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FACTORS CONSIDERED FOR SELECTING AN INSTITUTION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION IN BANGALORE AMONG STUDENTS FROM RURAL

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Abstract

This study provides a comprehensive assessment of various factors that influence a student's decision on which institution to attend and the sources of information when it comes to choosing a university for their higher education. This study is conducted among the students of two leading Engineering Institutions in Bangalore city and specifically among students who are with rural background. The data required for this study was collected using a structured questionnaire administered in both English as well as local language, i.e. Kannada. Resulting from the literature review, nine factors have been identified, which were used Researchers have successfully tested and retested the instrument to improve their reliability. The researcher interviewed 154 respondents who were in their first year of engineering course. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, Regression Analysis and Garrett Ranking Method were used as statistical tools to achieve the objectives. The results suggest that Institutions of Higher Education may focus their efforts to meet the expectations of the students and also to enhance other factors like learning resources, learning ambience, improve the quality of teaching and create visibility so that opinion of the parents, students and the general public be enhanced. The management should also stress upon the importance of extracurricular activities and awareness creating programmes to attract students from rural areas.

Keywords: Assessment, Higher Education, Expectations, Ambience, Extracurricular Activities.

INTRODUCTION

Different people have different expectations about what higher education means. For some, it means getting a higher education through the teaching-learning process in higher educational institutions. Higher education provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary to excel in today's world. It also serves as an opportunity for individuals to develop their personal development through a flexible education model **(1).**

Higher Education System in India:

India's higher education system, which is mainly focused on providing quality education, is the third largest in the global rankings. After gaining independence, it has become a massive growth opportunity **(3).** In India, higher education begins after the 10+2 education. There are various types of institutions involved in this field, such as universities, colleges, and polytechnics. Central universities are also involved in higher education **(11).** Through an act of

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parliament, the government of India established these institutions. State universities are also a part of this field. Education is a joint responsibility of the central and state governments in India **(9)**. The central government is responsible for higher education and technical standards.

Institutions such as the University Grant Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), and Indian Council of Social Sciences Research (ICSSR) etc., are responsible for overseeing higher education in India.

Evaluation criteria to select an Institution

Different levels of importance can affect the way that evaluative criteria are used in determining admission success **(4)**. A review of studies conducted in the US found that various factors can influence students' decision-making when it comes to university education. In a study conducted in 2001, researchers identified five factors that students consider when choosing a higher education institution (HE). These include the quality of the staff, the social environment, and the size of the institution. In a study conducted by Espinoza et al. in 2002, they identified factors that contribute to the flexibility and safety of college courses. Identified three main factors: academic rating; athletic rating; and news coverage. **(2)** Identified three other factors that influence a university's academic reputation: its athletic rating, public relations and stability. These factors were then added to the list of factors that influence a university's academic reputation by the authors.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

1. To identify the various factors that influence a student's decision on which institution to attend.
2. To collect information about students' sources of information when it comes to choosing a university for their higher education.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study was to identify the factors that affect the selection of a university in Bangalore. The data collected in this study can be used to improve the admissions procedures of engineering colleges.

Limitations and Future Research

The study had the following limitations:

The present study is conducted among the students at two leading Engineering Institutions in Bangalore city and among students who are with rural background. More over the sample size also was small. The study was conducted on first year students. It was conducted to see if there was a difference in their demographic data. The results of the study are only representative of the beliefs of the participants and not representative of the beliefs of the entire student population.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted to determine the factors that influence the choice of an institution for a particular student. Some of these include the advice of the parents, financial aid availability, and the program choice. The reputation of the school, its location, and the cost of attending the program are also taken into account to see if they are a good fit.

Joseph et.al. (2010) **(8)**, in his article, identified various factors that influence a student's decision to attend college, including the location of the school, the quality of its academic program, and the cost of financial aid. Aside from these factors, other factors such as the presence of representatives and the campus visit also influence a student's decision to attend a college.

According to Smedescu (2014) **(13)**, institutions must develop plans to use social media effectively to reach their target audience. This includes identifying the people who are most likely to be interested in their topic.

Davis et.al. (2015) **(5)** stated that social media had become an integral part of students' identities, which has led to the need for institutions to strategically use these platforms to attract young people.

Shields & Peruta (2016) **(12)** reported that the increasing competition for students has schools thinking about ways to improve their marketing efforts.

In their study, Rudhumbu et.al, (2017) **(10)** found that various factors can influence the decision of students to enroll in an undergraduate program. The factors that influence the decisions of students include institutional characteristics, marketing, and social factors. Among these, the factors that are considered to be the most important are the location of the school, academic program, and quality of education.

Hassan, et.al, (2019) **(6)** in their study analysed and concluded that the factors that influence students' decision to enroll at a school were analyzed in this study namely status, the image of the institution, campus safety and security, quality education, tuition fees, and location.

Research Gap

Various empirical researches have been conducted using many variables independently. However, no study has been conducted among rural students in Karnataka using some of these variables.

Hypothesis

Resulting from the above literature review analysis, nine factors have been identified namely 'About the Institution', 'Placement activities', 'Learning resources', 'Location of the institution', 'Opinion', 'Governance', 'Cost', 'Good learning ambience', and 'Other facilities'. Accordingly, following Hypothesis incorporating all the above mentioned factors have been formulated which would be tested in the analysis section:

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H_1: There is no significant influence of independent variables namely Institution, Learning Resources, Location, Opinion, Learning Ambience, Placement, Cost, Management and Other Facilities on the dependent variable choice of Higher Education Institutions.

H_2: There is a significant influence of individual factors on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

RESEARCH METHODS

Method

The method used in this research was Sample Survey by conducting the survey among selected respondents belonging two selected engineering institutions in Bangalore. The instrument used for collecting data was questionnaires. To improve the return rate of the questionnaires, the researcher visited the study participants to collect and distribute the questionnaires. The face-to-face interviews were conducted to establish rapport with the study participants. They also helped the researcher gain their cooperation. The face-to-face interviews can help improve the response rate of survey research. They can also help clarify ambiguous answers and provide useful follow-up information.

Sampling Survey

The researcher interviewed the respondents who are in their first year of engineering course in two of the well-known and reputed engineering institutions in the city. These two institutions were selected satisfying two selection criteria, namely the NIRF ranking within 100, and should be in existence for more than 30 years. Accordingly, two Institutions have been chosen as they have NIRF ranking as 83 and 65 and the year of establishment in 1988 and 1962. As instructed by the Management of the Institutions, the names have been kept confidential and not revealed anywhere in this article. The questionnaires were administered to selected students hailing from rural areas around Bangalore metro city. Snow ball sampling method was adopted in identifying the respondents.

Table 1: Validity of the Research Instruments

Dimensions	Expectations	
	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Items
Institution	.976	4
Learning Resources	.987	4
Location	.987	3
Opinion	.977	4
Learning Ambience	.997	4
Placement	.985	4
Cost	.986	3
Management	.996	4
Other Facilities	.992	4
Overall	.987	34

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Before proceeding to collect the required data, the questionnaire was subjected to a pilot test to test the reliability of the instrument. The questionnaire was administered to 50 first year Engineering students and reliability values for each of the factors were calculated. Table - 1 clearly describes the reliability statistics of the data. Any factor having less than or equal to 0.7 as Cronbach's alpha value was to be rejected. In this study, as is evident from the above table, all the factors were having the alpha value more than 0.7 and hence the questionnaire was found to be reliable.

Reliability of Research Instruments

Researchers have successfully tested and retested the instrument to improve their reliability. According to Wallen and Fraenkel (1996) **(7)**, the stability of test-retest scores is typically regarded as the most important factor in determining the reliability of a given instrument. For this study, the researcher conducted pre- and post-test procedures on a small group of first year engineering students in an interval of two months.

Data Collection Procedure

A letter of introduction to carry-out the research was sent to the Principals of the two selected institutions to allow the researchers to carry out the study and the researchers were asked to carry out the study by the Principals of the two institutions. They were also asked not to reveal the identities of the institutions.

Data Analysis

The researcher collected, sorted, edited, and classified the data into a coding sheet using a software package known as 'Statistical Package for Social Science for Windows, Version 22.0'.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 2: Sociodemographic Profile of the Respondents

Profile		No.	Percent (%)
Gender of the Respondents	Male	96	62.3
	Female	58	37.7
Medium of Instruction	Kannada	98	63.64
	English	56	36.36
Annual Income of the family	< Rs. 3.0 lakhs	54	35.07
	Rs.3.0 & Rs. 6.0 Lakhs	42	27.27
	Rs.6.0 & Rs. 9.0 Lakhs	30	19.48
	> Rs 9 Lakhs	28	18.18

From Table – 2, it can be interpreted that

- 62.3 % of the respondents are Male and the remaining 37.7 % are Female.

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- 63.64 % of the respondents had Kannada as their medium of Instruction and the remaining
- 36.36 % had English as their medium of Instruction.
- 35.1 % of the respondents belong to 'Less than Rs 3 Lakhs', 27.3 % belong to Rs 3 Lakhs & Rs 6 Lakhs, 19.48 % belong to Rs 6 Lakhs & Rs 9 Lakhs and 18,18 % belong to Above Rs 9 Lakhs.

Regarding the Sources of awareness of Present Institution, as shown in Table – 3, 8.4 % of the Respondents were aware through Friends, 64.9 % were aware through Media and 26.6 % were aware through their Previous College.

Table 3: Sources of Awareness of Present Institution

Awareness	Through	No.	Percent (%)
Sources of Awareness of Present Institution	Through Friends	13	8.4
	Through Media	100	64.9
	Through Previous College	41	26.6
Total		154	100

Regression Analysis:

Researcher have identified certain independent variables like Institution, Learning Resources, Location, Opinion, Learning Ambience, Placement, Cost, Management and Other Facilities. These are the factors which influence the dependent variable – choice of Higher Education Institutions. To understand the influence of each variable on choice of Higher Education Institutions regression analysis has been done. With the help of the regression analysis, researcher also wants to find that which independent factor has the highest significant influence on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mini	Maxi	Mean	Std. Devn.
Institution	154	1	5	3.60	.74264
Learning Resources	154	1	5	3.56	.75154
Location	154	1	5	3.52	.72983
Opinion	154	1	5	3.53	.74970
Learning Ambience	154	1	5	3.57	.71616
Placement	154	1	5	3.54	.78488
Cost	154	1	5	3.55	.76598
Management	154	1	5	3.53	.77888
Other Facilities	154	1	5	3.51	.75635
Valid N (list wise)	154				

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To understand the influence of the factors on choice of Higher Education Institutions, Table 4 deals with the descriptive statistics. It deals with the average values of the respondents' opinion and standard deviation indicates fluctuation among the opinion of the respondents. Researcher has collected 154 questionnaires from the respondents across two institutions in Bangalore. A 5 point Likert scale has been used. Considering the above table all values of mean is nearby 3.5 which lies between 3 and 4, it suggests that majority of the respondents' opinion lies between Neutral and Agree. Since the highest value of mean occurred by perceived content applicability i.e., 3.60 and the lowest value of mean occurred in Other Facilities i.e., 3.531 while the highest standard deviation is seen in Placement i.e., 0.78488 and the lowest standard deviation is seen in Learned Ambience of higher education Institutions.

The regression model indicates that the F value is 207.684 and significant value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, it suggests that independent variables have significant influence on dependent variables.

Table 5: Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	Change Statistics			Sig. F Change	Durbin - Watson
						F Change	df 1	df2		
1	.796[a]	.634	.631	.45142	.634	207.684	8	145	.000	1.758

a. Predictors: (Constant), Other Facilities, Cost, Learning Ambience, Institution, Placement, Management, Location, Learning Resources, Opinion.
b. Dependent Variable: Present Choice of Institution

The R value in Table – 5 shows the correlation between all independent variables and dependent variable. Here the R value is 0.796 which is higher than 0.50 which shows very strong correlations. The R^2 is called as coefficient of determinant. The value of R^2 is 0.634 indicates that 63.4% variations in dependent variable can be explained with independent variables. 36.6% variations in dependent variable are due to some other variables other than the independent variables present in the study. The Durban Watson statistics is 1.758 which lies between 1.5 to 2.5, which shows that researcher did not violate any assumption of auto correlation

H_1: There is no significant influence of independent variables namely Institution, Learning Resources, Location, Opinion, Learning Ambience, Placement, Cost, Management and Other Facilities on the dependent variable choice of Higher Education Institutions.

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Table 6: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	338.579	8	42.322	207.684	.001[b]
	Residual	195.835	145	1.351		
	Total	534.414	153	534.414		

a. Dependent Variable: Present Institution
b. Predictors: (Constant), Other Facilities, Location, Institution, Cost, Management, Opinion, Learning Ambience, Placement, Learning Resources

The regression model in Table – 6 indicates that the F value is 207.684 and significant value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. It suggests that null hypothesis has been rejected, so there is significant influence of independent variables namely Institution, Learning Resources, Location, Opinion, Learning Ambience, Placement, Cost, Management and Other Facilities on the dependent variable choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The **Table - 7** below shows the influence of each independent factors on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

Institution:

H_2: There is a significant influence of **Institution** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is significant influence of Institution on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the Institution factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 36.3 %.

Learning Resources:

H_3: There is a significant influence of **Learning Resources** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

Table 7: Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.569	.119		13.182	.000
	Institution	.363	.106	.905	3.419*	.001
	L. Resources	.193	.151	.487	1.276	.204
	Location	.386	.134	1.041	2.888*	.004
	Opinion	.203	.174	.531	1.165	.246
	L. Ambience	.257	.148	.696	1.739	.084
	Placement	.434	.139	1.093	3.11*	.002
	Cost	.263	.088	.679	2.994*	.003
	Management	.418	.140	1.085	2.973*	.003
	Other Facilities	.180	.172	.447	1.05	.296

a. Dependent Variable: Present Institution Choice

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The significant value is 0.204 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is no significant influence of **Learning Resources** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Learning Resources** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 19.3 %.

Location:

H_4: There is a significant influence of **Location** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.004 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is no significant influence of **Location** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Location** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 38.6 %.

Opinion:

H_5: There is a significant influence of **Opinion** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.246 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is no significant influence of **Opinion** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Opinion** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 20.3 %.

Learning Ambience:

H_6: There is a significant influence of **Learning Ambience** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.084 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is no significant influence of **Learning Ambience** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Learning Ambience** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 25.7 %.

Placement:

H_7: There is a significant influence of **Placement** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.002 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is significant influence of **Placement** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Placement** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 43.4 %.

Cost:

H_8: There is a significant influence of **Cost** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.003 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is significant influence of **Cost** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Cost** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 26.3 %.

Management:

H_9: There is a significant influence of **Management** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.003 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is significant influence of **Management** on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the **Management** factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 41.8 %.

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Other Facilities:

H_{10}: There is a significant influence of **Other Facilities** on choice of Higher Education Institutions.

The significant value is 0.296 which is less than 0.05; it suggests that there is significant influence of Other Facilities on choice of Higher Education Institutions. When the Other Facilities factor changes in 1 unit, coefficient factor changes to 18.0 %.

The Garrett Ranking method

The Garrett Ranking method has been used to study the perception of the respondents with respect to the importance in terms of ranking the attributes of Organisational Culture. The method is being explained in detail as below:

Percent Position = 100 (Rij – 0.5)/ Nj, it is the rank given by a respondent for a particular attribute

Where Rij = Rank given for the ith variable by the jth respondent

Nj = Number of variables ranked by the jth respondent.

The percentage estimate thus obtained is converted into scores using Garrett's Table. The individual scores thus obtained for every attribute is added so as to calculate the mean of each attribute. The attributes are then ranked according to the mean scores obtained in the descending order.

The table below shows the various attributes' scores and their corresponding percentage scores. These are then converted into scale values using the Henry Garrett Scale Conversion Tool. For instance, the first rank to twelfth rank of a school is 81, 69, 62, 61, 56, 44, 38, and 17. (Refer Table – 8)

Table 8: The Percentage position & Garrett Table Value

Rank	Percentage Position		Garett's Table Value
1	100(1-0.5)/9	5.56	81
2	100(2-0.5)/9	16.67	69
3	100(3-0.5)/9	27.78	62
4	100(4-0.5)/9	29.17	61
5	100(5-0.5)/9	38.89	56
6	100(6-0.5)/9	61.11	44
7	100(7-0.5)/9	72.22	38
8	100(8-0.5)/9	83.33	31
9	100(9-0.5)/9	95.55	17

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Ranking by respondents:

Table 9: Ranking of factors for joining this particular Institution by Students

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total
1	19	22	25	11	15	18	17	13	14	**154**
2	19	23	21	15	11	12	16	24	13	**154**
3	14	20	18	12	24	15	16	15	20	**154**
4	20	14	12	18	15	24	15	20	16	**154**
5	16	16	9	14	18	21	21	15	24	**154**
6	12	14	20	24	10	17	14	19	24	**154**
7	10	14	22	18	14	19	11	24	22	**154**
8	12	20	19	21	24	16	20	12	10	**154**
9	32	11	8	21	23	12	24	12	11	**154**
	154	**154**	**154**	**154**	**154**	**154**	**154**	**154**	**154**	

The score value for each attribute is calculated by multiplying the number of respondents (f) with respective scale values (x). The scores thus obtained are to be summed up to get the total score for each attribute and the same scores are to be divided by the number of respondents. Using this value, in the descending order, the ranks are to be obtained as given in **Table - 10.**

Table 10: Ranking of factors by calculations

Factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Total	Final Value	Rank
	(81)	**(69)**	**(62)**	**(61)**	**(56)**	**(44)**	**(38)**	**(31)**	**(17)**			
1	1539	1518	1550	671	840	792	646	403	238	8197	53.23	**2**
2	2592	759	496	1281	1288	528	912	372	187	8415	54.64	**1**
3	1539	1587	1302	915	616	528	608	744	221	8060	52.34	**4**
4	1134	1380	1116	732	1344	660	608	465	340	7779	50.51	**6**
5	1620	966	744	1098	840	105	570	620	272	7786	50.56	**5**
6	1296	1104	558	854	1008	924	798	465	408	7415	48.15	**8**
7	972	966	1240	1464	560	748	532	589	408	7479	48.56	**7**
8	972	1380	1178	1281	1344	704	760	372	170	8161	52.99	**3**
9	810	966	1364	1098	784	836	418	744	374	7394	48.01	**9**
1 - Institution, 2 – Placement, 3 - Learning resources, 4 - Location of the institution, 5 – Opinion, 6 – Management, 7 – Cost, 8 - Learning ambience, 9 - Other facilities.												

The ranking analyses of the factors for joining this particular Institution by Students was carried out and the factors are thus ranked as given in the Rank column in **Table – 10.** According to the above analysis, the attribute 'Placement activities' has been ranked as 1st, followed by 'About the institution' as 2nd rank, 'Good learning ambience' as 3rd rank, 'Learning resources' as 4th rank, 'Opinion' as 5th rank, 'Location of the institution' as 6th rank, 'Cost' as 7th rank, 'Governance' as 8th rank and 'Other facilities' as 9th rank.

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FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Based on the Regression analysis carried out reveals that the institution, Location of the institution, Placement, Cost and Management have significant influence on the choice of Higher Education Institutions. On the contrary factors like Learning ambience, Learning resources, Opinion and Other facilities do not have significant influence on the choice of Higher Education Institutions. In terms of placing the factors considered for selecting an institution for higher education in Bangalore among students from rural, the respondents have ranked 'Placement activities' as first, followed by 'Institution' as second, 'Good learning ambience' as third, 'Learning resources' as fourth, 'Opinion' as fifth, 'Location of the institution' as sixth, 'Cost' as seventh, 'Management' as eighth and 'Other facilities' as ninth one.

CONCLUSION:

This study assessed the factors that influence the choice of Higher Education Institutions by the students from rural background. The study also examined the level of importance placed by the students about the factors that influence on the choice of Higher Education Institutions. The study has used Regression analysis and Garrett Ranking method. The results suggest that Institutions of Higher Education may focus their efforts to meet the expectations of the students and also to enhance other factors like learning resources, learning ambience, improve the quality of teaching and create visibility so that opinion of the parents, students and the general public be enhanced. The management should also stress upon the importance of extracurricular activities and awareness creating programmes to attract students from rural areas.

An attempt may be made to study the moderating effect of some demographic and socio-economic variables like gender, income group etc., a future longitudinal study could be conducted to further explore the factors that influence the choice of Higher Education Institutions among students with urban background and a comparative study may also be conducted.

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