

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT

Student Enrollment in Higher Education: Influencing Factors

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Abstract:

Growing economies of this world are experiencing education growth and increased student enrollments, whereas some economies are finding it difficult to enroll students for Higher education. There are various factors which affect the enrollment of students for Higher Education. The University makes active efforts in making the students welcome by providing the right environment, quality education and good faculty, infrastructure support, job oriented courses, affordable cost of education, campus placements. Sometimes the economic condition of the state also affects student enrollment. The scholarship provided to students, loans and other benefits play an important part in student decision for enrollment. Secondary data research of the current scenario in Higher Education Industry and the important influencing factors would be studied. This study is an effort to study the factors effecting the student decision to enroll for higher education and further suggest efforts for improved enrollment figures. This would help the higher education sector in taking a correct course for better student enrollments.

Keywords: University effort Cost of education, education growth, economic condition.

1. Higher Education: An Introduction

Indian economy has witnessed an impressive student enrollment growth since 1947 with the growth in the population. The graph has soared from .1 million to 12 million due to the increase in the education providers. These education providers are from the Government, Private, Distance and Self- financing courses. India faces a growth challenge with many limitations such as lack of proper investment, safe and ample infrastructure and facilities, global competition and matching the needs of the growing market. (M2Presswire, 2009)

(RNCOS, 2010) Indian Education Services are bound for a major growth. India has more than 2000 Colleges and more than 400 Universities catering to the increased demand for higher education.

With more than 50% of the population below 24 years of age leaves lots of scope for private education industry to grow. Education industry, especially the higher education industry has seen phenomenal growth, as in the case of Saudi Arabia. (Media Report, 2010)

Interestingly the decrease in enrollment of students in higher education has been attributed to the fewer students enrolling in high schools, as in the case of china, mainly due to china's one child policy. Another important reason for drop in student enrollments has been student interest in seeking overseas admission in a Foreign University. (UPI Top News, 2011)

Community Colleges especially with a lesser tenure than four years score over the schools with four year Institutions as observed with Missouri Association of Community Colleges. Here there is significant increase in student enrollments over the last year. (Myers, Jimmy, 2010)

2. Objective of Study

The primary objective of this study is to identify the factors influencing enrollment in Indian higher education. There has been increasing growth in the Indian Higher education over the few years. The students seeking enrollment into the higher education Institutes face many hindrances and confusion. Primarily, they face great difficulty in finalizing the right Institute for higher education. There are many factors which play an important role. This study is an effort to identify these influencing factors and suggest further efforts for an improved enrollment graph.

3. Health of the Economy

It has been observed that the students are lured to the Industry for jobs when the economy is strong and they are lured towards education when the economy is not doing too good. (Honolulu, The Star Advertiser, 2013)

Economy downfall has also led to an increase in student enrollments. The young and old students all enroll in higher education with the hope of fetching a lucrative job by the time the recession ends. (Benman, Keith, 2009)

It is a good as well as a bad time since the enrollments is growing as a result of the bad time in economy. Students enroll in large numbers, hoping to get good, highly paid jobs with the increased qualifications once the recession is over. (Benman. Keith, 2009)

4. Institute Initiatives

There is a clear connection between student friendly system, improvised programs and facilities and student enrollments. It is also the commitment of the students and faculty which leads to higher enrollments. (Younker, Emily, 2015)

In many a case it has been seen that higher enrollments have resulted from the quality education being imparted at affordable prices. (Astrain, Carolina, 2012)

Initiatives such as adding programs which are relevant to the area have led to increased job offers from the business and Industry leading to increased student enrollment. (The Associated Press AP Regional State Report, 2013) Institutes have made lots of effort to improve student enrollments. There has been a great focus on recruitments. The Institutes have maintained relations with the corporate and business world. Programs which fetch good jobs are added. (The Associated Press, 2013)

A dedicated staff and faculty had led to an increase in student enrollment as seen at Texas College and Universities. There has also been an increase in the research activity along with the growth in medical facilities. (Brooks. Karen, 2006)

Important factors such as course curriculum and the ease in administration influence the selection of higher education Institution. (Dazmin.Daud, Dominic. Wong, Wai.Kee, 2012)

(Thibodeau. Patrick, 2013) Enhanced awareness about the computer based thinking in almost every field of science and technology has led to the enrollment growth in Computer Science.

At some Institutes the Minorities high Scholastic Aptitude scores have also led to an increased enrollment figures apart from the aggressive enrollment efforts. (Janice. E, 1992)

The most important factors which play a major role in college enrollment are quality, cost, experiences at other schools, communication and contacts with potential students and their parents, and the sense of commitment of faculty and staff. (Olivia Dianne Beverly, 2010)

5. Cost of Education

This study in Malaysia identifies a series of factors which have led to the increase in student enrollments such as the facilities and infrastructure provided, the cost involved, the course curriculum and structure, value of the degree and the impact of family and friends in influencing the enrollments. (Karl. Wagner, Pooyan.Yousefi. Fard, 2009)

Being able to accommodate to the higher need for an accessible and better education has been the call for many Institutes. The students have realized that to earn more they need to either get an advanced degree or go for a different degree which would prepare them and make them market ready. (Morton. Neal, 2010)

It has been found that students belonging to a particular place find the cost of education, the facilities provided, and family support as some important influencing factors in the education decision in colleges for the higher education. (So. Jung. Lee, Hyun.Kyung. Chatfield, 2011)

(Kelley, Jeremy. P. Dayton, 2015) Enrollments are experienced with waiving off of tuition fees for the low income higher education deserving and performing students. Such a gesture would make higher education more accessible to the deserving students seeking higher education.

Another study expresses concerns on the increase in enrollments coupled with the soaring rise in cost of Tuitions. In as short span of about a decade the tuition fee has more than doubled. Columbian. The (Vancouver, WA 2013)

With the 90/10 rule coming into force both the enrollments and revenue has seen a significant rise in the education for profit sector. Another student enrollment contributing factor has been the significant growth in loans and grants received by these educational institutes. (PR Newswire, 2014)

According to Fitch ratings the factors affecting student enrollment are many. The balance sheet resources, operating performance, proactive management in assessing the market and reshaping strategies, student loans access factor, annual family income are some of them. (Business Wire, 2014)

It is the more prominently the higher education affordability with the smaller regional tuition dependent institutes. Fitch expresses fears and concern over the rise and growth of big institutes whereas the smaller institutes find it difficult to survive with mounting need for an affordable higher education with the enrollments. (Fitch Ratings, 2014)

It has been seen that due to the reduced scholarship support to the students the enrollment of students has suffered. The students are not able to take the burden of high education fee which adversely effects the student enrollments as the case with Georgia's Schools. (McManus. Tracey, 2012)

In Germany a new study has revealed that Financial Student Aid is leading to increased student enrollments. The entitlement to the student financial aid has more importance and effect on student enrollment than the individual increased financial aid. (Steiner. Viktor, Wrohlich. Katharina, 2012)

6. Conclusion and Suggestions

There has been a great demand for higher education Institutes providing quality education. Although, reducing the gap between the student affordability and cost of higher education remains a challenge. The students can be encouraged to enroll for higher education by providing high class Infrastructure and facilities, learned and dedicated faculty, improved course curriculum, easy finance schemes and financial aid. In view the increasing demand for quality higher education in India, it is most important to concentrate resources

and efforts on the quality education dissemination in Indian Institutes of higher education. Student friendly education finance schemes and sponsored scholarship schemes can be encouraged and made readily available for students to apply. It is felt that the enrollment figures for Indian Higher education can be further improved by taking care of these factors.

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