do these students prefer to apply to local universities, or take a chance with internationally-acclaimed universities?
- Is ranking the only factor that determines the universities these students apply to? Are there any other factors?
- Do students seek the university, or the program? Which one outweighs the other?

Method & Recruiting

Method:

- 20-30 Minutes interview with graduates / graduating high-school student, in order to gather detailed information on what they consider post-graduation
- Use questions listed above, as well as follow-up questions for more detailed answers to get to the root of the user's needs.

Recruiting:

- Senior / Sophomore high-school students, or fresh graduates. Goal is to get more than 5 participants to interview.
- Generally any high-school student who is actively searching for opportunities post-graduation.

Script

Introduction

Hello all, my name is Ahmed. I would like to thank you all for taking time to participate in this study I'm conducting. Our project is revolved around finding your preferences, in terms of paths you will embark on after high-school graduation, the goal we have in mind is to design and develop a platform that will make the search easier, and provide you with all the updated information that you need in order to make your decision.

Do you mind if I record this session for note-taking purposes? The recording won't be shared with anyone outside of our team.

Warm-up Questions [*Build rapport. Start with easy questions to get to know the participant.*]:

- When did you start looking at options for paths after graduation?
- What were the most prominent options?
- Which options are you currently considering for yourself?

Questions [Dive deep into their process of searching for post-graduation options, as well as their criteria]:

- As a graduating student, are you interested mainly in Engineering / Medicine, or do you have other preferences you would like to consider? If you do, please state them [This helps determine whether students have a personal preference, or just want to work on whatever's high-demand at the moment]
- Do you prefer applying to universities which are local, or internationally acclaimed? [We would like our design to be inclusive, this helps us decide which orientation is best, and which preference is more common]

- Ask a follow up question regarding the reasoning behind their choice, keep track of how many students took which side
- University Ranking, Degree Program. Which of these choices outweigh the other for you?
 - Follow up with questions regarding which details they want to be shown about Degree programs or University ranking. What do they want to be displayed regarding programs? Which establishment do they trust more with ranking, or is it fame?
- How would you like universities to be shown to you? Ordered by Ranking? Degree Programs you like? Proximity?
 - Ask a follow up question regarding reasoning behind their choice, to determine which criteria they are most likely to follow when looking at options
- What information are you interested in regarding universities? Program Details? Course Syllabus? (Give example then wait for their answer)
- When was the last time you looked at future options for post-grad paths? What did you look for and why? Can you show us the sources you looked at for this information? [This helps us find sources they feel comfortable with, so we can gather their data and centralize it]
 - Ask follow up question regarding the way this information they searched for was presented to them. Did they like it? Do they find it convenient and easy to read? Is it informative enough? What do they dislike about it?

Wrap-up

Thank you so much for your time, the information you provided was very insightful, and it will help us provide a great experience for you, and for other students alike. You can always feel free to contact me at ahmed.fcit88@gmail.com if you have any more questions, suggestions, or thoughts you would like to share!

Study 2: Survey

Background

In the interviews we have conducted, we have found out that when searching and browsing for Universities, users had varying criteria when looking at options. Criteria ranged from Reputation and International Acclaim of the University, all the way to Market Demand for the Degree they're interested in. In order to provide a polished experience for our users, we need to collect more data that helps provide us with a grasp of their criteria, and as well as what kind of information they'd like to see when browsing a certain University. Taking these factors into consideration will help us cater to their needs, and deliver a polished experience.

Research Goal

The goal of this survey is to further understand and grasp the needs of graduates -When searching for Universities- and the criteria behind their search, to provide them with options that aim to suit their needs in the determination process of their future paths, as well as to delve deeper into what information they'd like to access when browsing for universities, provided that they wanted more detail.

Research Questions

- What do students look for, when browsing Universities?
- What catches a student's attention about a University, regardless of their criteria?
- What kind of information are students interested in, when browsing a certain university?

Method & Recruiting

The aim of this study is to reach a minimum of 20 or more high-school graduates, and ask them questions about their search criteria. This will help us shed a light on what's really important, and what stands out for students when browsing and looking for options, as well as delve deeper into what matters to them regarding the University itself. The data gathered from this survey will be incredibly crucial in designing a convenient, accessible, and beautiful design for our user base.

Survey Questions

Questions

1. What do you usually look for, when browsing for Universities that you'd like to apply to?
 - a. Degree I'm interested in
 - b. International Ranking
 - c. Education Quality
 - d. Market Demand
 - e. Other (Please state which)
2. What Information about the University would you like to know (Not Degree related)?
 - a. Architecture
 - b. Dorm Availability
 - c. Locations of Interest
 - d. Extra-curriculars
 - e. Other (Please state which, even if multiple)

3. Which from the following would you consider when wanting to learn more about a University?
 - a. Undergraduate Catalogue
 - b. Student Opinion
 - c. Graduates' Opinion
 - d. Critics and Rankings (e.g. QS World ranking)
 - e. Other (Please state which, even if multiple)
4. What kind of Information would you like to see when browsing a certain university (Select all that apply)?
 - a. Acceptance Rate
 - b. Tuition Cost
 - c. Programs and Degrees
 - d. Courses and Course Syllabus
 - e. Other (Please state which, even if multiple)
5. Besides textual Information, what other form of presentation would you like to see?
 - a. Video
 - b. Images
 - c. Infographics
 - d. Other (Please state which)
6. Do Faculty Accreditations (e.g. ABET Accreditations) matter to you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
7. Would you like to see Information regarding Faculty members, their qualifications and research?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
8. Do you think a student-managed forum / board about a certain University is something you'd like to see?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No
9. On a scale of 0 (Irrelevant) to 10 (Incredibly Valuable), how much does student opinion matter to you?
 - a. [Input box, participant enters a number here]
10. What other information would you like to know that wasn't mentioned in this survey?
 - a. [Input box, participant enters text here]