

An Analysis of the Key Factors Affecting Students' Decision-Making When Choosing Colleges for Undergraduate Studies in Mumbai.

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Abstract

India has the third largest higher education system in the world in terms of enrolments, after China and the US. India is acknowledged to have the largest higher education systems in the world in terms of number of institutes. Higher education is the second largest opportunity in the Indian education sector. There has been phenomenal growth of higher education in India since Independence. These numbers have increased by 26 times in the case of universities and 66 times in the case of colleges. (Sudararajan and Gopal, 2016).

College selection is one of the many important choices students make in determining future career plans. The governance of the higher education system throughout the world has changed considerably in the recent years. The number of unaided college is increasing year after year; hence students are getting wider choice to select the best suitable college for higher studies.

Significance of the study:

Student's enrollment is the lifeblood of every educational institution. Today the increase in number of private and international educational institutions has lead to a high need to understand the role of institution in the life of student. The colleges must have strong in – depth understanding about factors that influence most to the students while selecting a college.

Objectives of the study:

The objectives of the research study are as follows:

1. To investigate factors influencing students in selecting college for undergraduate programs.
2. To determine whether demographic factors influence selection of college.
3. To understand the role of family members in selecting a college.
4. To evaluate the impact of college infrastructure on youth while selecting a college.
5. To frame relevant conclusions regarding youth selecting a particular college.

Review of Literature:

The author has identified different factors influencing student's while selecting college in University of Indonesia. The basic objective of research was to understand its customer needs and wants in order to remain competitive and survive among higher education providers. (Kusumawati, 2013)

The authors identified the students' view about selecting a college nearby to their residence. Majority of females prefer their college to be closer from their home as compared to males, emphasis on the female safety concern.

The parent's education and family income is also considered while selecting college. (Mattern and Wyatt, 2009)

Hypothesis of the study:

Hypotheses of the study were as follows:

1. The propensity to visit college website before selecting a college is high among undergraduate students.
2. There is a significant difference for the factors considered by students belonging to traditional and professional programs while selecting a college for undergraduate program.

Research Methodology:

The present study is exploratory in nature to provide clear guidance for empirical search. A study of related and pertinent books and articles along with clues for further investigation lead to formulation of workable hypotheses. Data is collected through survey method.

Sampling technique:

The researcher adopted judgmental sampling method. In judgemental sampling a questionnaire was distributed by a researcher to students pursuing undergraduates programme from different colleges of western suburb college in Mumbai.

Analysis and Interpretation:

Hypothesis 1: The propensity to visit college website before selecting a college is high among undergraduate students.

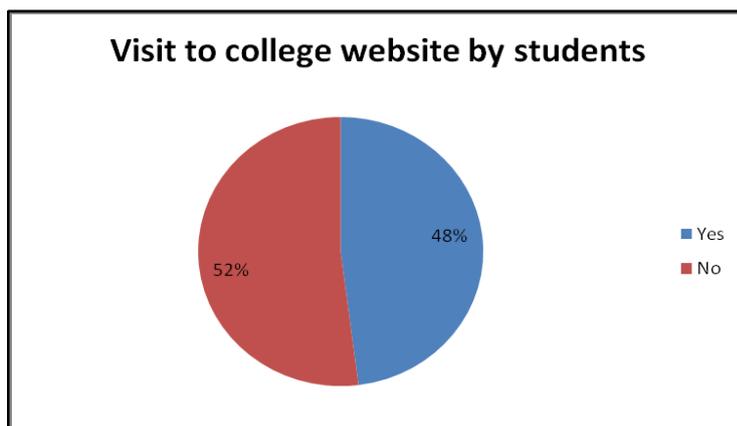


Figure 1.1 : Graphical representation of students visiting website

The figure shows the number of respondents visited college website before taking admission. It is depicted from the figure that 48% of respondents visit the website whereas, 52% do not visit the websites. The enrollment procedure has become online where; students need to select a list of college and accordingly needs to seek an admission.

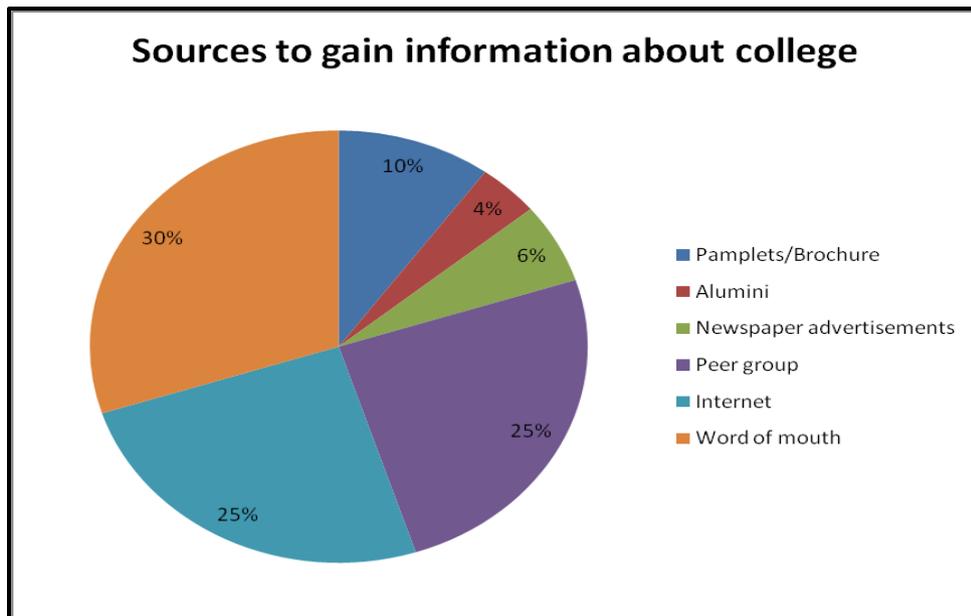


Figure 1.2 : Marketing activities adopted by colleges

Students consider technology as their first hand information but along with that there are many other ways to get the information about the college. As seen from the chart, 30% of students were influenced by the word of mouth. It refers to the reference given by their friends, relatives or any other who is associated with the college.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference for the factors considered by students belonging to traditional and professional programs while selecting a college for undergraduate program.

Table 1.1: Mean scores of Program

	Pursuing program	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Academics	Traditional	45	10.3778	1.91037	.28478
	Professional	55	10.9286	1.69338	.22629
Curricular activities	Traditional	45	10.5333	2.59895	.38743
	Professional	55	10.7143	2.07771	.27765
Infrastructure facilities	Traditional	45	11.4000	2.43460	.36293
	Professional	55	11.3571	1.65616	.22131
Socio – economic	Traditional	45	9.4222	1.82768	.27245
	Professional	55	9.8393	1.91432	.25581
Others	Traditional	45	11.0000	2.16375	.32255
	Professional	55			

Professional	55	11.5179	1.84874	.24705
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Using an alpha level of .05, an independent samples t – test was conducted to evaluate factors considered by male and female students while selecting a college for their undergraduate program.

In first, fourth and fifth variables the ‘Sig’ value for ‘Levene’s Test for Equality of Vairances’ is not less than .05 therefore the t-value of equal variances assumed is considered for further interpretation of the study. Whereas, in second and third factor the ‘Sig’ value for ‘Levene’s Test for Equality of Vairances’ is equal to or less than .

Table 1.2: Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Academics	Equal variances assumed	.482	.489	-1.534	99	.128	-.55079	.35897	-1.26306	.16148
	Equal variances not assumed	3.802	.054	-1.514	88.787	.134	-.55079	.36374	-1.27356	.17197
				-.389	99	.698	-.18095	.46523	-1.10407	.74217
Curricular activities	Equal variances assumed									
	Equal variances not assumed			-.380	83.236	.705	-.18095	.47664	-1.12894	.76703
	Equal variances assumed	5.822	.018	.105	99	.917	.04286	.40824	-.76717	.85288
Infrastructure facilities	Equal variances not assumed			.101	74.559	.920	.04286	.42508	-.80404	.88975
	Equal variances assumed	.015	.904	-1.110	99	.270	-.41706	.37563	-1.16240	.32827
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.116	96.054	.267	-.41706	.37373	-1.15890	.32477
Socio – economic	Equal variances not assumed									
Others	Equal variances not assumed	.068	.794	-1.297	99	.198	-.51786			.27459

assumed Equal							.39938	-1.31030	
variances assumed			-1.275	86.854	.206	-.51786	.40629	-1.32543	.28971
Equal variances not assumed									

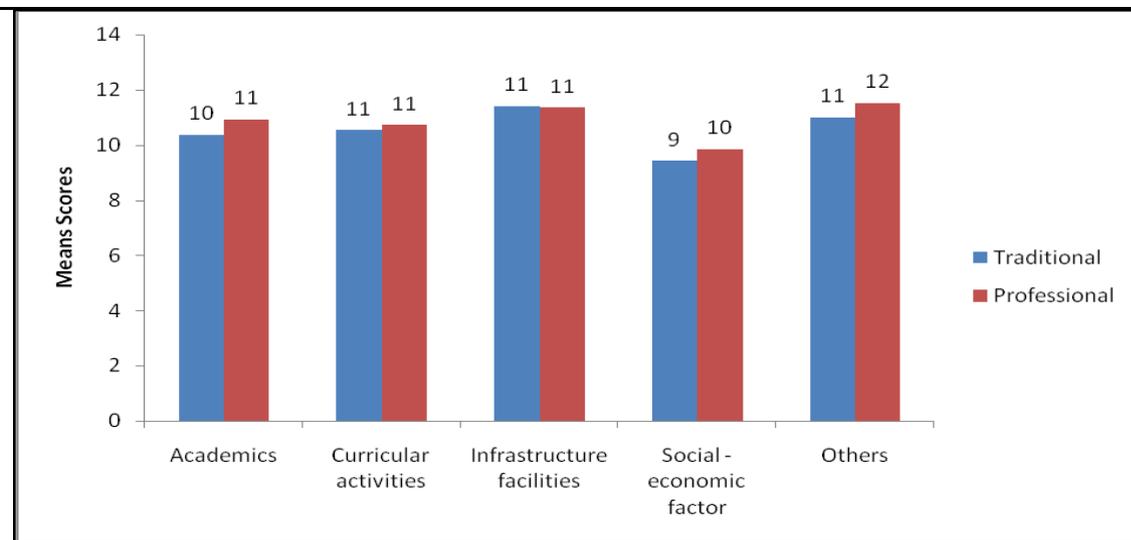


Figure 1.3 : Graphical representation of mean scores

Academic Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.53, P = .128$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.26 to 0.16. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 10.37 (SD = 1.9) and professional program averaged 10.92 (SD = 1.69).

Curricular Factors:

There was a significant difference found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(83) = -0.38, P = .705$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.12 to 0.76. 10.53 (SD = 2.59) and professional program averaged 10.71 (SD = 2.07).

Infrastructure Factors:

There was a significant difference found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(74) = -0.10, P = .920$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -0.80 to 0.88. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 11.40 (SD = 2.43) and professional program averaged 11.35 (SD = 1.65).

Social Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.11, P = .270$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.16 to 0.32. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 9.42 (SD = 1.82) and professional program averaged 9.83 (SD = 1.91).

Other Factors:

No significant difference was found between students pursuing traditional and professional programs at under graduate level while selecting a college. The $t(99) = -1.29, P = .198$. The 95% confidence interval of the difference ranged from -1.31 to 0.27. With a three point scale with one being not at all important and three being extremely important, traditional program averaged 11.00 (SD = 2.16) and professional program averaged 11.51 (SD = 1.84).

Suggestions and conclusions:

Internal and external factors considered for selecting a college:

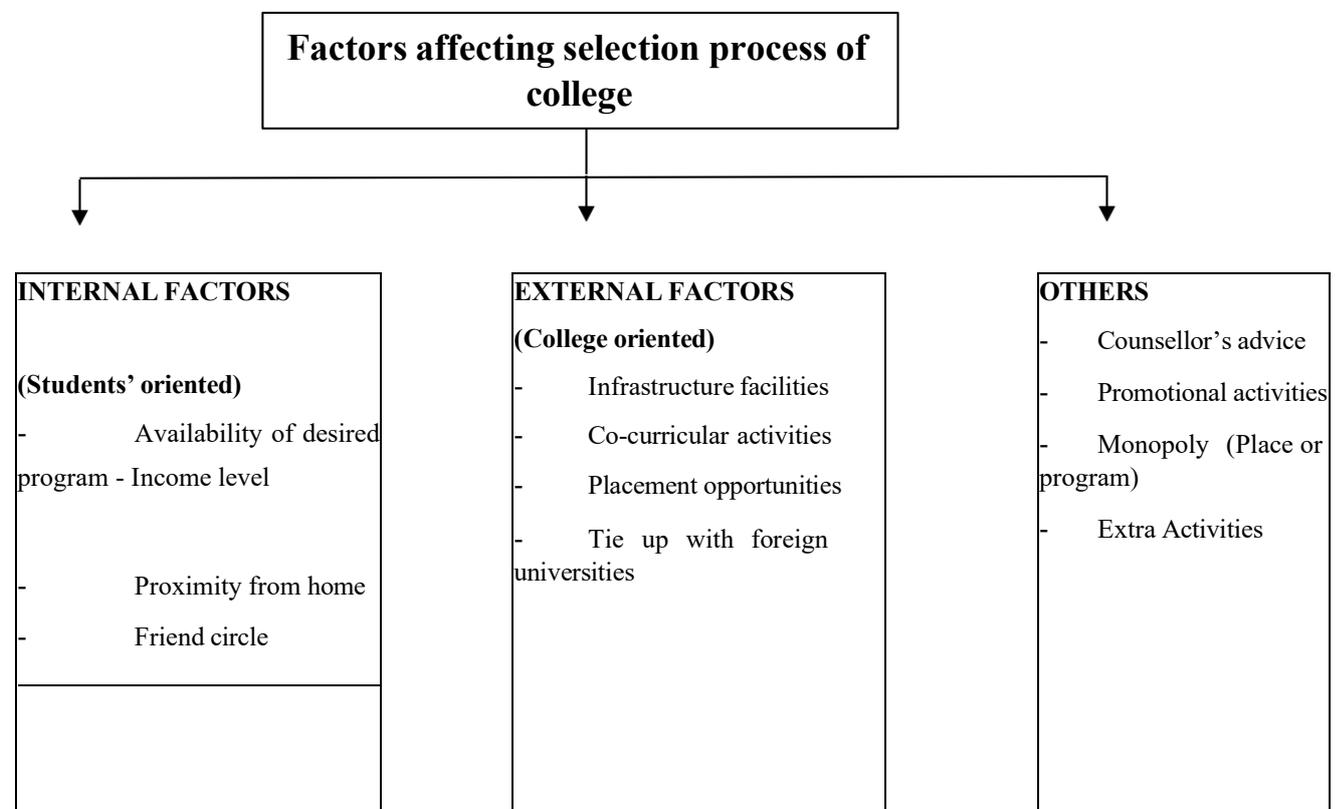


Figure 7.1: Factors influencing students' in decision making process

The factors are divided into three parts .i.e. internal factors, external factors and others. These all factors influence the decision of a student for selecting a college either individually or together. All these factors are explained in detail.

A) INTERNAL (Student's oriented)

1. **Availability of desired program:** The students wish to take admission for a particular program. Therefore, student's search starts with availability of program. If a desired program is not available in college, students may

not opt for that college.

2. **Income level:** Family income is one of the important factor influencing students to select a college. The income level has a direct relationship with fee structure of a college.

3. **Proximity from home:** There are students who do not prefer travelling long distance for college. Moreover, students those who are working or enrolled for professional courses like CA, CS etc find it difficult to travel.

B) EXTERNAL (College oriented)

1. **Infrastructure facilities:** The students consider the infrastructure of the college before enrolling themselves. Infrastructure includes the classroom, college premises, computer labs, canteen etc.

2. **Co-curricular activities:** When students enroll themselves in a college they expect more than studies. The cultural festivals, techno utsav (tech fest), sports and annual day are part of the college. These events help students to develop their personality and learn management skills practically.

3. **Placement opportunities:** The trend of offering placement opportunities to undergraduate students is increasing especially among students belonging to professional programme.

C) OTHERS

1. **Counselor's advice:** These days' students have started consulting career counselors to decide which college and program to be selected for further studies. Counselors have complete idea about colleges and programs offered in today's market.

2. **Promotion activities:** The number of colleges is increasing and therefore, every college has to promote their features. There are various promotional activities like creating websites, tie ups with coaching classes, mouth of word, newspaper advertisement etc.

3. **Monopoly (Program and place) :** It is an accepted and known concept that when there is a monopoly in a market, seller can enjoy the profits. When a particular program is offered in a single college students do not have choice they are bound to enroll themselves in that college.

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