

# CONCEPTUALIZING PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND STUDENT ENROLMENT INTENTION

## “PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT INTENTION FRAMEWORK”

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### Abstract

*Innumerable research has been done on perceived benefits in transnational higher education, such as Desire, career aspirations, and Diverse Program Options, and how these facts could affect Student Enrollment Intentions. The concept of factors persuading students to select a TNHE program has always discussed several other factors such as Facilitating Conditions, Institutional Reputation, Perceived Price Value, Convenience, and so on. However, this study discovers the relationship between Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention with three dimensions in place, such as Desire for a western-based education, Diverse program options, and Career Prospects and the author would conduct a much more extensive literature review with a combination of statistical analysis that discusses the relationship. It was also identified with the literature support that Educational Aspirations mediate between Career Prospects and Student Enrollment Intention for which a thorough statistical backing would be discussed in this chapter. Since it is easy to understand by internal and external stakeholders and has theoretical, literary, and statistical support, the study "Perceived Benefits and Student Enrolment Intention Framework" is topical and pertinent. The framework guides those wishing to develop curricular and pedagogical initiatives to increase student enrollments in TNHE.*

**Keywords** - TNHE, Perceived Benefits, Student Enrolment Intention, Western-Based Education

## 1. INTRODUCTION

"The most potent weapon you can use to change the world is education." Nelson Mandela (1990) Students who have the opportunity to further their education through private providers, transnational higher education providers, or Student Mobility are extremely fortunate and have already planned for a bright future. Students consider higher education to be an important component of their educational journey since it will act as a stepping stone for them to pursue their desired occupations and enjoy their quality of life, Social Status, and reputation. As a result, students and parents consider a range of aspects when selecting a University, College, or Institution.

Undergraduate education in state universities is free but fiercely competitive, constrained, and standardized, particularly in the Sri Lankan context. In the year 2018 / 2019, a total of 181,000 students got qualified to apply for the state university, out of 267,202 students who sat for GCE AL exams, however, only 30,000 students were admitted due to limited state university quota system (17%) (Daily Mirror, 2020) In the year 2016 out of 160,520 students (62.17%) who got qualified to enter a state university only 18.68% of the students were admitted to the state university (Daily mirror, 2017) Out of the 350,000 students that take the university entrance (A-level) exams each year, only about 25,000-30,000 are admitted annually into Sri Lanka's 15 state universities due to the constrained capacity of the universities. An estimated US\$400 million in foreign cash is lost from Sri Lanka each year when 22,000 to 30,000 students leave for higher education abroad (University Guide, 2021). 120,000 students give up on their desire to attend university, and many



students with Edexcel or Overseas A/L diplomas who graduate from international schools are unable to enroll in state universities (Institute of Policy Studies, 2017)

There is many students' cohort looking for non-state higher education option every year, approximately 43.49% of students seek alternative study options. (Daily Mirror, 2017). In order to find alternatives, students who cannot afford an abroad education are increasingly turning to the domestic market. Qualified students then discontinue their studies and enter the workforce (D'Souza, 2017). Based on the above there is a need amongst students in Sri Lank to pursue their higher education either through private providers or Transnational higher education providers or through Student Mobility. Whatever the mode it may be knowing the key attractive points adds value to these providers in student enrollment and on the other hand students also get benefits. In this study, the author explores three key factors that would influence student enrollment intention namely, Desire for an education, Job Prospects, and Diverse Program Options with Education Aspirations as a mediator between Job Prospects and Student Enrollment Intention.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

According to Leung (2013), Perceived Benefits are defined as the perception of positive benefits provided by a specific activity, and four variables, namely "Job Prospects", "Diverse Program Options", "Desire", and "Scholarships", were investigated using Consumer Buying Theory. Walters (1974) elucidates a consumer as "an individual who purchases, or can purchase, goods and services offered for sale by marketing institutions to satisfy personal or household needs, wants, or desires." Because this description focuses on an individual, it is critical to consider human behavior when selling goods and services. The Marshallian economic theory states that each client will invest their money on the products that, based on their unique preferences, will make them feel the most satisfied.

The Theory of Reasoned Action, the predecessor to LaMorte's (2016) Theory of Planned Behavior, was developed in 1980 with the objective of forecasting a person's desire to engage in each activity at a specific time and location. According to the idea, three predictors have an impact on three behavior intents, which in turn have an impact on an individual's conduct: the way a person feels about behavior, subjective standards, and perceived behavioral control. Particularly the TPB's Behavioral Intention component (Ajzen, 1991) reveals an individual's motivation in the sense of their deliberate purpose or choice to engage in particular conduct (Conner and Armitage, 1998); the more potent the intention, the more likely the behavior will be carried out.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), a motivational theory that includes a five-tier model of human needs and identifies the deficiency needs and growth needs, is directly related to Desire and Job Prospects (McLeod, 2007). From bottom to top, this includes physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization needs. Self-actualization requirements, which include achieving one's potential, finding fulfillment in one's own life, looking for personal and professional advancement, and having peak experiences, are at the top of Maslow's hierarchy. According to Maslow (1943), this level is the desire to be the best version of oneself and to accomplish everything that is possible. People may feel or concentrate very hard on this need. For instance, if someone has a strong desire to advance professionally, the desire and job prospects factors become quite important.

Reasons, a variety of choices or courses of action, and any decision mediators that link the reasons with those alternatives, all of which are related to various program possibilities in the context of this study, all have an impact on a buyer's preferred brand choice. Consumer buying behavior is the process through which individuals and communities choose, purchase, use, and then discard goods and services to satiate their needs and desires, according to Solomon et al. (1995). Similar terminology is used by Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) who define consumer buying behavior as "the behavior that consumers express when they choose and get goods or services using their available

resources to satisfy their needs and aspirations" (Dudovskiy, 2013). Stallworth (2008) defines consumer buying behavior as "the acquisition and utilization of products and services as a result of the customers' emotional and mental requirements and behavioral responses." According to Gabbot and Hogg (1998), there may be several steps and activities in the process (Dudovskiy, 2013). All the theories are easily applicable to students' needs, aspirations, and objectives.

## **CONCEPTUALIZING PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND STUDENT ENROLLMENT INTENTION FRAMEWORK WITH A LITERATURE BACKGROUND**

### **3.1 CAREER PROSPECTS**

College is becoming more popular as a goal. Because of escalating higher education costs and present economic challenges brought on by the coronavirus pandemic, experts predict that prospective students are more likely than ever to prioritize financial considerations and future work opportunities over other factors (Kerr, 2020). "Now that we've seen what a huge impact something like this pandemic can have, it's more important than ever that one-factor-factor students consider before choosing a college and a major at that college is how much money they're going to make when they get out," stated by Martin Van Der Werf, a co-author of the study and the Georgetown CEW's associate director of editorial and postsecondary policy, which indicates the importance of Career Prospects (Kerr, 2020). Students are very interested in and concerned about their career objectives and employment prospects and Students chose Career Prospects as the most important aspect in their decision to enroll in TNHEs (Mehboob, Shah, and Bhutto, 2012). To ensure that people lead satisfying lives, are inspired at work, and are capable of incredible productivity laying the foundation for organizational success and sustainability it is essential to choose the correct profession. Students must be inspired to make the ideal profession choice from the moment they decide on the educational path that would best prepare them for their desired career, given the significance of doing so. As a result, student enrolment in the TNHE program is heavily influenced by employment prospects (Nyamwange, 2016). At some point in their life, everyone must make a decision about their career, and for many people, that decision is made as students when they must choose the academic paths that will lead them to their future careers (Ferreira, Santos, Fonseca, & Haase, 2006). The impact that professions have on an individual's earnings, the standard of living, social standing, social networks, mental health, and sense of self-worth may assist to emphasise the importance of career choice. Making wise career decisions imply less wastage of educational and training resources as a result (Nyamwange, 2016). According to Nyamwange's (2016) study, which examined students' interest in career prospects when selecting HE programs, for kindling and keeping that interest, preparing a person for the criteria of acquiring a profession, and selecting to pursue a field based on that understanding, prior knowledge of a career is essential. Study, consultations, training, experience, and connections to the business are all ways to learn about a profession. Mentoring, commitment, motivation, and networking with experts in the topic of interest are additional ways for people to obtain the background knowledge they need for their professions. Making deliberate and well-informed career selections is advantageous to both the organization and the individual. The likelihood of climbing the corporate ladder is a significant element that affects career decisions. Many studies have been conducted to study students' occupational plans to determine their effects on the institution's total enrolment, and the results have always been good (Sedahmed and Nouredien, 2019) therefore, it was concluded that students have been given priority in considering the above aspects when selecting a higher education program.

### **3.2 DESIRE**

Francois et al. (2016) explore the push-pull factors that play a role in TNHE. According to Marginson (2004) in Francois et al. (2016), The lack of supply at nearby post-secondary institutions, job market globalization, and the possible prestige of earning a foreign degree all contribute to TNHE. There are many driving forces in TNHE, including demographic shifts, a lack of educational



possibilities, a yearning for Western-based education, endo-colonialism, the traditional middle class, transcultural acceptance, and the quest of international chances. One of the key pull elements in terms of student enrolment is a desire for Western-style education, especially in developing nations where education based on Western ideas is highly valued. Students planning to pursue Western-based education should be aware that in the local environment, many firms place a high value on foreign degrees. Students are also more drawn to Western-based culture and modern teaching techniques that involve not only learning but also work-integrated learning, self-learning, extra-curricular activities, and a variety of other possibilities to expand their education and interpersonal skills. Another important facet of enrolment is the desire for global prospects in higher education, where a western-based degree is mostly sought after by students from poor nations. It is a prestigious aspect because most firms prefer candidates with foreign degrees. Westernized degrees also address migratory issues. As a result, TNHE is in high demand in emerging countries. This is also an important consideration in student enrollment selections. Joshi (2022) proposes a few methods to increase the desire that would lead to student enrollments, for example, the use of online properties such as social media, Websites, Blogs, and so on with motivational, attractive messages. Dynamic student engagement strategies to talk to them about fulfilling their desires. The use of technology and mobile apps to connect with them by discussing their desire are a few strategies.

### **3.3 DIVERSIFIED PROGRAM OPTIONS**

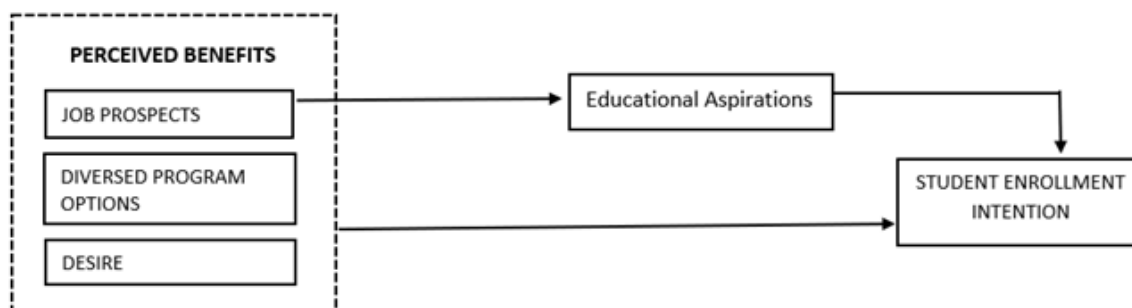
In the research paper by Slocum (2020) which assesses the influencing college choice, Slocum (2020) indicates that students regarded the university's specific programs and academic offerings to be very appealing. A study conducted by Ajibola, Emeghe, Oluwumi, and Oni (2017) indicates that 90% of their respondents considered the choice of the program when choosing their university education. When there are diverse programs, and options students have the liberty to select a wider spectrum of opportunities in the future. Most of the students give priority to the availability of program options mainly considering their future and available options in the future. Recent research reveals that there is a need for more diversification at the program levels and this has supported higher education providers in enrollment (Teixeira et al, 2012).

### **3.4 EDUCATION ASPIRATIONS**

Students are influenced by occupations that offer higher privileges such as income, allowances, and holidays, according to Hewit (2010). However, despite the potential rewards, some people choose to pursue occupations they are passionate about because a profession significantly influences everyday activities, activities of daily living, the level of living, spirituality, and the social life of an individual. One's entire life is organized in part by their profession. Although there are disparities across different demographic groups, families, colleagues, acquaintances, family, mentors, and instructors, particularly employment consultants, are the most important extrinsic effects on profession choice. This is made possible by using social ties or other types of aid (Pummel, Harwood & Lavalley, 2008). However, depending on the population and objectives, different factors impact occupation choices to varying degrees (Nyamwange, 2016). Sedahmed and Nouredien (2019) state that research demonstrates a positive correlation between student Educational Aspirations and decisions about Higher Education Institutions.

### **3.5 STUDENT ENROLLMENT INTENTION**

Student enrolment is the process of assuring enrollment at a university or college or an institution as well as certain classes. Intention refers to their purpose or desire to do so. Today's college and university students are different from those who enrolled in earlier generations' institutions (Abrahamson, 2000). According to Nazidin et al, (2019), students take into account aspects that, in a different way from previous generations, which can influence and allure them to choose that particular educational establishment when deciding which institution to enroll in.



**Figure 1. Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention Framework.**

Figure 1 demonstrates the constructs discussed above, the study was to understand that there is a connection between the independent variable Perceived Benefits which consists of three dimensions namely Job / Career Prospects, Diversified Program Options, and Desire with the dependent variable Student Enrollment Intention. Also, there is a significant mediating effect was identified, where the mediator Educational Aspiration, was mediating between Job Prospects and Student Enrollment Intention.

### 3. VALUE OF THE FRAMEWORK

The "Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention Framework" aims to provide Academia, Higher Education Providers, Higher Education Industry Marketers, Policymakers, and many other interested parties with a simple and clear understanding of the fundamental influences on Student Enrollment Intention and how these factors are related to each other in increasing the number of students enrolled in a Higher Education Provider. In this study, the functions of the dimension under Perceived Benefits are examined. Although these aspects have been examined in several research in the past, they have never been included in a single theoretical framework. As a result, the "Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention Framework" seems to have achieved its objective by succinctly summarizing all the various elements that affect student enrollment intention in a single, straightforward conceptual framework. All the involved stakeholders can make conclusive decisions as to how and what message to share with potential students and their parents to increase student enrollment numbers in which the dimensions of Job Prospects and Desire are involved. Secondly, academics are benefitted from the diverted program options they need to provide to students to get enrollments as well as retain student cohort. This clearly explains that the discussed framework would add immense value to this area of study.

### 4. FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

A novel "Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention Framework" is presented in this study. Since the model was created using a vast body of supporting material, it is still more theoretical. Future research could be conducted to study its practicality which would largely contribute to many stakeholders mainly higher education providers. Desire, Career Prospects, and Diversified Program Options could contribute largely to Student Enrollment decisions of students who intend to pursue their higher education. Authors also suggest carrying out research based on this framework on the other aspects and their influence levels, for example, Country, State, Socioeconomic Status, Societal Influence, Demographics, Marital Status, and Peer Influence. These factors could be further researched as moderating or mediating factors. The "Perceived Benefits and Student Enrollment Intention Framework" could be further developed with supportive independent components in future studies.






## 5. CONCLUSION

Perceived Benefits Factors and Student Enrollment Intention would support and complement each other, According to the Study's Results. Example Desire to pursue higher education influences that enrollment decision. This desire could be developed in students in many ways, such as Career Aspirations, Looking at higher education as a complete transformational process, Status in society, Childhood dreams and ambitions, and so on. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which specifically addresses future Physiological, Protection, Love, Belonging, Esteem, and Self-actualization needs, Job prospects are considered for them to ensure future Quality of Living, Increased Salaries, Promotions, Status in Society, and Reputation. Lastly, Diversified Program Options enables students to select the stream or major or minor and select their area of interest to reach their career aspirations.

Many higher education providers should not only work on conducting traditional programs that were conducted one or two decades ago, but this study is also an eye-opener for academics to explore and ensure diverse program options are given to students and which would eventually influence their enrollment decisions. Education Aspirations are proved to be strongly mediating between Job Prospects and Student Enrollment Intention. This has been proven through literature background. Students' aspirations to have an education strongly supports their Career aspirations and act as a pull factor in their enrollment decisions. Therefore, this study has developed a very simple, clear, and concise model of the Perceived Benefits on Student Enrollment Intention framework that brings a completely new aspect to student enrollment decisions.

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