

Factors Shaping the Students' Enrollment Decision in Private Universities for Higher Education during the Pandemic Environment

Mousumi Sultana¹, Tamal Chakroborty²

¹Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Varendra University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

²Lecturer, Department of Business Administration, Varendra University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

¹Corresponding author's e-mail: mou.mousumisultana@gmail.com

Abstract: To pursue higher studies students are engaging with private universities in modern times as the acceptance rate of public universities in Bangladesh is low. Students are acquiesced for private universities by some influencing factors while taking enrollment decision. After extracting the knowledge of previous literatures, the study developed a conceptual framework of enrollment decision factors that can influence students' choice selecting private universities in Bangladesh. The four broad choice factors of the study were: Decision Influencers (DI), E-learning Indicators (ELI), Economic Factors (EF), and Career Prospect (CP) under which 19 variables were developed that were assumed to have a positive relationship with students' enrollment decision in the private universities. The students of Varendra University, Rajshahi, Bangladesh from different departments participated in an online structured survey questionnaire and enrolled themselves in private universities during the COVID pandemic in between 2020 to 2021. The study developed a structured online questionnaire and circulated the questionnaire to 360 students and received 352 completed questionnaire with a response rate of 97.8%. The study performed a non-probability convenient sampling method during the year 2021 and analyzed in MS Excel to find the percent and cumulative percent of the decision variables. The result of study indicated that as a private university, Varendra University meets most of the academic, career, and faculty credential attributes and market rations that attract more students to study in private universities and besides this universities can expand more visibility for the students if their promotional efforts are amplified in a wider scope.

Keywords: Higher Studies, Private University Selection, Quality Education, Choice Factors, Varendra University-Bangladesh.

INTRODUCTION

Public universities as well as private universities play an important role in the spread of higher education. Private universities have long played a key role in improving the quality of higher education in the developed world. However, the active participation of private universities in the advancement of higher education in Bangladesh was evident through the establishment of North South University, the first private university in the country, in 1992. (*Private University- Banglapedia*, n.d.)

In Bangladesh, about 1.31 million students pass the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination every year, which is about 95% of the total number of students. These passing students have to face extreme admission tests as the number of seats in government universities is very limited (nearly 60000), whereas the number of seats for fresher students in the existing 71 private universities is about 185,157. Private universities are working towards fulfilling the dream of students to get quality higher education through a quality education system and modernization of the education environment. (*HSC exams to be held with Shortened Syllabus, Question Paper*, n.d.)

Several factors play a key role in the admission process to private universities in the country. Most students consider the admission fee and incidental expenses, as well as the quality of education, received from the university, to be more important in determining the preferred private university. In addition to this, the social identity of the university and its importance in society as an institution serve as influencers. How students select the University of their Choice for graduation can be presented through three models based on student behavior and the above explanation. These are financial/econometric models, status fulfillment/sociological models, and combined models (Dhaliwal et al., 2019).

Furthermore, factors such as the brand value of private universities, geographical location, sustainable campuses, and investment in modern teaching aids can help first-year undergraduate students choose the University of their Choice. Universities (both private and public) must develop these stimuli to accommodate the desired students in their limited seating capacity. Universities in developing nations employ a range of media to attract students to their image and the value of their brand; as a result, the university's brand is a top priority for students and their families when selecting an educational institution (Le, 2020).

Despite the country's high demand for public universities, the standards of most private institutions are steadily improving, and several private universities have even received international recognition for their academic achievements. Currently, a large number of students are qualified for admission to public universities but choose to apply to the best private universities of their own volition. Session congestion and unhealthy student politics in public universities are some of the reasons for this. Opportunities for education at various reputable foreign universities through credit transfer are also factors, as are difficult admission tests at public universities and practical knowledge for higher education (Jamil et al., 2012).

After the first corona virus was identified in Bangladesh on March 8, 2020, a radical change was observed in the education system of the country. On March 17th of the same year, all the educational institutions were declared closed. When the education system is in a state of uncertainty, the online education activities of private universities play a significant role in bringing back unemployed students to the regular education system. (Khan et al., 2021) Varendra University, the first private university in Rajshahi, which was established in March 2012 with all the elements of modern education, like other private universities, launched online education during the Corona period. To maintain the quality of education and to bring the benefits of modern quality online education activities to the students, Varendra University has started online education activities through Microsoft Teams.

In this study, we have tried to find out which of the various facilities offered by the university to the students who are interested in getting admission to Varendra University in Corona is most preferred by the students.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The paper focused to present the vital determinants that can influence the choice factors of the private university admission seeking students. In case of choosing institution for higher studies in Bangladesh, students are influenced by some socio-economic factors as well as institutions promotional efforts. Decision on the selecting institution to explore higher studies is perceived as complicated choice making procedure (Chapman 1981). The paper depicts the vital influencing factors that affect higher education seeking students' private university choosing behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Universities can guide the decision-making power of a student for his personal and professional life by forming one's understanding, values, standards, and discernment. In Bangladesh, public and private are the two essential educational stands for higher education (Ashraf, Osman, & Ratan 2016). The number of public universities is insufficient for the students as there are only 51 public universities and 109(till September 2022) private universities in Bangladesh (UGC, 2022).

Callender&Melis (2022) highlighted the educational cost and financial obligations as the prime factors that influence the college choice decision of higher education seeking students. The paper examines English higher education seeking students' cost perspective and borrowing tendency to pursue their study.

Adam & Gunarto (2021) the authors aimed to find out how private university selection is influenced by social media and positive word of mouth in Palembang City, Indonesia. The study found that private universities need to adopt digital promotional tools as the world has entered the digital era. Potential students are attached to social media and like to take positive electronic word of mouth from others before private university selection.

Rashid, Othman&Yusop (2021) conducted a study on university students of Malaysia to find out the factors that influence students to choose a university for higher education during the new normal period. The paper tried to highlight different aspects of students learning perspectives, opinions, and preferred learning types during the COVID pandemic period.

Dhaliwal, Mittal, Aggarwal & Chand (2019) showed that education is fast moving to a market-driven approach from a product-driven approach. So its concerned authority should try to grab the attention to get closer to its potential students. The paper focused on some important factors like location, public image, employability of graduates, promotion, fee, and academic quality that affect the student's choice regarding the selection of a higher educational institution in India.

Islam (2019) conducted a study on BUBT students and found some strong factors for students' enrollment decisions in higher education institutions in Bangladesh. The author suggested universities adopt the most influencing factors such as opportunities, reputation and good affiliation of the university, teaching quality, location, fees, admission process, and job market opportunities to satisfy students.

Hidayat & Sinuhaji (2018) tried to establish the factors that persuade student decisions in selecting private universities in Medan, Indonesia. The paper focused on influencing variables that were considered by the students at the time of selecting private universities. The exogenous variable of the study is the cost of education, advertising, brand image, motivation and facility, and student decision process as the endogen variable.

This study by Rohaizat, Zubaidah& Siti (2011) focused on the choice criteria that impact international students’ higher education choice decisions in Malaysia. The authors found that quality education, decision influence, customer focus, cost, facility, socialization, and location are the strong factors that direct a student to decide on higher education.

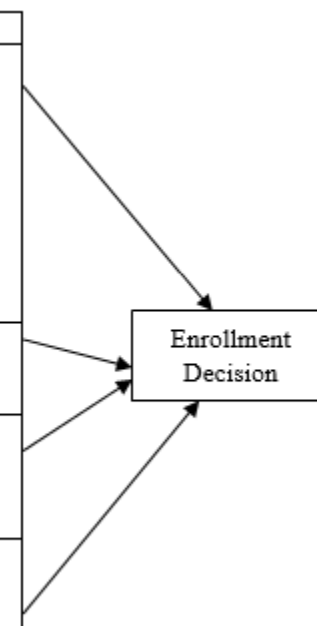
According to Ashraf, Ibrahim &Joarder (2009), the four-year based bachelor programs in the private universities of Bangladesh are designed imitating to the American style where they practice English as the core medium of instruction except for some anomaly. The study shows that Faculty credentials, administrative services, library services, curricular structure for quality education, general facilities for quality education, career prospects, cost, and financial aid are the crucial factors of private university quality education.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The broad choice factors of the study were decision Influencers (DI), E-learning Indicators (ELI), Economic Factors (EF), and Career prospects (CP) under which 19 variables were developed that have a direct and positive relation to enrollment decision of the students.

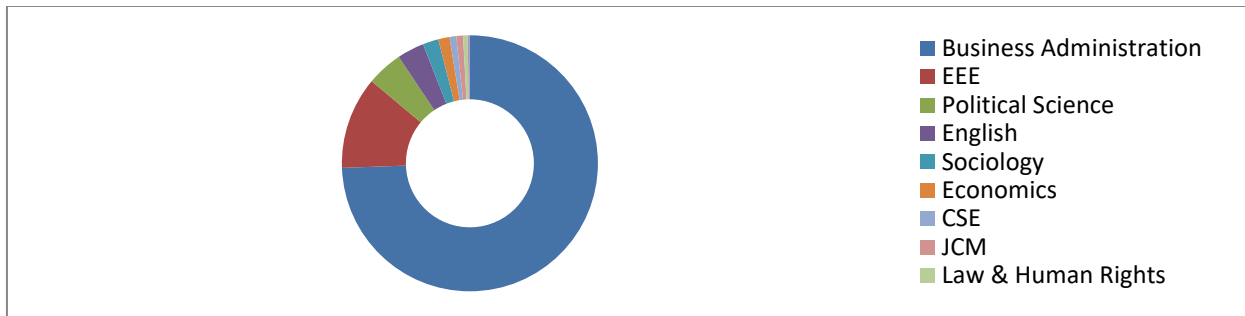
Table: Composition of Factors& Enrollment Influencers

Factor's name	Loaded Variables
Decision Influencers (DI)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. University Brand Image/Reputation 2. Location 3. Basic Facilities 4. Syllabus /Courses offered 5. Influence of traditional print media 6. Influence of online media 7. Family/Friends 8. Word of mouth of ex-students 9. Permanent Campus
E-Learning Indicators (ELI)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. MS Teams 11. Official website & Pages 12. Faculty Credentials
Economic Factors (EF)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. Payment mode 14. Payment flexibility 15. Waiver and Scholarships 16. Financial Condition
Career Prospect (CP)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 17. Seminar &Workshop 18. Link with Different organizations 19. Career of the university graduates



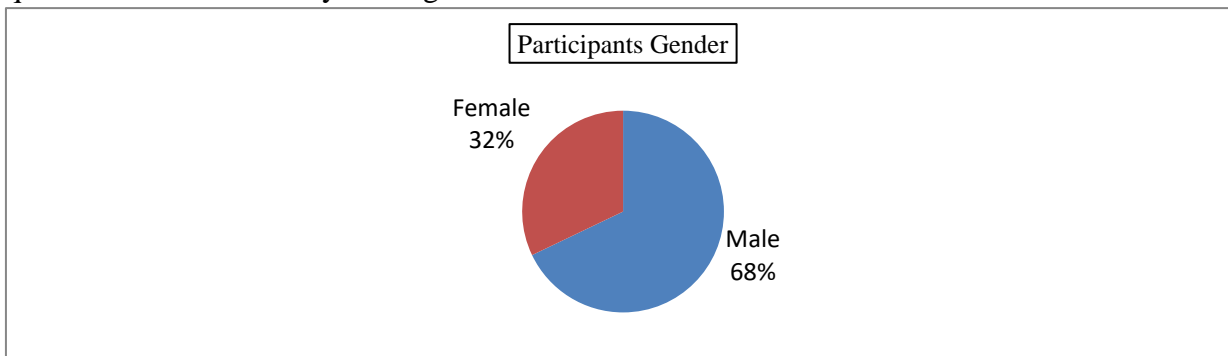
METHODOLOGY

Sampling Frame: The study was designed only for the students of Varendra University, Rajshahi. Students of Business Administration, Electrical and Electronic Engineering (EEE), Political Science, English, Sociology, Economics, Computer Science and Engineering (CSE), Journalism, Communication and Media Studies (JCM), and Law & Human Rights participated in the structured online questionnaire survey.



Sampling type: The study type was non probability convenient sampling.

Sample size: Total 360 students from different departments participated in this study. A structured online questionnaire was used to get the data from the students. 8 questionnaires were found invalid, so 352 questionnaires were analyzed to get the result.



Among the total 352 participants, 68 percent was male and 32 percent was female.

Time frame of data collection: The study was carried out on the students of Varendra University, Rajshahi, who enrolled themselves during the COVID pandemic period (Jan 2020-June 2021). The authors distributed a structured questionnaire to the sample of 360 students via email on 7th July 2021 and received the filled questionnaires in August 2021.

Analysis Technique: The data was analyzed in MS Excel to get the percentage and cumulative percentage of the study.

ANALYSIS, RESULT & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Brand image as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: University brand image/reputation	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	148	42.045%	42.045%
(5) Strongly Agree	86	24.432%	66.477%
(3) Neutral	76	21.591%	88.068%
(2) Disagree	24	6.818%	94.886%
(1) Strongly Disagree	18	5.114%	100%

The study found that approximately 42 percent of the participants have agreed that university brand image influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 2: Campus location as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Campus location	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	131	37.216%	37.216%
(5) Strongly Agree	82	23.295%	60.511%
(3) Neutral	73	20.739%	81.250%
(2) Disagree	42	11.932%	93.182%
(1) Strongly Disagree	24	6.818%	100%

The study found that approximately 37 percent of the participants have agreed that university location influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 3: Basic facilities as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: University basic facilities (classroom, library, lab, transport)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	159	45.170%	45.170%
(5) Strongly Agree	105	29.830%	75.000%
(3) Neutral	56	15.909%	90.909%
(2) Disagree	18	5.114%	96.023%
(1) Strongly Disagree	14	3.977%	100%

The study found that approximately 45 percent of the participants have agreed that university basic facilities like classroom, library, lab, transportation etc. influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 4: Program syllabus/courses as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Program syllabus/ courses offered	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	149	42.330%	42.330%
(5) Strongly Agree	99	28.125%	70.455%
(3) Neutral	65	18.466%	88.921%
(2) Disagree	20	5.682%	94.604%
(1) Strongly Disagree	19	5.397%	100%

The study found that approximately 42 percent of the participants have agreed that university program syllabus and courses influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 5: Printed media advertisements as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Printed media ads (brochures, newspapers, billboards)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	96	27.273%	27.273%
(2) Disagree	86	24.432%	51.705%
(3) Neutral	61	17.330%	69.035%
(1) Strongly Disagree	59	16.761%	85.796%
(5) Strongly Agree	50	14.205%	100%

The study found that approximately 27 percent of the participants have agreed that different printed advertisement media influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 6: Online media advertisements as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Online media advertisements (news portals, social media)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	104	29.545%	29.545%
(3) Neutral	80	22.727%	52.272%
(2) Disagree	74	21.023%	73.295%
(5) Strongly Agree	52	14.773%	88.068%
(1) Strongly Disagree	42	11.932%	100%

The study found that approximately 30 percent of the participants have agreed that different online advertisement media influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 7: Family & Friends suggestions as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Family/friends suggestions	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	165	46.875%	46.875%
(5) Strongly Agree	119	33.807%	80.682%
(3) Neutral	38	10.795%	91.477%
(1) Strongly Disagree	16	4.545%	96.022%
(2) Disagree	14	3.977%	100%

The study found that approximately 47 percent of the participants have agreed that different online advertisement media influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 8: WOM as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Word of mouth from students	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	147	41.761%	41.761%
(5) Strongly Agree	88	25.000%	66.761%
(3) Neutral	60	17.045%	83.806%
(1) Strongly Disagree	31	8.807%	92.613%
(2) Disagree	26	7.386%	100%

The study found that approximately 42 percent of the participants have agreed that positive word of mouth of current and ex-students influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 9: Permanent campus as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: The permanent campus attributes	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	122	34.659%	34.659%
(5) Strongly Agree	113	32.102%	66.761%
(3) Neutral	55	15.625%	82.386%
(2) Disagree	35	9.943%	92.329%
(1) Strongly Disagree	27	7.670%	100%

The study found that approximately 35 percent of the participants have agreed that permanent campus attributes influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 10: Online class facility as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Online class facility (MS Teams)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	134	38.068%	38.068%
(5) Strongly Agree	104	29.545%	67.613%
(3) Neutral	56	15.909%	83.522%
(2) Disagree	30	8.523%	92.045%
(1) Strongly Disagree	28	7.955%	100%

The study found that approximately 38 percent of the participants have agreed that online class facility influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 11: Official website of the university as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Official website information	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	159	45.170%	45.170%
(5) Strongly Agree	122	34.659%	79.829%
(3) Neutral	31	8.807%	88.636%
(1) Strongly Disagree	22	6.25%	94.886%
(2) Disagree	18	5.114%	100%

The study found that approximately 45 percent of the participants have agreed that the official website of this university influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 12: Faculty credentials as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Faculty credentials	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	152	43.182%	43.182%
(5) Strongly Agree	103	29.261%	72.443%
(3) Neutral	62	17.614%	90.057%
(2) Disagree	19	5.398%	95.455%
(1) Strongly Disagree	16	4.545%	100%

The study found that approximately 43 percent of the participants have agreed that the faculty credentials influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 13: Convenient payment modes as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: The convenient payment modes	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	136	38.636%	38.636%
(5) Strongly Agree	110	31.25%	69.886%
(3) Neutral	64	18.182%	88.068%
(1) Strongly Disagree	22	6.25%	94.318%
(2) Disagree	20	5.682%	100%

The study found that approximately 39 percent of the participants have agreed that the convenient payment mode like bank and mobile banking influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 14: Payment flexibility as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Payment flexibility (installment and duration of payment)	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	144	40.909%	40.909%
(5) Strongly Agree	113	32.102%	73.011%
(3) Neutral	55	15.625%	88.636%
(1) Strongly Disagree	20	5.682%	94.318%
(2) Disagree	20	5.682%	100%

The study found that approximately 41 percent of the participants have agreed that the tuition fee payment flexibility influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 15: Waiver and scholarship as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Waiver and scholarship facilities	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	152	43.182%	43.182%
(5) Strongly Agree	126	35.795%	78.977%
(3) Neutral	39	11.080%	90.057%
(1) Strongly Disagree	18	5.114%	95.171%
(2) Disagree	17	4.830%	100%

The study found that approximately 43 percent of the participants have agreed that the waiver and scholarship facilities provided by the university influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 16: Financial support as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Financial support of family during the COVID	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	119	33.807%	33.807%
(3) Neutral	87	24.716%	58.523%
(5) Strongly Agree	83	23.580%	82.103%
(2) Disagree	43	12.216%	94.319%
(1) Strongly Disagree	20	5.682%	100%

The study found that approximately 34 percent of the participants have agreed that financial support from their family influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 17: Seminars and workshops as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Seminars and workshops	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	145	41.193%	41.193%
(5) Strongly Agree	102	28.977%	70.170%
(3) Neutral	68	19.318%	89.488%
(1) Strongly Disagree	23	6.534%	96.022%
(2) Disagree	14	3.977%	100%

The study found that approximately 41 percent of the participants have agreed that seminars and workshop arranged by the university influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 18: University link with other clubs, organizations and businesses as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Links with other clubs, organizations& businesses	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	150	42.614%	42.614%
(5) Strongly Agree	98	27.841%	70.455%
(3) Neutral	63	17.898%	88.353%
(1) Strongly Disagree	21	5.966%	94.319%
(2) Disagree	20	5.682%	100%

The study found that approximately 43 percent of the participants have agreed that university link with other clubs; organizations and businesses influenced their enrollment decision.

Table 19: Career of the university graduates as enrollment influencer

Row Labels	Q: Career of the University Graduates	Percent	Cumulative Percent
(4) Agree	132	37.500%	37.500%
(3) Neutral	78	22.159%	59.659%
(5) Strongly Agree	71	20.170%	79.829%
(2) Disagree	49	13.920%	93.749%
(1) Strongly Disagree	22	6.25%	100%

The study found that approximately 38 percent of the participants have agreed that the career prospect of the university graduates influenced their enrollment decision.

FINDINGS

S	Loaded Variable Hierarchy	Agreed participants in % (Variable Highest Score)
1	Family & Friends suggestions as enrollment influencer	47%
2	Basic facilities as enrollment influencer	45%
3	Official website of the university as enrollment influencer	45%
4	Faculty credentials as enrollment influencer	43%
5	Waiver and scholarship as enrollment influencer	43%
6	University link with other clubs, organizations and businesses as enrollment influencer	43%
7	WOM as enrollment influencer	42%
8	Brand image as enrollment influencer	42%
9	Program syllabus/courses as enrollment influencer	42%
10	Payment flexibility as enrollment influencer	41%
11	Seminars and workshops as enrollment influencer	41%
12	Convenient payment modes as enrollment influencer	39%
13	Online class facility as enrollment influencer	38%
14	Career of the university graduates as enrollment influencer	38%
15	Campus location as enrollment influencer	37%
16	Permanent campus as enrollment influencer	35%
17	Financial support as enrollment influencer	34%
18	Online media advertisements as enrollment influencer	30%
19	Printed media advertisements as enrollment influencer	27%

The study found that 47 percent of the participants agreed that they took their enrollment decision in Varendra University to their family and friends' suggestions. While 40-45 percent of the students said that they were convinced with the enrollment with this university with the factors like basic facilities, website, faculty credentials, waiver/scholarship, link with other organizations, positive word of mouth, brand image, program syllabus, payment flexibility, seminars, and workshop. Around 30-39 percent of the participants agreed that university payment mode, class facility, career prospect, permanent campus, location, and financial support were the influencers for their enrollment decision.

The university started their online based class in May 2020 (VU official website) the countrywide lockdown from March 2020. The university showed fast progress in class management during pandemic. Around 38 percent of the students have agreed that they have taken their enrollment as the Varendra University was operating its activities through MS Teams.

Among the total participants, 30 percent agreed that online media advertisement, and alarmingly only 27 percent agreed that printed online advertisement influenced them to take enrollment in this university.

FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION

The number of private universities is gradually increasing in Bangladesh and many students are now a day's taking their private university enrollment decision based on some choice influencing variables as the seat of public universities are limited (UGC, 2022). If private universities can meet the expectations of the potential students, they can ensure more enrolment for their university. The study can benefit the private university authorities to take more accurate decision to make their universities more attractive for the admission seeking students from national and international. The study is based on a single university, for a confined time frame with a limited number of participants. Academicians and researchers can come forward to perform more profound research on this topic by taking into account a number of universities in Bangladesh and covering more students at the same time to find more relevant factors of enrollment decision.

CONCLUSION

As the spread of higher education has happened in the developed countries of the world, the practice of knowledge has also increased. The world's knowledge base has been enriched by the addition of much new knowledge. There has been an explosion of knowledge in the developed world, especially in the western world. Therefore, the effective changes in our education system, along with the application of various new techniques to infuse the western world with knowledge, are undeniable. Because any revolutionary change in the field of education plays an important role in fulfilling the dreams of students interested in higher education in the country as well as abroad. Choosing the right and effective university for higher education is very important. Apart from a student's efforts, the infrastructure of the institution from which he is pursuing higher education, teaching methods and techniques, the use of advanced technology in teaching, and various facilities provided by the university to students in higher education help students realize their dreams of higher education. These factors are often overlooked by students when deciding on their dream university in higher

education. In this era of intense competition, the institution that a student chooses for higher education must be able to provide education that keeps up with the times.

The regulatory authority of Bangladesh emboldened the private university culture from 1992 (Mazumder 2014) and now the number of private universities stood at the figure of 109 (UGC Bangladesh 2022). Only an ignoble number of students get the opportunity in 52 public universities for their low student affirmation rate (UGCB 2022). The study endeavored to find out the strongest factors that could have an outright influence on a student's enrollment in a private university. Many students are stepping towards the enrollment decision with private universities for pursuing their higher studies due to the regulated and limited acceptance rate of public universities in Bangladesh. More than 3.5 lakhs students are pursuing their higher studies in private universities (tbsnews 2020). The study tried to bring the factors which determine the choice decision of the students. The study could help private universities to focus on the factors to grab the attention of their potential students. Universities should focus on promotional measures along with their quality enhancement and management. This study found that students of Varendra University were convinced about enrollment by the current students, graduates, friends, and family but a very scanty portion are convinced by their promotional implements. During the corona period from 2020 to 2021, various universities of Bangladesh stopped their ongoing education programs only due to a lack of sufficient technological equipment and support. The effect of this stagnation was a curse for students interested in higher education. The educational program of Varendra University was free from this stagnation from the very beginning as it started its online class through MS Teams in May 2020 (VU Official Website).

REFERENCES

- Adam, R., & Gunarto, M. (2021). The influence of promotion in social media and word of mouth on the decision on selection of study programs at private universities. In *11th Annual International Conference on Industrial Engineering and Operations Management, IEOM 2021* (pp. 5975-5980).
- Ashraf, M. A., Osman, A. Z. R., & Ratan, S. R. A. (2016). Determinants of quality education in private universities from student perspectives: a case study in Bangladesh. *Quality Assurance in Education*.
- Ashraf, M. A., Ibrahim, Y., & Joarder, M. (2009). Quality education management at private universities in bangladesh: an exploratory study. *Journal of Educators & Education/Jurnal Pendidik dan Pendidikan*, 24.
- Chapman, D. W. (1981). A model of student college choice. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 52(5), 490-505.
- Callender, C., & Melis, G. (2022). The privilege of choice: how prospective college students' financial concerns influence their choice of higher education institution and subject of study in England. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 93(3), 477-501.
- Dhaliwal, M. S., Mittal, A., Aggarwal, A., & Chand, P. K. (2019). Determining the factors affecting the selection of private universities and colleges in indian context: a structural equation modeling approach. *Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical & Control Systems*, 11(8), 2579-2590.

Hidayat, R., & Sinuhaji, E. (2018). Factors that affect students decision to choose private universities in medan city indonesia. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 17(6), 1-8.

HSC exams to be held with shortened syllabus, question paper. (n.d.). Retrieved May 11, 2022, from <https://www.dhakatribune.com/education/2022/05/09/hsc-exams-to-be-held-with-shortened-syllabus-question-paper>

Islam, M. J. (2019). Factors influencing students' enrolment in private universities in bangladesh: A Study on Bangladesh University of Business and Technology (BUBT). *BUBT*, 19691(01911), 76.

Jamil, M. Al, Sarker, M., & Abdullah, M. (2012). Students' choice criteria to select a private university for their higher education in Bangladesh. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 4(17), 177–185.

Mazumder, Q. H. (2014). Analysis of quality in public and private universities in Bangladesh and USA. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 3(2), 99-108.

Khan, M. M., Rahman, S. M. T., & Islam, S. T. A. (2021). Online education system in bangladesh during covid-19 pandemic. *Creative Education*, 12(02), 441–452.

Le, H. Q. (2020). Factors affecting students' decision to select private universities in vietnam. *Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business*, 7(4), 235–245.

Private University - Banglapedia. (n.d.). Retrieved May 11, 2022, from https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Private_University

Rashid, M. A. A., Othman, M. N. A., & Yusop, Z. M. (2021). Online learning issues and challenges during covid-19 pandemic: a case study at a private university college. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society*, 3(2), 50-57.

Rohaizat, B., Zubaidah, A., & Siti, F. P. (2011). International students' choice criteria for selection of higher learning in Malaysian private universities. *African journal of Business management*, 5(12), 4704-4714.

University Grand Commission of Bangladesh, private university list of 2022: <http://www.ugc-universities.gov.bd/private-universities>

UGCB, public university list of 2022: <http://www.ugc-universities.gov.bd/>

Varendra University Rajshahi Official Website: vu.edu.bd