

# UNDERSTANDING IMPORTANT FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS OF THE PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AS CONSUMERS DURING THE SELECTION OF PRIVATE ENGINEERING COLLEGES – A STUDY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW.

Mayukh Thakur

Faculty Member, Dept. of Commerce, Barrackpore Rastraguru Surendranath College, N24Pgs, W.B.  
Research Scholar, PhD in Management, JIS University, Agarpara, N24Pgs(Kolkata), W.B., India

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to find out the various factors of selection on the basis of which the young adult aspirants/students select the Private Engineering Colleges as a consumer. This study investigates the components of the institute value which affects students' choice, in order to develop a value approach that measures the total student experience.

Higher education trains the extremely competent manpower and contributes to the analysis base and innovation capability that more and more determines aggressiveness within the knowledge-based world economy. With its central role in society encounters, higher education fosters mutual understanding and helps to build global networks for the future. At an equivalent time, cross-border flows of ideas, students, faculty and financing, coupled with developments in information and communication technology, are changing the environment for higher education. This implies each accrued collaboration and competition between countries and establishments on a world scale.

Higher education has deeply modified within the past twenty years, and those involved in the academic enterprise have yet to grapple with the implications of these changes. Academic institutions and systems have faced pressures of increasing numbers of students and demographic changes, demands for accountability, reconsideration of the social and economic role of higher education and the impact of new technologies, among others. While educational systems perform in an exceedingly national atmosphere, the challenges play themselves out on a world scale.

### **Keywords:**

Consumer selection process, higher education, technical education, engineering colleges, consumer behaviour, students' decision-making, consumer choice, consumer preference.

### **A. Introduction:**

In the recent years there has been a massive growth in the number of private engineering colleges in West Bengal. So, as a result of that the scenario of the technical education sector has also changed with newer provisions and techniques to cater to the needs and requirements of the sector.

Due to the huge number of private engineering colleges the number of students successfully passing out every year is also very large in number. But, due to various economic and industrial reasons there is a huge crunch in the number of jobs available for those students and they are facing a very adverse situation just at the beginning of their career.

There is another drawback which is also having a very adverse effect on the quality of academics delivered to the students. This can be said as less number of properly educated and trained faculty are available for teaching the students and quality of learning process is being compromised.

Again many students are going out of West Bengal for technical and as well as management studies in case of higher education for pursuing the Graduate level and Post-Graduate level degrees and courses. They are getting better faculties for teaching, well-built infrastructure and also placement after completing the course like KIIT University, Xaviers' University & XIMB in Bhubaneswar, Odisha; which are having all the required amenities for the students. They are giving good campus placements in various leading companies. Every year a large number of aspiring students are going there to seek their future career irrespective of the cost of study.

However, at the same time many private engineering colleges of Kolkata region are getting closed down due to lack of students (new aspiring students are not taking admission). Here, the parents are ready to give more money if they get quality education for their children.

If the private engineering colleges of Kolkata region can come up with real new offerings and structures then students would not go out and will pursue their higher studies and degrees in their own state, West Bengal.

So, a study can be designed to find out those factors which actually attract the aspiring and prospective students.

### **B. Objective of the study:**

- a. To understand the important factors having impact on students' decision-making as a consumer through the available literature review.
- b. To understand the various dimensions of students' choice as an aspirant of the private engineering colleges by the help of the available literature review.

### **C. Research Methodology:**

#### **a. Data Collection:**

The data collected for the purpose of this particular paper is from the available secondary sources from various existing published literature on this domain.

#### **b. Analysis of Literature Review:**

#### **2010**

1. Research additionally thought of geographic location as a crucial issue (**Beneke & Human 2010**).

#### **2009**

2. Students also considered job prospects along with the enjoyment of the subject, need for a degree for career, new subject areas and enjoyment of student life when selecting an institute (**Wiese et al. 2009**).
3. Pupils also considered job prospects when selecting their faculty at the side of the enjoyment of the topic, need for a degree for a career, better job, new subject areas and the enjoyment of student life (**Wiese et al. 2009**).
4. **Joshi et al. (2009)** found that low achieving students were more likely to enrol in community colleges than four-year institutions. This finding supports the common perception that community colleges serve as a resting place for underachieving high school students.

**2007**

5. Other research works claimed that personal factors show the greatest positive influences on the student choice of an institute (**Raposo & Alves 2007**).
6. Recognition and reputation of the institutes are the strongest evaluation criteria used by students in their selection process (**Ancheh et al. 2007**).
7. Research on the choice stage found individual, social and cultural variables such as socioeconomic status, parental education and occupation, parental student encouragement and involvement, and economic expectations; and organizational or policy variables such as financial aid, state-wide financial aid programs, high schools, local colleges and institutional prestige and ranking, influence students' decision to select a college (**Wolniak & Engberg, 2007**).

**2006**

8. Studies found that reference groups such as siblings, friends, peers, relatives, teachers and other related people influence a student's choice of an institute (**Yamamoto 2006**).
9. Students also considered job prospects along with the enjoyment of the subject, need for a degree for career, new subject areas and enjoyment of student life when selecting an institute (**Tatar & Oktay 2006**).
10. Many scholars have investigated the influence of price in the choice of an institute (**Domino et al. 2006**).
11. Some other researchers contend that price is the most important factor from parents' point of view rather than a student's perception (**Domino et al. 2006**).
12. Higher education has been transformed from the dependency of funding by government to the competitive markets (**Maringe 2006**).
13. Marketing in higher education is also needed to mitigate the effects of decreasing government funding and increases in competition (**Des Jardins et al. 2006**).
14. However, researchers contend that price is the most important factor and financial aid or packages that include scholarships and grants was examined thoroughly by **Govan et al. (2006)**.
15. In college admissions, social capital can influence college choice outcomes by providing students with access to information networks about the college admission process (**Ceja, 2006**).
16. Research on the search stage has demonstrated that individual, social and cultural variables such as socioeconomic status, family income, academic ability, and race; and organizational variables such as institutional marketing procedures, college counselors, tuition and financial aid policies; and public policy variables such as state-wide financial aid programs, influence students' college search processes (**Abraham & Clark, 2006**).
17. The other combined models relating to the choice of aspirants in the literature have become the most widely accepted in enrolment behaviour (**Smith & Fleming 2006**).

**2005**

18. Proximity to home is one of the strong influences in the choice process of selecting a particular institute (**Dawes & Brown 2005**).
19. It is not surprising that student anxiety about the college choice process has reached a fevered pitch (**Walpole, McDonough, Bauer, Gibson, Kanyi, & Toliver, 2005**).
20. College graduates have higher lifetime earnings, longer life expectancy, commit fewer crimes, and have higher levels of civic engagement (**Hill & Hoffman, 2005**).
21. The developmental process by which a student ultimately attends college is commonly referred to as college choice in educational research (**Freeman, 2005**).

**2004**

22. Research has found that in the predisposition stage individual variables such as grade level, academic performance, and participation in extracurricular activities; and social and cultural variables such as race, gender, socioeconomic status, parental income and education, parental encouragement and involvement, peers, siblings, and extended family; and organizational variables such as teachers and high school racial composition, influence students' decision to attend college (**Goldsmith, 2004**).

23. The transformation in pedagogy has additionally been influenced by augmentative world competition, declining funding and changing demand patterns (**Veloutsou et al. 2004**).

24. The progressively necessary role that selling plays in student achievement has been recognized by several students (**Goff et al. 2004**).

25. The progressively necessary role that marketing plays in student achievement has been recognized by several students (**Judson et al. 2004**).

26. In terms of college choice, habitus can affect the decision to attend college and the decision to attend a particular institution (**Nora, 2004**).

27. **Stokes and Somers (2004)** found evidence that peers and friends influenced the decision to attend a community college, but it is clear that additional work in this area could shed light on how pervasive these networks are in students' community college choice decisions.

**2003**

28. A range of research examines the dramatic effect parents have on a student's choice of institute or college (**Moogan & Baron 2003**).

29. Various studies also found that institutional characteristics including teaching quality, prestige, infrastructure, library, computer facilities, location, quality of the academic curriculum, scientific research quality, administrative support, extra-curricular factors and the availability of academic exchange programs with reputed universities or foreign universities, are perceived as having an important influence on student's choice of institutes (**Price et al. 2003**).

**2002**

30. Students also considered job prospects along with the enjoyment of the subject, need for a degree for career, new subject areas and enjoyment of student life when selecting an institute (**Soutar & Turner 2002**).

31. Students from high-income families are more likely to attend college and more likely to attend highly selective institutions than students from low-income families (**Paulsen & St. John, 2002**).

32. While research on community college choice and transfer is not as robust as traditional four-year college choice outcomes, previous research has found that finances, geography, parents, academic performance, high school climate and counselors, influence students' decision to attend a community college (**Bers & Galowich, 2002**).

33. Similar findings were replicated by **Cohen and Brawer (2002)**, and found that students with weaker academic records tend to choose community colleges instead of four-year institutions.

**2001**

34. The progressively necessary role that relationship marketing plays in student achievement has been recognized by several students (**Kittle & Ciba 2001**).

**2000**

35. Many scholars have investigated the influence of worth within the selection of a university in which high discounts were viewed more favourably than low discounts (**Quigley et al. 2000**).

**1999**

36. Choice can be examined from a variety of theoretical viewpoints and numerous variables influence the choices that individuals make throughout their lifetime. College choice research seeks to unpack the myriad of variables that influence the choices students make as they navigate their way to higher education. Students engender their road to college as early as the seventh grade, when references to a college education are common place (**Hossler, Schmit & Vesper, 1999**).

**1998**

37. The progressively necessary role that strategic marketing plays in student achievement has been recognized by several students (**Liu 1998**).

38. The other combined models relating to the choice of aspirants in the literature have become the most widely accepted in enrolment behaviour (**Hamrick & Stage 1998**).

**1997**

39. In terms of college choice, cultural capital has been demonstrated to influence students' relative value of a postsecondary education, knowledge of college admissions, and enrolment in college (**McDonough, 1997**).

**1995**

40. In order to survive and to realize a property competitive advantage, higher education institutions should use a marketing framework and should satisfy the need of their customers by adding value (**Kotler & Fox 1995**).

**1994**

41. Research by **McPherson and Schapiro (1994)** demonstrated that high-income and low-income students have disproportionate levels of college enrolment.

**1991**

42. While other researchers have made attempts to "re-brand" the term college choice, this widely used moniker has cemented itself as the referent tagline for how students decide to attend college, search for and apply to colleges, and ultimately select a college to attend (**Hearn, 1991**).

**1986**

43. Social capital refers to the sum of personal networks, relationships, and group memberships that are available for redemption in a variety of uses. These networks and relationships can be considered as investments that will yield returns for the bearer (**Bourdieu, 1986**).

**1985**

44. The other combined models relating to the choice of aspirants in the literature have become the most widely accepted in enrolment behaviour (**Kotler, Littens and Fox 1985**).

**1982**

45. **Jackson (1982)** expanded on Chapman's model and incorporated students' aspirations to attend college (preference), their formation of college options (exclusion), and their selection of a college (evaluation).
46. The other combined models relating to the choice of aspirants in the literature have become the most widely accepted in enrolment behaviour (**Hanson 1982**).

**1981**

47. Early attempts to model the college choice process were offered by **Chapman (1981)** and his model asserted those students' background characteristics, external influences, fixed college characteristics, and college communication efforts.

**1977**

48. **Bourdieu (1977)** also introduced habitus as a construct to understand how routines and practices in our daily existence reproduce themselves as forms of tacit knowledge that are internalized in our habitus.

**1976**

49. Students analyse the costs and benefits associated with a particular level of educational attainment (or vocational training) and proceed to choose the option that yields the highest economic returns (**Becker, 1976**).

**1972**

50. While human capital theory is focused on cost-benefit analysis, status attainment theory argues that individual educational choices are influenced by families' social status. Specifically, parental levels of educational attainment, family income, occupational status, and social standing, have an influence on the educational attainment of their children (**Duncan, Featherman, & Duncan, 1972**).

**D. Findings on the basis of the collected Literature Review:**

- a. Effect of parents on a student's choice of private engineering institute or college.
- b. Reference groups such as siblings, friends, peers, relatives, teachers and other related people influence a student's choice of a private engineering institute.
- c. Personal factors show the greatest positive influences on the student choice of a private engineering institute.
- d. Institutional characteristics including teaching quality, prestige, infrastructure, library, computer facilities, location, quality of the academic curriculum, scientific research quality, administrative support, extra-curricular factors and the availability of academic exchange programs with reputed universities or foreign universities, are perceived as having an important influence on student's choice of private engineering institutes.
- e. Proximity to home is one of the strong influences in the choice process of selecting a particular private engineering institute.
- f. Recognition and reputation of the private engineering institutes are the strongest evaluation criteria used by students in their selection process.
- g. Students also considered job prospects along with the enjoyment of the subject, need for a degree for career, new subject areas and enjoyment of student life when selecting a private engineering institute.
- h. Influence of price in the choice of a private engineering institute because price is the most important factor from parents' point of view rather than a student's perception.

- i. The increasingly important role that marketing plays in student recruitment has been recognized by many scholars.
- j. Students' choice of private engineering colleges and their decisions are no longer guided by finding a life partner, religion, or the influence of relatives.
- k. Students from high-income families are more likely to attend college and more likely to attend highly selective private engineering institutions than students from low-income families.
- l. While research on community college choice and transfer is not as robust as traditional four-year college choice outcomes, extensive research has found that finances, geography, parents, academic performance, high school climate and counsellors, influence students' decision to attend a particular college or institute.
- m. Choice can be examined from a variety of theoretical viewpoints and numerous variables influence the choices that individuals make throughout their lifetime. College choice research seeks to unpack the myriad of variables that influence the choices students make as they navigate their way to higher education.
- n. Students analyse the costs and benefits associated with a particular level of educational attainment (or vocational training) and proceed to choose the option that yields the highest economic returns.
- o. In terms of college choice, cultural capital has been demonstrated to influence students' relative value of a postsecondary education, knowledge of college admissions, and enrolment in college.

#### **E. Conclusion:**

Research has found that individual variables such as grade level, academic performance, and participation in extracurricular activities; and social and cultural variables such as race, gender, socio-economic status, parental income and education, parental encouragement and involvement, peers, siblings, and extended family; and organizational variables such as teachers and high school racial composition, influence students' decision-making and final choice of an institute or a college.

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