INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN SELECTING A BACHELOR'S DEGREE FROM INTERNATIONAL DEGREE PROGRAMMES OFFERED IN SRI LANKA: PERSPECTIVES OF LECTURERS AND GRADUATES

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Abstract: National University intake in Sri Lanka has become progressively competitive due to the limited number of opportunities available. Majority of the students who fail to enter National Universities and students who complete Advanced Level in British curriculum have been increasingly seeking alternative educational options in the domestic market. Of those students, a small percentage is presumed to continue their university level education (ULE) overseas based on affordability. At present many private higher educational institutes (PHEI) in Sri Lanka offer various types of International Degree Programmes (IDPs) to cater to the rising demand of ULE. Due to the flexibility and optionality in IDPs offered in Sri Lanka, the decision making process in selecting a Bachelor's degree (BD) in IDPs has become complex and multifactorial. This study aims to explore factors influencing students' choice in selecting a BD from IDPs. Data for the study were collected via focus group discussions with lecturers and graduates in randomly selected PHEIs. 62 themes which emerged in thematic analysis of data were categorized into 7 variables, namely, university characteristics, source of information (messenger), programme evaluation, cost, marketing strategy, location and infrastructure facilities. The percentage of occurrence of each theme has been calculated to identify how the lecturers and graduates have ranked the themes based on their level of importance. University characteristics, programme evaluation, infrastructure facilities and messenger were rated as most influential by lecturers and graduates, but with different orders of importance. 'Cost' is the least influential factor for lecturers while 'location' is for graduates.

Keywords: University Level Education, Students' choice, Bachelor's Degree, International Degree Programmes

Introduction

The governance of the higher education system throughout the world has changed considerably in the recent years. Internalization is a term being used to discuss the international dimensions of higher education, and more widely post-secondary education (Knight, 2007). As a result of internationalization in education, international degree programmes (IDPs) have emerged in several countries where degree programmes move from one country to another instead of students. Alternatively, it has been forecasted that the demand for international education will be 7.2 million in 2025 (Knight, 2012) and foreign universities may have a challenge to fulfill the requirement. Hence most of the foreign universities which hold higher global rank offer their Bachelor's degrees (BDs) through IDPs to international students, parallel to their local students.

University Grants Commission (UGC) which was established under the University Act No 16 in 1978 is the main body responsible for selection and allocation of students to National universities in Sri Lanka. Selection of the students for National universities is determined by the student's performance at the GCE Advanced level examination in Sri Lanka. Essentially, it depends on the Z score of the student and the 'cut off' mark which is calculated by the Commissioner General of Examination (UGC, 2017). National University intake in Sri Lanka has become progressively competitive over the years where only a small proportion of students are eligible for a

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state-funded higher education. Of the 149,489 students who were eligible for National university admission from GCE Advanced level examination in 2014/2015, only 17% were admitted to National universities (UGC, 2016). According to the population census in 2012, only 4% of the age 25 years and above population have a BD level qualification in Sri Lanka. That could mainly be due to fact that the higher education system is catering only to a very small proportion of the population of the country. Therefore, it has become challenging for Sri Lankan students to pursue a BD in catering to the demands of the future job market.

It has been perceived that many students who fail to enter National Universities and students who complete advanced level in British curriculum pursue university level education (ULE) in a foreign university in an overseas country. However, foreign university education is very costly due to university fees and higher cost of living and it could be beyond the spending limit of most of the parents. Further, the students have to leave their families and study in a novel and challenging environment which causes various adverse effects for some students due to issues including cultural differences and climate changes (Sunday Times, 2011). Additionally, due to natural disasters taking place in several parts of the world, terrorism and political instability in many countries, parents are concerned about their children's safety when sending them abroad (Sunday Times, 2011). As a result, most of the students have been increasingly searching the domestic market for affordable alternative options. These circumstances have caused an emergence of IDPs in Sri Lanka, affiliated with Private Higher Educational Institutes (PHEIs) to cater to the need of ULE for students who did not get state-funded university admission after completing GCE Advanced level and for students who qualified advanced level in British curriculum.

At present, selecting a BD has become strategically complicated in Sri Lanka due to optionality and flexibility of the BDs offer in IDPs. Hence the decision making process has become complex and multifactorial since the decision is influenced by a number of demographic, economic, social and psychological factors, which is evident through research studies carried out by Briggs (2006), Kusumawati *et al* (2010) and Sia (2011) on the importance of students' choice criteria. Ozga and Sukhandan (1998) highlighted that the difference between 'correct' and 'wrong' choices can be difficult to comprehend at an initial stage of the decision making process. Further they opine that sub-optimal choices of students would impact negatively on their motivation and academic success which may lead to student dissatisfaction. Furthermore, Yorke (1999) identifies that the sub-optimal decisions at the point of entry could increase the future failure rate. Moreover, unsatisfactory progression of students will be a challenge for the academic reputation of PHEIs. Hence it is vital important to research about the students' choice in selecting a BD from IDPs in Sri Lanka.

Theoretical Framework

Numerous theoretical models have been suggested to explain the factors which influence students' intention to pursue ULE and further to describe various processes by which a post-secondary student can follow when selecting a BD from PHEIs. According to Fernandez (2010), there are three theoretical or choice models such as economic models, sociological models and combined models. Under economic models, individuals are assumed to act rationally in ways that maximize their utility based on their personal preferences (poo *et al*, 2012). According to Poo *et al* (2012), the underlying assumption of the economic models is that students will select a particular BD or a PHEI if the benefit of that choice exceeds the perceived benefits of other alternatives. Further the economic model assumes that, even when the expected benefits and costs are the same, two individuals may make different choices when selecting a BD or a PHEI (Fernandez, 2010). Sociological models describe a process that considers decision determinants developed throughout a student's life. According to Jackson (1982) and Fernandez (2010), sociological model specifies a variety of social and individual factors leading to a student's occupational and educational aspirations. Combined models include the most important indicators from economic and sociological models in the decision making process (Hossler, 1985; Joseph and Joseph, 1998; Joseph and Joseph,2000). Hence these kinds of models allow a considerable amount of analytical power, as they combine sociological perspectives with rational decision making.

Literature Review

It appears that the students' choice criteria in selecting a BD in various disciplines or an Institution have been widely researched in several countries. The basic idea is that students and their parents (consumers) will choose a BD and a PHEI that matches their selection criteria academically, financially and socially (Fernandez, 2010). Many studies on 'student decision making' rely on economics and sociological theoretical frameworks to examine factors of students' choice (Jackson, 1978; Tierney, 1983; Hearn, 1984; Somers *et al.*; 2006). These studies analyse students' behaviour as consumers in the private higher education marketplace when pursuing ULE. However, the influential factors found in previous other studies may be varied among countries and the types of BDs in various disciplines.

Further, a range of researchers strongly discuss the dramatic effect of parents on student's choice of college (Moogan and Baron, 2003; Domino *et al.*, 2006; Yamamoto, 2006, Al Yousef, 2009). Studies in Asian countries predominantly found that reference groups such as friends, peers, siblings, relatives, teachers and other individuals influence a student's choice of university (Ceja, 2004; Ceja, 2006; Yamamoto, 2006; Pimpa and Suwannapirom, 2008). Few other researchers highlighted that personal factors show the greatest positive influences on students' choice of university (Nora, 2004; Yamamoto, 2006). Keling (2006) concludes that the reputation of the institution, future graduates' job prospects, nature of the institutions, cost effectiveness, affiliation of the institutions, entry flexibility and institutions' campus environment are six factors that influence the choice of higher education institutes in Malaysia. Another study which was conducted by Tang *et al* (2004) adds the need for a large faculty and a wide range of facilities to the above mentioned factors. Meanwhile, Falindah *et al* (2010) found that qualification of the teaching staff, English usage, English language specialized field and an excellent staff are the factors which considered important among international students. In addition, Rahayu *et al* (2000) suggest that the availability of the desired programme is mostly significant for a sample of prospective students and undergraduates. This factor is also shared by Yusof *et al*, (2008) along with other factors including the quality of the faculty/lecturers and financial assistance offered by the Higher education Institutions. Further, Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2014) expound four factors which are further classified into twelve sub factors: educational factors (family involvement, style of education, recommendations of teachers and career counselors), information factors (open days, exhibitions, mass media), economic factors (cost of the degree, cost of accommodation, career prospects) and other factors (geographical location of higher education institution, ranking of the foreign university, personal skills). Although it was found that there are numerous important factors considered by students when selecting a BD, these factors have different levels of importance for each country and the type of the BD.

As explained above, numerous studies have been conducted to explore the influential factors in selecting a BD in quantitative, qualitative and mixed method approach. But none of the researchers have discussed about the selection of a BD in IDP offer in those respected countries. Further, students' choice in selecting a BD has not been researched in Sri Lanka since it is a newly emerging field. Hence, identification of factors influencing Sri Lankan students' choice in selecting a BD is recognized as a significant study due to the optionality and flexibility offer under IDPs. Yet various factors have been identified as influential by previous research studies, all of which may not be relevant for Sri Lankan students. Hence it is adequate to explore the influential factors of student's choice in selecting a BD using the perspectives of other connected parties such as lecturers and graduates. Moreover, due to the sub-optimal choices of the students, lecturers may have to face numerous challenges in guiding students to complete the selected BD at the ULE. Further, the perspectives of the graduates are significant because they must have previous experience in choosing the BD at the initial stage of the decision making process and have knowledge on the problems encountered later due their personal characteristics and environmental factors. Therefore, the positive and negative feedback of lecturers and graduates is ideal to determine the influential factors on students' choice. Hence, this study aims to explore the influential factors of selecting a BD based on the perspectives of lecturers and graduates and to identify the most influential factors according to the view point of people in two different statuses.

Research Questions

The research addresses two key questions:

1. What are the factors that influence Sri Lankan students' choice in selecting a BD in IDPs?
2. Which factors have the greatest influence on Sri Lankan students' choice in selecting a BD in IDPs?

Research Methodology

Population and Sample

The target population of lecturers is "all the lecturers engaged in IDPs in all PHEIs in Sri Lanka". This consists of full time and part time lecturers engage in all types of BDs offer under IDPs in all PHEIs in Sri Lanka. Further some of them may lecture for more than one PHEI or in several BD programmes. Therefore, the accessible population of lecturers is limited to "all the lecturers engaged in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and Management related BDs in IDPs in all PHEIs in Sri Lanka". Moreover, the target population of graduates is "all graduates of IDPs in all PHEIs in Sri Lanka" and the accessible population of graduates is limited to "all the graduates of STEM and Management related BDs in IDPs in all PHEIs". Hence, the study was conducted by using a purposive sample of 30 lecturers who are engaged in STEM and Management related BDs in IDPs and a purposive sample of 30 graduates who have completed STEM and Management related BDs in randomly selected 7 PHEIs in Sri Lanka.

Research Design

This study is designed to explore the influential factors based on the perspectives of lecturers and graduates in which data collection and analysis proceeded sequentially and concurrently. Secondary data were collected using documents such as prospectus of various IDPs and websites of PHEIs in order to identify the characteristics of the IDPs offered in Sri Lanka. Further, several factors identified as influential by various types of BDs in other countries were determined through the review of related literature and used to prepare the structure to conduct the focus group discussion. Data were gathered by conducting focus group discussions with 30 lecturers and 30 graduates of randomly selected 7 PHEIs and data were analysed thematically. Thematic analysis is a poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic (Roulston, 2001). Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data and this method has been widely used across the social, behavioural and more applied (clinical, health and education) sciences (Braun and Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), these patterns are identified through a rigorous process of data familiarization, data coding, theme development and revision.

Data Analyses and Results

The focus group discussion of lecturers and graduates were recorded using audiotapes with the permission from the participants to ensure the accuracy of the information provided. Data were transcribed into written form and thematic analysis was conducted according to the guidance provided by Creswell (2013) and Braun and Clarke (2006). After 3 focus group discussions with lecturers, the data were transcribed and read several times to search for meanings and patterns to begin the process of coding which continues to be developed and defined throughout the entire analysis. The initial codes have been developed as a part of the analysis and preceded to 4th focus group discussion. However, the coded data differs from the units of analysis which is called as themes (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Data were transcribed again and searched for patterns by comparing the initially defined codes. Moreover, data were collated into the relevant initial coding and this process of coding, decoding and recoding continued several times throughout the focus group discussion with 30 lecturers and identified a

long list of different codes. Finally, thematic analysis was completed by collating codes into potential themes and by gathering all data relevant to each potential theme. The themes which have been emerged after thematic analysis were considered as the influential factors in selecting a BD from the IDP based on the perspectives of the lecturers. The same processes were conducted sequentially and concurrently during the focus group discussion with graduates. After 7 focus group discussions with 30 lecturers and 30 graduates, 62 themes were emerged. All the lecturers have not mentioned all these themes at the discussion by themselves but most of them have highlighted many based on their previous experiences with undergraduates. Further, all graduates have not highlighted all 62 themes but some of them have highlighted many of the emerged themes. Hence, the percentages of occurrence of themes were calculated to see how the lecturers and graduates have ranked their preferences on the emerged themes and presented below in table 1.

Table 1   Rank percentages of Lecturers and Graduates on the emerged 62 themes by the thematic analysis .

Variables		Influential factors in selecting a Bachelor's degree encountered by thematic analysis	Rank % of Lecturers	Rank % of Graduates
Marketing strategy	1.	Selection of an institution is based on its websites	50	43
	2.	Selection of an institution is based on its paper advertisement	54	68
	3.	Impression of campus visit before the enrollment	61	54
	4.	Impression of campus during the open day	46	54
	5.	Meet university delegates in an educational fair	54	71
	6.	Familiarize with the university from a school competition which was organized by them	29	18
	7.	Heard about the educational conference organize by the university	18	18
Messenger	1.	Choosing an institution is based on parents suggestion	82	68
	2.	Choosing an institution is based on peer influence	86	75
	3.	Advice from peers who have been following the similar programme	61	82
	4.	Advice from peers who have been studying in a similar university	57	75
	5.	Recommendations given by the career counselors of the university	61	50
	6.	Encouragement of high school teachers to attend this university	43	57
	7.	Social networking sites (face books, twitter, you tube)	57	93
Location	1.	Location of the university is convenient and accessible	21	54
	2.	Excellent layout of the university	54	32
	3.	Friendly atmosphere of the campus	54	36
	4.	Availability of integrated transportation facilities	79	68
	5.	Preferred institutions nearer to my home	32	46
Cost	1.	Cost of the programme compared to other alternative programmes	89	79
	2.	Other costs involve with the selection	39	54
	3.	Affordable rates for university offers	43	43
	4.	Flexible payment of fees to their students	75	82
	5.	Scholarships offered by the university	36	86

	6.	Fee structure of the institution is not an issue before enrollment	11	18
	7.	Financial assistance (student loan) offered by the university	39	57
Infrastructure facility	1.	Accommodation provide for affordable rates	21	18
	2.	Library facilities with all recommended reading	86	79
	3.	Prefer institution with maximum operating hours of library	61	75
	4.	Availability of sporting facilities	75	61
	5.	Availability of medical facilities at emergency situations	61	57
	6.	Availability of wider range of student administered societies	43	57
	7.	Availability of fully equipped laboratory instruments with trained instructors	29	39
	8.	Prefer an institution with good study environment	50	71
	9.	Availability of modern IT lab with trained staff	36	43
	10.	Availability of free internet or WIFI access	46	50
	11.	Availability of extra-curricular activities	25	50
University characteristics	1.	Academic reputation and the image of the institute	79	82
	2.	Affiliation or collaboration with a reputed foreign university	96	71
	3.	Higher educational opportunities offered for graduates of this university	39	68
	4.	Maintain discipline in students	29	54
	5.	Good social environment at the university/institution	43	57
	6.	Future graduate job prospects	96	57
	7.	Selection is based on good passing rates of senior batches	82	96
	8.	Offer range of Bachelor's degrees	57	71
	9.	Alumni of the institution/university	29	82
	10.	Employment assistance provided by the institution/university	32	68
	11.	Academic research background of the university	36	29
	12.	Personal follow-up from lecturers and advisors	61	68
	13.	Number of permanent lecturers	29	64
	14.	Flexible entry requirement of the university	82	68
	15.	Opportunity for internships	50	96
	16.	Priority given for older institutions when making decisions	25	43
	17.	Selection is Prioritise for newly established institutions	50	57
Programme evaluation	1.	Availability of required degree programmes	100	75
	2.	Flexibility of switching majors between the optional units	68	79
	3.	Arrangement of specialized study programmes when required	64	71
	4.	Methodology of teaching	79	82
	5.	International recognition of the university programmes	61	79

6.	Industry demand for the programme	57	100
7.	Design the required computer practical for the programme	43	39
8.	Design the required laboratory practical for the programme	32	32

Discussion

The focus group discussions of lecturers and graduates have highlighted 62 items as influential factors in selecting a BD in IDPs according to their perspectives and it is shown in Table 1.1. However, according to the lecturers' perspective, the students would have made decisions based on a combination of these factors. The Graduates confirmed that most of the factors they have considered at an initial stage were latter recognized as not being the most significant ones and most of the factors they disregarded affected them substantially when continuing the selected BD. Those 62 items which are recognized as "themes" can be further categorized into 7 variables such as "marketing strategy", "messenger", "location", "cost" "infrastructure facilities", "university characteristics" and "programme evaluation". The percentages of themes based on 7 variables have been calculated and discussed below depending on the rank of importance shown by the lecturers and graduates.

Marketing strategy - 7 themes have been categorized under "marketing strategy" and more than 50% of the lecturers as well as graduates have ranked 4 themes of it. Around 55% of the lecturers have ranked "website information", "paper advertisement" and "meet university delegates at an educational fair" as influential. But "impression of the campus visit at the time of inquiry" has been ranked by 61% of the lecturers and 54% of the graduates. During the focus group discussion, 54% of the graduates have ranked "impression of campus during the open day" is influential even though the lecturers have ranked it as 46%. It has been discussed that the open days organized by the PHEIs creates an opportunity to meet the foreign university delegates. The graduates highlighted that the students may gather information about scholarship offers, higher education opportunities and industry demand of their programmes at the open days. Apart from that, 61% of lecturers have ranked "selection of an institution is based on paper advertisement" and 71% of graduates ranked "meet university delegates at an educational fair" as influential.

Messenger (Source of information) - All 7 themes categorized under "Messenger" was ranked by more than 50% of the graduates. Further, "advice from peers within the same programme", "advice from peers in the same university" and "recommendations from university career counselors" has been ranked between 55% to 70% by the lecturers. Moreover, "information through social networking sites" has been ranked as influential by 93% of the graduates but for lecturers it was only 57%. However more than 80% of the lecturers highlighted that parental involvement as the most influential source of information while graduates ranked it as 68%. Both graduates (75%) and lecturers (86%) have highlighted that the peer influence is highly effective on students' choice because peers may share their positive and negative feedback that they have experienced due to their selection criteria of the BD. Hence, it will be helpful for the prospective students to take their decision effectively and efficiently.

Location - Out of the 5 themes listed under this category, 2 and 3 of the themes were ranked by more than 50% of the lecturers and graduates respectively. Exactly 79% of the lecturers and 68% of the graduates have ranked "availability of transportation facilities" as mostly influential. Further they highlighted that most of the PHEI in Colombo have established their branches in other districts (Kandy, Galle, Rathnapura) to cater to the requirement of students who have difficulties in coming to Colombo. Further 54% of lecturers concluded that "excellent layout of the university" and "friendly atmosphere of the university" has some influence on student choice and "location of the university is convenient and accessible" is influential for 54% of the graduates.

Cost - out of the 7 themes categorized under "cost", 2 of the themes have been ranked by more than 75% of the lecturers while 5 of the themes have been ranked by more than 50% of the graduates as influential. More than

80% of the graduates have ranked "scholarships offered by the university" and "flexible payment of fees" as influential while 57% has ranked "arrangement of student loans" as influential. Further, during the focus group discussion with lecturers, it was highlighted that some of the PHEIs offer student loans with various banks for less interest rate. Moreover, 75% of the lecturers confirmed that the "flexible payment of fees by the PHEIs" has an impact on students' choice. Further, 89% of the lecturers have been ranked that "cost of the other alternative programmes" influenced mostly since various types of BD programmes are designed to obtain different academic qualifications under IDPs. However, "other cost involved" has been ranked by 54% of the graduates as influential but according to lecturers (39%) it might not have a significant influence on the students' choice.

Infrastructure facilities - Out of the 11 themes listed, 5 and 8 of the themes have been ranked by more than 50% of the lecturers and graduates respectively. More than 61% of the lecturers rated "maximum opening hours of the library", "availability of medical facility at an emergency", "availability of sporting facility" and "good study environment" as influential. However, 86% of the lecturers and 79% of graduates implied that "availability of library facilities with recommended reading" is the most influential factor. Further, both parties have confirmed that recommended reading is important for most of the subjects offered in their BD programmes and it is compulsory for students to refer the recommended reading list. Further 57% and 61% of the graduates ranked that "availability of wider range of student administered societies" and "availability of sporting facilities" as influential respectively. According to the graduates, the overall wellbeing of student is important to develop personality and these factors are considered as the most influential on students' choice.

University characteristics - out of the 17 themes listed, 15 and 9 of the themes have been ranked by more than 50% of the graduates and lecturers respectively. In detail, more than 80% of the lecturers have ranked that "flexible entry requirement", "good passing rates of the PHEIs", "reputation of the foreign university" while 57% have ranked "availability of various degree programmes" as most influential ones. Lecturer's perspective is that students give priority in selecting the PHEI first and then select the BD based on their interest and future goals. Nevertheless, some of the lecturers viewed that students search for PHEI with good reputation to enroll, based on their preferred field of study. Further, More than 80% of the graduates have ranked "academic reputation of the institute", "alumni of the institute" and "opportunity for internships" attracts more students for the BD. However, 60% to70% of the graduates ranked that "number of permanent lecturers", " higher educational opportunities", "employment assistance provided by the university" to be the most influential.

Programme Evaluation - Out of the 8 themes listed, 6 similar themes have been ranked by more than 50% of the lecturers and graduates. Moreover, 100% of the graduates ranked that the "industry demand for the programme" is influential but for lecturer it was 57%. Further, 68% of the lecturers believed that "flexibility of switching between majors" influential while 79% of graduates also confirmed this stance. Moreover, "methodology of teaching" was ranked by 79% of the lecturers as influential and 82% of graduates also confirmed. The "international recognition of the university" have been ranked by 79% of the graduates and 61% of lecturers as influential.

Finally, the data analysis confirmed that more than 50% of the lecturers have ranked 35 themes as most influential factors in selecting a BD based on 62 themes emerged during the focus group discussions. Hence 25.71% (9) of themes in "university characteristics", 17.14% (6) of themes in "programme evaluation" and "messenger", 14.29% (5) of themes in "infrastructure facilities" and 11.43% (4) of themes in "marketing strategy" have been contributed for those 35 themes to be rated as most influential based on the lecturers' perspectives. Further, "cost" is ranked as least influential factor by the lecturers. According to the perspectives of the graduates, 47 themes have been identified as most influential by more than 50% of the graduates. Moreover, 15 themes (31.01%) of "university characteristics", 8 themes (17.02%) of "infrastructure facilities", 7 themes (14.89%) of "messenger" and 6 themes (12.77%) of "programme evaluation" have been contributed mostly for the 47 themes to be rated as most influential. However, "Location" is the least influential factor according to graduates in which 2 of the themes out of 7 themes have been ranked by more than 50% of the

graduates in the sample. However, "location" is a highly influential factor according to the studies conducted by Pimpa, 2005; Turley, 2009; Briggs, 2006. Alternatively, "cost" is the least influential factors for lecturers in which 2 of the themes out of 7 themes grouped under "cost" have been rated by more than 50% of the lecturers in the selected sample.

Conclusion

In conclusion, 'university characteristics' is the most influential factor for both graduates and lecturers. Further, it has been identified that programme evaluation, infrastructure facilities and messenger are influential for graduates and lecturers but with different orders of importance. Lecturer's perspective is that marketing strategy plays an important role in students' choice in selecting a BD from IDPs but graduates have not confirmed it as influential. The present study revealed that 'location' is the least influential factor for graduates which show some significant difference in the results of empirical studies conducted in other countries. The 'cost' is the least influential factor based on the perspectives of graduates in order to pursue a BD while staying in Sri Lanka.

Recommendations

At present, marketing strategies of PHEIs is moving towards customer (student and parent) orientation due to globalization. Hence it is vital important that PHEIs to review and modify their marketing aspects based on the findings of this study in order to compete the competitiveness in the private higher education market in Sri Lanka. In conclusion, this study is an early effort to explore the influential factors in selecting a BD in IDPs from the viewpoint of lecturers and graduates. Hence it is recommended to continue further studies using undergraduates as respondents, to compare and identify any gaps of the findings of this study.

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