



**EXAMINE THE STUDENT'S DECISION MAKING PROCESS IN CHOOSING
INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: To examine the most important evaluation attributes that students use when choosing higher learning institutions

Problem investigated: Students who study in higher learning education of Malaysia might have different evaluation attributes when deciding and selecting the Higher Education Institution as other students in European countries. Malaysian students and European students might have the same evaluation attributes but, there must be have a different in deciding which attributes is the most important to students when selecting the higher education institutions.

Methodology: A sample of 94 respondents was drawn, representing UITM Sarawak Kota Samarahan Campus 1 and 2. A self administrated questionnaire was used to collect the data. Using the Mean difference to identify the most important evaluation attributes that students use when selecting the higher education and Independent Sample Test were use to examine the different level of important between gender.

Findings/Implications: Irrespective of gender, the most important factor for students was the Programs Evaluations at HEIs. The findings showed that for answering the research Question 2, males and females in Malaysia Higher Education Institutions have same level of important evaluation attributes toward selecting the University.

Conclusion: The findings provide Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with points and ideas of the importance of attribute or factors considered by students in selecting a Higher education. This will enable HEIs to use their minimum funds more efficiently to attract the right calibre student (recruitment policies), to create a unique position, to segment the student market more appropriately and to gain a competitive advantage.

Keywords: factors; attributes; institution selection; student decision-making; higher education marketing; gender, level of important.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

In 2001, over 1 500, 000 applications were made through University and Colleges Admissions Services at the start of the year, but this was a 2.5% decrease from the previous year (Jones, 2001). However, according to Moogan (2003) many students make the wrong decisions due to receiving poor advice and conflicting opinions or because of the lack of accurate and relevant information. According to Clarke and Brown (1998), potential students are generally young people who are at a relatively unstable phase in their lives and yet they are making very important (investment) decisions.

Regarding to the role of students gender in making the decision on choosing the higher education, according to Hoyer and MacInnis (2001), gender are changing, males and females differ in terms of consumer traits, information processing, decision-making styles and buying patterns. Gender influences both purchase and consumption situations, similar as physiological differences between male and female may lead to specialised service and product needs (Sheth, Mittal & Newmand, 1999; Arnould, Price & Zinkhan, 2004). There are research on Choices Factor Used in Difference Gender conducted by Galotti & Mark, 1994; Desjardins, Dunbar & Hendel, 1999, suggests a variety of gender differences with regard to the choice factors used to select a Higher Education Institutions (HEI). HEIs need to understand that differences exists which affect how HEIs reach and influence each gender group with appropriate communication messages. Although, Mansfield's research (2005) shows student gender differences in terms of the importance of financial aid, security, academics, atmosphere and religious culture. The most important criteria for female students proved to be academics and for male students it was tuition.