



# Influencing Student Choice: A Case Study of a Boarding Private University in Indonesia

Fitriani Tupa R. Silalahi<sup>1</sup>(✉), Devis W. Saputra<sup>1</sup>, Goklas Panjaitan<sup>2</sup>,  
Monica Butar-Butar<sup>1</sup>, and Noramti Mardianti Manurung<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Engineering Management, Del Institute of Technology, Toba, Balige, Indonesia  
{fitriani.silalahi, Devis.simanjuntak}@del.ac.id

<sup>2</sup> Information Technology, Del Institute of Technology, Toba, Balige, Indonesia  
Goklas.panjaitan@del.ac.id

**Abstract.** The purpose of this study is to see the factors that influence prospective students to choose the private university in Indonesia. This research is a descriptive university study with a cross-sectional survey using a questionnaire that has open-ended questions. The literature study found a series of factors influencing prospective students in choosing the best university and marketing strategy. Interviews with new students were conducted to find out strategies and various influencing factors other than those obtained through literature studies. Then data processing is carried out with descriptive statistics to find out the best marketing strategy for conveying information to the students until they can finally determine their university choice. From the research result, it is found that the internal factors that influence the student to choose University X are the motivation for a clear job in the future, income level after alums, social position, expanding knowledge and the existence of a dormitory as a way to guarantee regular life. External factors influencing the student to choose University X are alumni with brilliant careers, qualified teaching staff, job security, campus discipline, relationships with alums and a safe and comfortable environment. Information about this factor becomes a recommendation for university X to detail the influential parts of promotion. This research is still limited to descriptive data analysis. Further research using factor analysis needs to be done to obtain factors that are pretty significant in influencing students to choose a private university. More data is needed with more universities. This is the first study on analysing factors that influence students in choosing a private campus with boarding university status .

**Keywords:** private university · student choice · promotions · university choice

## 1 Introduction

The increasing number of universities marks the development of education in Indonesia. To date, 125 public and 2,990 private universities have been registered in Indonesia under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Competition to enter State Universities is still very high, especially in universities with the best rankings. This is because entering a prestigious state university is still the dream of every prospective

student. Private Colleges are generally an alternative for students who fail to secure a place at a state university.

A large number of institutions currently available increases competition for each university to get the best prospective students, especially private universities, in obtaining the best prospective students. Private university is trying to get good input because it is proven that entry qualifications affect the prestige and reputation of the institution [1]. Furthermore, the state of the Covid-19 pandemic has become one of the significant challenges for private universities because now students can take part in the selection at many private universities at once without being limited by distance, thereby increasing competition between private universities.

University X, a private boarding university, is a private university located in a district far from the city centre. This makes University X has its challenges in positioning itself as the college of choice among prospective students. For this reason, an analysis of the factors influencing students in choosing university X is needed. If these factors have been obtained, they become the basis for determining marketing strategies so that more and more students apply to University X.

## 2 Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted human life, including in the education sector. In the education sector, every private university must have a good strategy and quality education to attract students' interest in enrolling. The increase in the number of students enrolling to the number of students accepted is expected to improve the quality of students who register. This is an essential factor because the quality of students who register will affect the college's reputation [1]. For this reason, appropriate marketing strategies must be carried out to increase the number of students who register.

In general, an effective marketing strategy is influenced by two things: considering marketing strategies that can be carried out by institutions and considering student preferences [2]. In terms of student preferences, one of the interesting things is that the level of parental education is quite large [3]. For this reason, these two aspects must be considered carefully so that universities can take appropriate strategies in obtaining the number of new students that are in accordance with the expected quality.

For marketing strategy, in Songan, Sam [4], it was found that with a sample of first-year students, it was found that the main sources of information for students were word of mouth from friends and relatives and university websites. From this study, the factors that make students choose are academic programs, academic and teaching quality, job prospects, and choice of university are factors that contribute to choosing university.

Research by Al-Fattal [2] obtained information on a university to students through 5 categories: social connection through relatives and friends, direct inquiry, media, current students and the Ministry of education. This study states that the most effective is direct inquiry, where students visit campus and have direct contact with university staff and students rather than other sources. Still, in the same study, students ranked university priorities which would be selected based on six variables: teaching and learning, informal reputation, convenience, administrative, social and economic issues. The most influential thing is the quality of education and teaching, which is followed by teaching and learning variables. Research by Dillon and Smith [5] states that the influencing

factors are financial conditions, information obtained by prospective students, and state universities' availability.

The following research by Uchendu, Nwafor [6] found that the factors that influence student engagement are: quality programs, social media/websites, infrastructure development, face-to-face talk, media advertisements, and price. Research by Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka [1] shows that there are factors from students, institutions and a combination of students and institutions. From the student side, the influencing factors are family income, parental education, gender, race, age, socioeconomic and quality of the origin of the school. In terms of institutions, the influencing factor is the quality of institutions and facilities. Finally, the mix of students and institutions is tuition, resources, travel and geographic factors.

According to Moogan [7], the most important and most valuable sources of information are: university prospectus, university websites, faculty websites, college rankings, teachers/schools and family and friends. Top decision-making variables: teaching quality, course content, university reputation, research quality and faculty reputation. Roskosa and Stukalina [8] shows that the information prospective students need is the professional development of their future careers. After that, what is considered is the quality of education offered.

Aydın and Marketing [9] showed that location greatly influences students' decisions in choosing university, namely areas close to the city and locations close to their homes. Mustafa, Sellami [3] stated that the quality of education, culture, and education costs are essential factors that make students decide. A recent study by Nuseir and El Refae [10] that the factors that influence students in choosing universities are academic reputation, grants and funding, location and proximity, facilities and services, and promotional and marketing channels.

Specifically discussing marketing strategies, Research by Bowen, Gogo [11] specifically found that advertising using websites, social media, increasing word of mouth, career fair involvement, open days on campus and alums will increase enrollment from students. Bélanger, Bali [12] shows that a university with very active social media has many advantages. The more university publishes its activities on social media platforms, the more audience there will be, both locally and globally. Dei, Anane-Donkor [13] stated that the promotion strategy so that information reaches prospective students are Facebook (27%), websites (20%), trade fairs (20%), TV (13%) and the rest from exhibitions, newspapers and magazines and radio.

From the results of the literature study, it can be found a series of factors influence prospective students in choosing university and the best marketing strategy. The data sample of new students who experienced a pandemic so that the data obtained were in a pandemic condition new in this study. By knowing the dominant factors, universities can highlight these factors in their promotional activities and then convey them with various existing marketing strategies. This will result in an effective marketing strategy because the needs of prospective students regarding a university can be adequately conveyed.

Through a literature study, an analysis of the factors that influence students in choosing a college is carried out. These factors were then analyzed and combined, as shown in the Table 1.

**Table 1.** Dimensions and indicators affecting student choice to choose a university

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>
Motivation (Internal)	Future career and security	Future work is clear.	Studying at a university is considered to improve job prospects and employability.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Bowen et al. (2012); Songan et al. (2010)
		Alumni salaries (financial)	Education is believed to offer a better income in the future.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Songan et al. (2010)
		Continuing parent's business	Expected to assist, or take over, their parents' business upon completing their university education.	
	social motives	Social position	Related to the self-esteem and respect respondents receive or expect from their community. For example, attending university is a matter of prestige and a certain image they want from people.	Al-Fattal, 2010
		Educated social environment	That university is a healthy environment to meet and meet new educated friends.	Al-Fattal, 2010
		Following in the footsteps of the family	The background as a student with an educated family or social environment tends to follow in the footsteps of their parents or family and undergo the same routine.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Mustafa et al., 2018
Parent's choice		The influence of parents on the decision-making process is felt as the party providing education costs.	Al-Fattal, 2010	

*(continued)*

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Dimention</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>
		Social networking	They can meet and socialize with different kinds of people at university.	Al-Fattal, 2010
		University experience	Social fun and entertaining part of university life, such as travel and concerts.	Al-Fattal, 2010
	personal motives	To expand knowledge	The university is a valuable source of knowledge and education that will reflect on their lives.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Roskosa & Stukalina, 2019
		Intrinsic interest	Pursuing higher education due to a hobby or passion for a particular field through subject knowledge and other informal sources of knowledge.	Al-Fattal, 2010
		Personal development	Pursuing higher education due to a hobby or passion for a particular field through subject knowledge and other informal sources of knowledge.	Al-Fattal, 2010
		Ambition of excellence	The ambition of excellence culminates in a feeling of accomplishment that is reflected in individuality and self-worth.	Al-Fattal, 2010
Dormitory Needs (External)	Dormitory Lifes	The existence of the boarding	Dormitory life is one aspect that makes students have different values in terms of regularity and security of life.	Interview
		Guaranteed regularity of life		
		Good behavior guarantee		

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>
Quality Programs (External)	Alumni have a brilliant career	Alumni who have brilliant careers	Organizing programs providing social services of respect and dignity leads to 'respectable' and rewarding careers. Students are provided with an invaluable opportunity to equip students with knowledge and practical skills.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Songan et al. (2010); Uchendu et al. (2015)
	Quality teaching staff	Quality teaching staff	One aspect of a quality program is qualified teaching staff	Al-Fattal, 2010; Songan et al. (2010); Uchendu et al. (2015)
	Job guarantee	Job guarantee	Campus efforts in informing and promoting campus to prospective students. So that prospective students can be interested in registering at the campus concerned.	Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015; Bowen et al. (2012)
	Cooperation with foreign universities	Cooperation with foreign universities	Partnerships with international institutions and 'internationalization' are marketing strategies that support building a positive university brand and image. It was done because this newly opened university leveraged the experience of an established international institution and brought it to the customers in the market.	Al-Fattal, 2010

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>
	College Accreditation	College Accreditation	Accreditation relates to brands as every university strives to portray itself as a well-accredited and recognized institution locally and internationally.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Bowen et al. (2012)
	Campus discipline	Campus discipline	A good quality education provides what suits the needs of students.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Roskosa & Stukalina, 2019
People (Eksternal)	Relations between alumni	Relations between alumni	Behavior such as respect, friendliness, warmth, empathy, and helpfulness.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Bowen et al. (2012)
	Student activity	Student activity	University/student relations are a matter of student life; the relationship between these two issues is formed because they reflect the way of life and experience of students at the university.	Al-Fattal, 2010
Price (Eksternal)	Cost according to quality	Cost according to quality	The price element generally relates to the tuition fees offered and monetary related issues. However, its importance to an institution stems from the fact that it reflects income.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Dei et al. (2021)
	Costs according to parents' income standards	Costs according to parents' income standards	This shows that the tuition fee is following the current standard of tuition fees at private universities.	Dei et al. (2021); Uchendu et al. (2015); Al-Fattal, 2010; Dillon and Smith (2017)

(continued)

**Table 1.** (continued)

Variabel	Dimensions	Indicators	Definition	Source
	Easy payment terms	Easy payment terms	Easy payment terms and help parents in making payments.	Dei et al. (2021); Uchendu et al. (2015); Al-Fattal, 2010; Dillon and Smith (2017)
	Scholarships	Various scholarships	It is a strategy to attract potentially good students to enrol with financial benefit offers.	Dei et al. (2021); Uchendu et al. (2015); Al-Fattal, 2010; Dillon and Smith (2017)
		Confidence in getting scholarship		Al-Fattal, 2010
Promotion (Eksternal)	communication	Information from the website	Communication is related to this theme because it is a mechanism that conveys the perceived brand and image of the university to the public.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Dillon and Smith (2017); Uchendu et al. (2015)
Location (Eksternal)	Location near the city	Location close to residence	The university's location causes a competitive advantage to attract students, and the proposed model expands our understanding of the relationship between sustainable competitive advantage for higher education and background.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Aydın and Marketing (2013)
		Location near the city		Al-Fattal, 2010; Aydın and Marketing (2013)
		Safe and comfortable environment	The built environment is an aspect that comes from the physical evidence and the evidence it offers, and the trust it makes.	Al-Fattal, 2010; Uchendu et al. (2015)

(continued)



**Table 1.** (continued)

<b>Variabel</b>	<b>Dimensions</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Source</b>
	accommodation	There is a boarding place	Accommodation is related to the built environment and location. This is related to the first because the hostel is part of the built environment. Holdsworth and Nind (2005) highlight the importance of providing suitable accommodation options.	Al-Fattal, 2010
Adequate facilities (External)	Adequate facilities	Adequate facilities	States how comfortable and easy access the location of the campus can be. So that student can describe their satisfaction with the site of the campus.	Dei et al. (2021); Aydın and Marketing (2013)

### 3 Results and Discussions

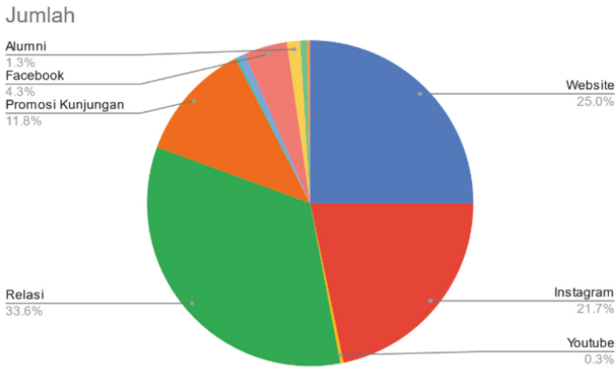
This research is a descriptive university study with a cross-sectional survey using a questionnaire that has open-ended questions. The sample of this research is the new batch of 2022 students on a boarding campus. The number of respondents in this study was 67.5% of the total number of new students in 2022.

#### A. Sources of Information

The following is a source of information used so that students decide to study at University X. Each person can choose more than one answer for this question. From this, it is obtained that the influencing factor in introducing is the relation.

#### B. Preference for studying on Boarding Campus

Of the total respondents, there are as many as 27.05% of students choose to study without attending state university first. This shows that university X's reputation with state university is quite good. This also indicates that university X is not a second choice (secondary university) in choosing to study. From the results of the questionnaire, the reasons why university X became the main choice. The reasons stated why he immediately chose university X were because: the courses offered are according to your interests, and feel that university X is the best campus, family suggested studying at university



**Fig. 1.** Source of Information

X, universityX has dorms, following in the footsteps of a family who had previously studied at university X, and because they saw the alums of university x immediately went to work.

Next, 72.95% of students tried state university, and there were 21.6% graduated from state university but finally decided to study at university X. The reasons are: university X has alumni who go straight to work, at state university, pass on the second choice in state university, university X is a disciplined campus and their parent’s recommendation.

*C. Validity and Realibility of Instrument*

Before the questionnaire can be processed, the instrument is first tested to be valid and reliable. An instrument is said to be valid if the questions on the questionnaire can reveal something to be measured and are said to be reliable if someone’s answer to the question is consistent.

From the results of the questionnaire output, it can be shown that Fig. 1 are the results of reliability tests with SPSS software. Cronbach Alpha shows a value of 0.935, where the Cronbach Alpha value is greater than 0.7, indicating that the questionnaire is reliable (Fig. 2).

*D. Analysis of questionnaire answers*

Table 2 is an analysis of the answers to the questionnaire. This study concludes by using the author’s perspective that if the number who answered the Likert scale for point 5 was more than 50%, then the indicators is signifant influenced the student in choosing a university.

Reliability Statistics		
	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
Cronbach's Alpha	.935	34

**Fig. 2.** Reliability of questionnaire

**Table 2.** Questionnaires Analysis of Student Perceptions About Indicators That Affect Student Choice

Variabel	Dimension	Indicators	1	2	3	4	5
Motivation (Internal)	Future career and security	Future work is clear.	0%	1%	3%	22%	74%
		Alumni salaries (financial)	0%	0%	8%	23%	68%
		Continuing parent's business	12%	12%	22%	21%	33%
	social motives	Social position	11%	15%	22%	26%	26%
		Educated social environment	0%	0%	5%	21%	72%
		Following in the footsteps of the family	23%	13%	16%	16%	32%
		Parent's choice	4%	8%	18%	24%	45%
		Social networking	1%	2%	11%	31%	54%
		University experience	1%	2%	7%	28%	61%
	personal motives	To expand knowledge	0%	0%	4%	19%	77%
		Intrinsic interest	0%	4%	14%	27%	54%
		Personal development	0%	1%	3%	25%	70%
		Ambition of excellence	0%	0%	6%	27%	66%
Dormitory Needs (External)	Dormitory Lifes	The existence of the boarding	7%	10%	26%	28%	29%
		Guaranteed regularity of life	0%	2%	8%	33%	56%
		Good behavior guarantee	1%	3%	13%	35%	48%
Quality Programs (External)	Alumni have a brilliant career	Alumni who have brilliant careers	1%	1%	3%	22%	72%
	Quality teaching staff	Quality teaching staff	2%	3%	9%	30%	55%
	Job guarantee	Job guarantee	1%	1%	5%	23%	69%

(continued)

**Table 2.** (continued)

Variabel	Dimension	Indicators	1	2	3	4	5	
	Cooperation with foreign universities	Cooperation with foreign universities	3%	3%	15%	31%	47%	
	College Accreditation	College Accreditation	2%	4%	18%	35%	39%	
	Campus discipline	Campus discipline	1%	1%	5%	26%	67%	
People (Eksternal)	Relations between alumni	Relations between alumni	3%	4%	13%	23%	56%	
	Student activity	Student activity	1%	3%	12%	30%	53%	
Price (Eksternal)	Cost according to quality	Cost according to quality	1%	2%	12%	33%	50%	
	Costs according to parents' income standards	Costs according to parents' income standards	4%	11%	29%	29%	28%	
	Easy payment terms	Easy payment terms	5%	9%	29%	31%	26%	
	Scholarships	Various scholarships	Various scholarships	3%	4%	17%	33%	43%
		Confidence in getting scholarship	Confidence in getting scholarship	3%	6%	16%	30%	44%
Promotion (Eksternal)	communication	Information from the website	7%	13%	21%	31%	27%	
Location (Eksternal)	Location near the city	Location close to residence	22%	11%	15%	20%	31%	
	lingkungan binaan	Location near the city	22%	17%	28%	16%	15%	
		Safe and comfortable environment	0%	2%	7%	30%	61%	
	accommodation	There is a boarding place	6%	7%	24%	29%	33%	
Adequate facilities (External)	Adequate facilities	Adequate facilities	2%	2%	9%	35%	51%	

For the motivation variable, the clear indicator is a straightforward future job. This follows the general goal of college students to have a career as an apparent life activity in the future. Next, the amount of salary in the future is also an influencing factor when choosing a private university. Finally, the factor of being able to continue the parent's

business is not a factor for students in choosing University X as the campus where they study.

The next factor that influences is the social, academic environment. This shows that to obtain an educated climate, University X is the choice. Next, social networking is an influencing factor. This means that the existence of University X, which is spread by the relations of prospective students, is one of the factors that influence students in choosing University X.

External factors are factors from outside that can attract students to choose a college. In other words, this factor must be clearly emphasized when a university conducts a promotion. The factors are as follows.

Alumni have a brilliant career is a very influential factor. For this reason, the careers of alumni need to be identified regularly and used as promotional material. Furthermore, qualified teaching staff also has an influence on students choosing private university. Guaranteed employment is the next influential factor, so the number or percentage of alumni who work immediately after graduating from campus is data that must be collected and submitted when doing college promotions.

Campus discipline indicators are factors that influence campus selection. This is related to discipline as one of the first steps to adequate learning quality. Next, a strong alum bond is a factor that affects students. Next, the suitability of costs between the rate offered and the fees charged is also one of the factors that a person considers in choosing a university. Finally, adequate facilities also affect the choice of campus.

## **4 Conclusion and Policy Recommendations**

After analyzing the factors that influence students in choosing private university, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, universities are not always an alternative choice. Some prospective students have decided to study at a specific preferred private university and do not consider participating in the selection at state university. There are several considerations for prospective students. Some of the reasons that can be identified are: first, the majors offered are in accordance with their interests, and it is believed that studying at the private university is the best. Second, there are suggestions and recommendations from the family, and there are families who have previously studied at the private university and obtained good results. Third, prospective students directly see how the alumni from the private university are already working.

Second, the boarding campus is one of the reasons that attract prospective students and their parents to enroll students at the University X. This is because of the values offered in boarding life that is in accordance with internal factors that influence students in choosing University X, including discipline and regularity of life.

Third, external factors that affect prospective students in University X must be identified so that these external factors are conveyed in every promotional material by promotion department in University X. Some of these factors include the career conditions of alumni and the number of alumni directly absorbed by the market, qualified teaching staff, campus discipline, relationships with alumni, students who are active in activities, adequate facilities and costs incurred following the quality obtained.

This research is still limited to descriptive data analysis. Further research using factor analysis needs to be done to obtain factors that are significant in influencing students to choose a state university. In addition, the unit of analysis in this study is still limited to only one private campus. More data is needed with more universities.

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