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Full Name: MRISHO ABEID OMARY.

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Lecturer's Name: AHSAN RIAZ.

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Introduction:

J1 talks about factors are considered for the choice of universities in Malaysia. As according to the Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia, almost 90,000 students from more than 175 countries worldwide have spread all over the Southern part to Northern part of Malaysia. The International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM, 1983) has a greater number of students compared to the other universities; accommodation students form more than 100 countries as per its 2008 annual report. International Students come to Malaysia to pursue their undergraduate studies, and also to continue with their postgraduate studies like Master and Doctoral degrees. Since the importance of Postgraduate studies is very high, tuition providers always consider improvements to their overall performance in order to attract prospective students to continue with Master and Doctoral level of studies at their institutions. Also promote the university as a renowned research university in the world, indirectly promote other prospective students and also act as independent study. This means, for a university to attract postgraduate students, particularly international students, it should point out the important elements required by international students in selecting universities. This article aims to study the factors that elaborate the choice of student's enrolment in a new program, which are applied to international students' choice of study in Malaysia. With analytic hierarchy process (AHP), the study levels factors that affect international students' choice based on the sensitivity of the first year postgraduate students in IIUM.

According to J2, Malaysia has both public and private institutions of higher education. The increase of education sector has stretched out the number of private institutions of higher learning and the involvement of foreign universities, which offers relating programmes and/or the prospect of establishing branch campuses in Malaysia. The growth of private institutions of higher education since 1990's has winded the selection of universities for students who wish to pursue their education in Malaysia, which increased the competitive nature of higher education industry for undergraduate students. The nation's focus on higher education has increased the number of types of higher education. The number of private higher education institutions has increased from 537-570 in 2002-2005, which then dropped to 460 in 2009 due to the decrease in the number of non-university-status private institutions. By 2009, the number of public and private universities in Malaysia increased to 20 from 17 public and 11 private universities from 2002. This growth has enabled more students to pursue their education in Malaysia. In 2002, 664,402 students were enrolled in higher institutions in Malaysia. The enrolment increased by 58% in only 7 years, and in 2009, enrolment exceeded 1 million. The Economic Planning Unit, (2006) shows the percentage of students enrolled in bachelor's degree programmes raised by 40.0% from 2000-2005, while the percentage enrolled in public institutions decreased by almost 10% in the same period, from 74.0% to 65.8%. 57.8% of students in first-degree programmes in Malaysia were registered in public institutions in 2009, which showed a greater shift in students' preferences towards private institutions.

All public universities are subjected to *Bahagian Pengurusan Kemasukan Pelajar*, with an exception of Universiti Sains Malaysia which was excluded since 2009 after having been designated as the accelerated programme for excellence. This study aims on first year undergraduates in the 2009-2010 academic sessions of USM with the sample derived from the School of Social Sciences.

J3 mentions that for a Jordanian student or foreigner who wants to enrol for higher education, they are required to present a formal proof of a certificate of success in high school, depending on the following factors, tendency profile, mark rates, financial ability and others (Embo Saiedi, 2010). In addition, especially in Eastern communities, (Kubilius and Yasumoto, 2006) the parents attitudes have a greater effect on the choice of all variables to students, in fact, some factors will have an effect on the decision to select a university; these factors are categorised in the following groups: personal, social, economic, educational and marketing factors. This study focuses on role played by marketing factors, in impelling Jordanian students' choice of a private university.

Literature Review:

In J1, Mansky and Wise (1983) did a seminal work on selection criteria that examined the individual's choices on higher education. The results were; individual applications were more important than university admission decisions in determination of attendance. Also, Montgomery (2002), Avery and Hoxby (2004) studied the choice among graduate business schools and discovered substantial effects of program quality, cost and convenience. However, Long (2004) who used data from 1972, 1982 and 1992, discovered that the level of importance of cost becomes lesser throughout the year. Chen and Zimitat (2006) studied the behavioural motivations of Taiwanese considering to undertake higher education in Australia and USA, found that in choosing a destination of study, the most important factors were, program's price, teaching methods, environment, and influence of family and friends. Similarly, Ivy (2008) discovered something similar to the previous findings about the same topic.

J2 however, shows that one of the elements that linked their decisions was cost of education and financial aid. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) consistently show the significant negative relationship between tuition rises and enrolment. On the other hand, Hossler, Schmit and Vesper (1999) discovered that financial help reduces net cost of college attendance. Another element was reputation of the institution, this is due to the increasing number of higher institutions hence students are more critical in their selection process (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). Also, studies prove that, if an institution has a good image, it strongly affects the preference of the student (Mazzarol, 1998; Bourke, 2000; Gutman and Miaoulis, 2003). Institutional characteristics and the type of programmes offered also affect the students' selection process. Hooley and Lynch (1981) stated the suitability of programmes is important in the process. Krampf and Heinlein (1981) however, found that prospective

students compare programmes offered by various institutions to gain their suitability. Geographical location of the institutions was also a factor, whereas, many students consider colleges that were closer to their homes and don't show excessive academic or financial obstacles (Jackson, 1982). A survey study that was conducted by Rohaziat Baharun (2004) on the local universities indicated that, important determinants are reputation, programme structure, quality of facilities and family and peer influence.

J3 shows Hassan's research (et al 2008) that, the important factors are age, father's income, university's reputation, location and facilities. According to Wagner and Fard, (2009), important factors according to rank are, education cost and value, degree content and structure, family, friends and peers. Some previous studies done by other researchers like Nicole (el at 2003) suggest, during the period from 1987-2000, the important factors were university's academic reputation, availability of desired materials and cost of the university, while, parents/guardians, friends and guidance centres were rated most important in 1994. As for a field study conducted by the Academic Publication Council, Kuwait University, 800 students (male and female) were given questionnaires from UMM AL Qura University in Saudi Arabia, whereas the analysis indicated that, a university degree gives better options for employment and raise as much as the holder in Saudi Community. However, females added more information such as love of the city and the convenience of the family's situation.

Analysis:

All three articles (J1, J2 and J3) pointed out the same factors such as family, friends and peers, cost of education, proximity of the institution to their homes, facilities and financial aid as factors that influence the choice of selection of a university to a student. However, J3 also mentioned the love of the city, convenience of the family situation and availability of desired fields as other factors.

Methodology:

J1 used a sample of 135 students of IIUM in Gombak, Selangor to compare the importance of all factors after briefing the students about the research objectives. The criteria used in this study were taken from the literature above which are price, prominence, program, environment, facilities, convenience and scholarship. The study used was analytic hierarchy process (AHP) due to its appropriateness to the matter in assessing criteria and making decisions (Saad, 2001; Udo, 2000; Yang and Lee, 2002). AHP is also well-known to be a tool used to rank the importance of alternatives based on some defined criteria. Another consideration to AHP is that it is a notion of consistency which is the degree to which the perceived relationship between elements in the pair wise comparisons is maintained.

J2 used a questionnaire based approach that was regard to the 167 responses from the first-year undergraduate students of USM Social Science of 2009/2010. It was designed to ascertain student's demographic profile, family socio-economic background, reasons to pursue higher education, influential factors of choice on choosing a public or private institution, source of information for choosing a university, and reasons of choosing USM.

The study used in this research was descriptive analysis approach. A five-point-Likert scale was use to rank the importance of the factors.

J3 used descriptive analytical approach in order to assign the ranking to factors affecting Jordanian student's choice of private universities. The sample used was 25 male and 25 females student of high school graduates of 2010 who got admissions in 3 private universities in Jordan. The data collection method was secondary data from similar and books and internet, while primary data was derived from asking several questions to the sample members.

Analysis:

Both J2 and J3 used descriptive analytical approach, while J1 used analytical hierarchy approach. It is also observed that J1 and J2 had an approximate number of respondents adding up to 135 and 167 students, while J3 had a smaller sample size of 50.

Results and discussions:

J1 had responses from 135 post-graduate students with 78 male and 57 female. Almost 60 are originated from South-east Asia while 55 come from Middle East and 20 come from Western Countries. Some of the findings were that programs offered and tuition price had more votes than the other factors, while environment and scholarship were ranked less important.

J2 results received were based on the profiles given in the research which are as follows; age profile had more respondents with the age of 20 at 29.9%, educational background received 56.3% of students with a CGPA above 3.0, socio-economic background received results 80% students who come from families with salaries below RM 3,000.

J3 results show that the most important factor was financial costs of the university which led it to be ranked as the top most important reason in the research.

Analysis:

All articles; J1, J2 and J3, show a common factor of price and financial cost which suggests that financial costs are indeed the most important factors that affect students their choice of universities.

Conclusion:

In conclusion all three articles show a very broad similarity in the factors observed. However, J1 and J2 have more in common concerning factors and proximity in the number of respondents they received, while as for J3, it had a lesser sample size compared to J1 and J2. Due to the number of responses received, it is safe to say that the study done by J1 and J2 is more effective than that of J3 hence could be used effectively in making proper-and-good decisions. As for J3, since it didn't have as many responses due its sample size, it is safe to say that its research is not very effective hence can't be used in good-and-proper decision making.

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