

EXPLORING THE FACTORS OF STUDENTS DECISION ON CHANGING A DEGREE PROGRAM AFTER ADMISSION IN A UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Schools, and universities are worthless without students. The most valuable resource for every educational institution is its students without any doubt. The academic achievement of students is intimately related to the social and economic prosperity of the nation. The academic performance of the students is crucial in developing the highest caliber graduates who will serve as outstanding leaders and human resources for the nation, contributing to the economic and social growth of that nation. The objectives of the study were to look at the reasons why students decide to switch their chosen degree programs after being accepted into a university. The current study concluded that there are some important factors that can affect students' decision to change their program after getting admission to a University. In the study, it was concluded that most of the students change their decision and get admission to another program due to factors like academic fees, parents' desire, lack of interest etc.

Keywords: Interest, Education, Degree, Program, Students

1. Introduction

Schools, and universities are worthless without students. The most valuable resource for every educational institution is its students without any doubt. The academic achievement of students is intimately related to the social and economic prosperity of the nation. The academic performance of the students is crucial in developing the highest caliber graduates who will serve as outstanding leaders and human resources for the nation, contributing to the economic and social growth of that nation.¹

Many theories have identified numerous factors that influenced students' decisions to change their selected majors, some of which may be better than others. Students choose their majors for a variety of reasons. Some of which may be better than others. In the same way, students may also change their majors for a variety of reasons, some of which may be better than others.

According to Ismael et al.2012 and Dickson et al.2011, students may switch their majors during their first and second years of college at any moment.²

While according to Zafar et al.2011, when students gain knowledge about their skills, preferences, and compatibility, they may decide to switch their majors over time which implies that students who switch majors primarily react to information in both their original major and the new major.

The issues that higher education institutions are experiencing call for a greater comprehension of the factors that affect students' decisions to switch their majors.³

Students' decisions to switch majors might be influenced by good or bad factors that may affect them positively or negatively.⁴ Some students seemed more motivated to switch majors due to the positive aspects of the new major than the drawbacks of their previous major.

According to some writers, it is observed that students may switch their majors in order to earn greater pay in jobs.⁵

According to Dietz et al.2010, students change as a result of opportunities or reasons for

interest. While according to John in 2000 it was concluded that some students switch because the program they choose piqued their curiosity, inspired them, made them joyful, and allowed them to make use of their strengths that may be seen in mostly students.⁶

A study was done by Mohsen in 2013 in which he stated that students seldom alter their minds about their choices other than when they are unsatisfied with their present program of choice.⁷

According to Lay et al.2010, due to incorrect information they get or ignore, many kids don't attend the school they prefer or where they belong in. Evidence demonstrates that students, in part because they are ignorant of these options, miss out on the good choices that would fit them.

1.1. Factors due to which students change their subject after getting admission in university

Numerous researchers have discovered a few groups that have been demonstrated to affect students' choices to switch from their present degree program; preferences for particular courses, concerns about influence, and employment. Some of them are listed below.⁸

1.1.1. Personal and Course Personal Preferences

Bartle & Polanco revealed in 2012 that some students changed their subjects as a result of the new program since it piqued their interest, inspired them, and gave them opportunities to utilize and demonstrate them.

1.1.2. Influential Issues

Theories revealed that it is a student's decision to choose a different program that are influenced by a number of specific variables. These factors might include many aspects like your teacher, counsel, friends, and parents.

According to Dietz (2010), two things that have a bigger impact on students' decisions to alter their majors and enroll in degree programs are family and friends. It becomes important for people to choose what they recommend to them.^{9, 10}

1.1.3. Job Issues

Another important factor is job issues. For many of the student's equal employment salaries, work stability, and professional growth choose to stay in their majors or switch majors were also mentioned by many authors. Students who alter their professional paths typically change their majors, according to Willcoxon and Wyder (2010).

According to Dietz (2010), students may change their majors according to the opportunities they avail.

2. Rationale of the Study

Finding the reasons why students altered their degree program after being admitted to the university is crucial. Universities may focus more on the problematic phenomenon of students changing their degrees. So the goal of this research was to investigate the variables that influence students' decisions to switch their degree programs after being admitted to a university. This work is significant for both expert practice in the future and future research at other levels.¹²

3. Thematic analysis

A technique for finding and analysing patterns of meaning in qualitative data is thematic analysis (TA). Gerald Holton, a physicist and science historian, invented TA as a method in the 1970s. Although TA has been widely utilized in the social sciences to analyse qualitative data,

there hasn't been much discussion of the technique or advice on how to apply it until lately. A "systematic" and "advanced" method to TA was put forth in 2006 by Braun and Clarke, and it has since become extensively used.

4. Statement of the Problem

The present study investigated to explore the factor of student's decision on changing a degree program after admission in a university.

5. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were:

1. To look at the reasons why students decide to switch their chosen degree programs after being accepted into a university.
2. To compare the reasons why students, alter their chosen degree programs and external conditions.
3. To compare student counseling and the decision-making process involved in students' altering their chosen degree programs.

6. Research Question

The study seeks answers to the following questions:

1. How students switch their degree program?
2. How environmental influences and student decisions related with each other in any way?
3. Why there is a connection between the decision-changing process and student guidance?

7. Significance of the Study

Universities and educators can focus more on the problematic phenomenon of students changing majors and assist their students in choosing majors that are right for them right away to reduce the effect of students changing their majors. Due to the challenges they encountered while studying in their disciplines, some students were switching their majors.

Other students were listening to their parents' advice about changing their majors because the ones they had chosen were not practical for them. It was interesting to see that students' decisions to switch degrees were connected to a variety of factors, and other researchers may uncover other factors. Students were switching majors as a result of conversations they had with parents and other students regarding their present majors, predicted careers, and salaries after graduation. These conversations had an impact on the students' decisions to choose alternative degrees to study.

8. Methodology of the Research

The study was conducted on the following procedural steps:

9. Research Design

The qualitative approach was utilized for this study. The study was based on interview method because it determines the factors of students' decision on changing a degree program after admission in a university.

10. Population

The population was consisted on University of Okara and University of Lahore in the academic year 2019-2022. Purposive technique was utilized for interview. Interview was preplanned.

11. Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample size was taken on the basis of purposive sampling and the qualitative approach was utilized for this study.

12. Research Tool

Keeping in this view of the nature of the content, qualitative study type research was considered appropriately to collect data. From interview method as per respondent choice to provide with flexibility of time and place. It can be providing accurate and authentic. It was easy way of data collection.

13. Data Analysis

As the study deals with the factors of students' decision on changing a degree program after admission in a university. The data was analyzed in light of the research objectives and research questions of the study. The data were analyzed by using thematic analysis, defining units and categories of content, coding text according to rules, drawing conclusion and giving recommendations suggested by this research.

14. Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited that factor is measured on the base of opinion of the instructor and student of University of Okara.

15. Conceptual Framework

The present study was focused on the factors of students' decision on changing a degree program after admission in a university. The study was based on interview method. The interview was preplanned. The study was based on individual study, responses and seek to examine the factors of students' decision on changing a degree program after admission in a university. The basic assumption was that there is a significant relationship between student's decision and changing program after admission in a university.

16. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS RESULTS

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected by the researcher from the participants of research that are those parents who have changed their degree program from any one degree to another due to different factors. Researcher uses semi-structured interview as a data collection tool. Analysis and interpretation are followed by a phenomenological approach of qualitative research. Researcher made themes and sub-themes of the data they gathered through interviews. These themes and sub-themes described below. Findings from these themes will be presented in the next chapter.

16.1 Academic fee of institute

Academic fee is an important part for any student who wants to continue his or her studies. Every persona has desire to study but most of the people cannot afford studies due to

academic fesses' transportation issues etc. • Increase fee can make students disgrace to study and cab affect their target of achieving worse. Every student has a right to study but academic fee is an important factor. Many students may change their despiteful degree form just because they are not able to pay their fee as it was very high for them. Students may lack interest in studies and forget their targets.

Among all the participants in the study' most of the students have agree to the statement that they changed their degree program due to academic fee. The academic fee of the program was not bearable for their family as they have other siblings so they change their degree.

The first student was make whose answer to first statement was that *the fee factor doesn't change my mind. It was very reliable for me to pay my fee. It was affordable. It was not the reason.* The second respondent was female who answered that *Absolutely not! Its fee was very low even lower then my current program.*

The third response of the respondent was that *Mam it was like that aaaa that degree was not good I don't like it-therefore I changed my degree-I choose BBA- Because the education department have very low opportunities so I choose professional degree- No-it was not the factor* the next respondent answered in the interview that *Yes it was the factor for me- It was not affording- Fee was very high for me and also transporting was very expensive too so I changed my program- I was interested in science but it was very expensive so I changed my program to education-*

One of the respondent in the interview answered about the fee statement that *-Fess was low there but I was not interesting-*Another student responded that *Yes sir it affects me because if students are not bearing the fee then students should not take admission in that program* While the last student also responded that the academic fee is important factor in changing degree program. Most of the respondents were not considering academic fee as factor for changings their degree program. Most of the students change their department only in the same university so that it was not a factor for them, only a few respondents answered that academic fee was a factor for them for changing their degree program. A girl was also very worried and sad for changing her program due to her financial issues.

16.2. University is far from your residence

In the second statement of the interview, it was to the students that how long-distance institute affects you to change your program. Most of the students denied the statement. they said that most of the students are studying currently in the same institute they just change their department. They change their program due to other different factors but long distance was not the one. Only one young girl said in the interview that it was the factor that affects her to change her decision.

She said that her University was very far from her house and city and she was very interested in the previous program She thought that she will be able to manage long distances as she entered her favorite program. But she said that it was not convenient for me so I changed my decision to leave the University and went to another University for studying. But Most of the students do not agree to this statement.

16.3. The reputation of your institute

One another important factor that can affect students' decision to change their degree program is the reputation of the degree. The students are very serious about the reputation of the institute as well as the reputation of their subject. This question was asked to all students is included in the interview.

Most of the student's answers were in the way that yes the reputation of the subject and program affects their decision to change their decision. Most of the students thought in the interview that it affects them to change their decision. The first three students answer this in a negative way.

Some students who rejected the statement concluded that they are not interested in the program's reputation. They are only interested in their favorite subject. They remain on their subject just because they like those subjects.

16.4. More interesting and inspired program

The next important factor was that is the students interested in any other field or inspired by some other program. Most of the students answer the statement in a positive way. Almost six students seven agreed with the statement. They said that they quit and change their program after getting admission to the university as they found another program that was more interesting for them. They found it more inspiring.

Only one student rejected the statement. She declared that it was not the program that inspires her but was her parents' wish to change her program. The previous program was very expensive so she quit it. It can be considered that it was the major factor that affects students' behavior to change their program from one to another.

One student agreed and said that *BBA was more suitable for me because I have done I.com but I was not interested in that- In 2018 I choose law over BBA -It was not the factor-*

16.5. Role of teachers and friends

The main responsibility of a teacher is to decide what practices to use in order to achieve a variety of goals for the students in their classrooms. It should be the responsibility of a teacher to decide how to support students' learning in which they teach in the contexts.

The job of the teacher is described so that students take an interest. They serve as a student's counselor, role model, external parents, etc. There are several significant approaches to assist students to learn a subject better so they might have better futures.

In this interview, most of the students replied that teachers and friends an important role in changing our decision. One of the students replied with the statement that *I have good friends in both departments right now-While another student replied that the Faculty was not so good with students but there was no problem in this as it is not a matter of fact for me.*

During the study in the real world, teachers are crucial in our lives. The teacher's job is to instruct students in the classroom in ways that will benefit them in the future. So let's see what a teacher does.

The fundamental duty of a teacher serves as the foundation for all other responsibilities in education. Other roles are born from this character. The main fundamental responsibility falls on teachers. They won't be able to perform other obligations if they don't.

16.6. Role of equal employment salaries, work stability, and professional growth in student life

The connections between education and employment are influenced not only by the role of education in preparing students for future work tasks and other facets of life, but also by the fact that education is chosen: in an educational meritocracy, financial resources, and social recognitions.

The idea of equal employment opportunity holds that everyone should be given the opportunity to work and grow based only on skill and merit, regardless of their race, sex, gender, color, religion, handicap, national origin, or age.

Most of the respondents in the interview agreed with this statement. They responded that they were interested in some programs when they saw more programs that are having more equal employment salaries. The scope of education is an important factor for students. After completion of the program, students rush toward the market to get jobs. When they do not get a job and get satisfactory salary packages, they go into stress and heartbreak. Therefore, students must be aware of the scope of the program before getting admission to the university.

One student said in the interview that

16.7. Environment of institute

According to research, an active learning environment helps students pay attention and concentrate better, facilitates meaningful learning experiences, boosts student achievement, and inspires them to use more sophisticated critical thinking abilities.

Learning ability may be impacted by a number of things, including sitting, light, noise, and even color. Positive learning environments have been linked to increased motivation, engagement, and general learning capacity in students.

The study environment is a term used to describe the physical, psychological, and social settings that influence how you perceive your studies and your well-being as a student. Although the phrase "study environment" is frequently used, the law frequently refers to the workplace of students.

Most of the students agreed to this statement that a good environment is necessary, and most of the students found a good environment in their universities.

16.8. Role of parent's desire in changing program

Schools must form partnerships with parents and establish shared accountability for students' achievement in the educational system in order to adhere to the system of integrated support for their pupils. In this approach, parents' efforts to help schools are encouraged, parental involvement is raised, and they directly contribute to a successful educational system.

In light of the significance of parents' involvement and participation in school activities, in this paper, we will examine the positive effects of parental involvement, summarize guiding

principles for the successful partnership of parents and school, and present six factors and six models.

Most of the students' answers to this question that was their own choice to change their study from one to any other. The student's interviews showed that they want to study only those subjects that make them inspire. They tried to choose those subjects that they find interesting.

A student answered *Yes I can say that--My father was interested that I do Law degree because my elder brother was a lawyer and my mother was a teacher so I decided to choose it*-He said that he quit his studies in this semester of BBA as he could not find a chance to study it before. After choosing BBA he got an opportunity to get admission in law so he chooses it.

Another student replied that *Aaa like Yes my parent's desire was to enroll in an education program*. But it was not very important for me. My interest was more important to me.

16.9. Grading factor in changing program; CGPA

Another statement that was asked of the students who changed their degree program was that how many students change their degree program because of their CGPA. All students were asked about their CGPA. Students may get involved in the grading system of the university and may find it tough and change their degree program. They may have thought that they are not settled in the program or they do not understand the concept and subjects of the current program. They may get stressed and change their program. The current study shows this factor very little in students. Most of the students deny the statement. They said they were scoring great marks in the study but they were not understanding it.

One student responded during the interview that *I worked hard so it was not the factor-I worked too hard*-I have found during the study that students felt shy when I asked about this question. They thought that they are intelligent enough to get a good score but it is a general practice for sensitive students to change their degree program to get good grades.

One another student answered to it that *No noo there was no role of CGPA in it- because BBA was easy I got good marks- In fact, I have a low CGPA in my current subject*-another student who changed his degree program answered that *Yes I can sathatttt it was a factor like I was not very much interested in it but there was no other option for me to choose any program but I am working hard for it*.

16.10. Development of interest in program

Academic success depends on interest, a potent motivating factor that drives learning, directs academic and career paths, and energizes learning. Interest is a persistent propensity to reengage over time as well as a psychological state of attention and affect toward a specific object or topic.

The four-phase model of interest development integrates these two definitions to direct interventions that foster interest and profit on already-existing interests. Attention-grabbing environments, contexts that evoke prior personal interests, problem-based learning, and increasing utility value are four interventions that seem to be effective at increasing interest. Promoting interest can help pupils study more actively and with more motivation.

The term "interest" can refer to two different (though frequently co-occurring) feelings: a person's fleeting feeling of being mesmerized by an object and longer-lasting feelings that the object is enjoyable and merits further investigation. Therefore, interest is both a psychological state that is characterized by increased attention, effort and emotion felt at a specific time (situational interest) and an enduring propensity to return to a specific object or topic over time.

To the stamen that how you think that you were not interested in previous degree program therefore you changed it after admission in the university, most of the students agreed. The students answered that they were not interested in the program as there was nothing new for them to learn. They found another program that makes them inspire and develop their interest and change their decision after admission to the university.

One student answered *Yes I think target matters. I was interesting in botany so I was very desperate so I waste two years but I am now in my favorite program.* Another student answered *Yes I was not interested in that program but want to change.* Some of the students replied very politely while some replied in a very certain way.

16.11. Past experience in the same subjects

The events that take place in students' life both inside and outside of the classroom have an impact on them in the long run. That also applies to lecturers in classrooms. Past events that have a tendency to stay with you for years later. From positive developments, for instance recalling an excellent lesson your former elementary school teacher taught you done while you were in elementary school with me. awful things. It could alter the way you act or see things at school. Having a teacher that didn't treat her students equally in class, for instance. Past events have an impact on kids in that way.

In the current study only a few of the students agreed to this statement. Most of the students said that they do not change their decision due to past experience. One of the student answered *YES.. Umm subject study was not bad but I was forced to change my decision. External factors were pressurizing me.*

16.12. Goal achievement

When a person has a goal, they are forced to act in spite of any impediments that may be there. As a result, it may inspire students to acquire critical-thinking abilities, fresh approaches to problem-solving, and a deeper comprehension of how to deal with challenges.

All students answered this statement and were determined. Everyone was giving an idea to choose the program that inspired them. Most of the student change their degree program due to goal achieving.

17. Conclusion

The current study concluded that there are some important factors that can affect students' decision to change their program after getting admission to a University. In the study, it was concluded that most of the students change their decision and get admission to another program due to factors like academic fees, parents' desire, lack of interest etc.

Some major factors that were considered mainly in the current study are academic fees teachers and friends' behavior and better equal employment salaries Most of the students give attention to their desires and try to choose the program that they found interesting for themselves They do not get confused due to other factors and keep their goals focused Their targets are very clear to them.

The study also observed that some students change their degree program as they cannot pay their fees they cannot afford transport dues etc. Some students cannot take admitted to their interesting program as the institution is away from their homes They do not have any options rather than studying in the institutes that are closer to their home towns

Most of the University students have a thought that they have a right to choose the program which they like. Most of the students have decided in their intermediate what will they study further The students found their previous experience good in the exams and study so they want to continue their study in the same field and change their program after getting admission in the university.

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