

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **A literature review on students' university choice and satisfaction**

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Received 8 March, 2023; Accepted 27 April, 2023

Recently, many researchers have found that education systems in many nations are very comprehensive and competitive. They revealed that the primary goal of many universities is to increase the number of students' enrolment as much as possible. In students' perspective, they also consider different factors when they make their higher education decision. Therefore, this article aims to investigate the factors affecting for students' university choice and satisfaction. Relevant literature reviews explained in terms of four models which link to students' university choice process: economic model, sociological model, combined complex decision model and the marketing mixed model. Then, the study investigated the other main factors that are affecting to the university choice of students from empirical evidence. In terms of students' university satisfaction, this paper has described several models and other factors influencing on students' university satisfaction.

**Key words:** Higher education, university choice, university satisfaction.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The education system plays a major role as it contributes to making the future of every country. The education sector is absolutely critical for country's development (El-Hilali et al., 2015). Human capital is the most important element that represents nations' economic growth. Another aspect is the base pillar of the development of human capital. There may be a positive impact on the growth and wealth of any nation. Education can benefit a person financially, emotionally, socially, and intellectually. Comparing Sri Lanka to many other

developing nations especially in the sub-continent, it has made outstanding development in terms of basic education metrics (Liyanage, 2014). Thanks to the government's introduction of the universal free education program in 1945, Sri Lanka had universal basic education by 1964, providing free education for students from kindergarten through university. In the framework of free education system in Sri Lanka, the government offers free teaching, free textbooks, and free uniforms to students to make use the free education at the maximum

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level and serve to the nation respectively. In Sri Lanka, all children between the ages of 5 and 14 must attend school. The average length of the Sri Lankan school system is 13 years, divided into 3 cycles. According to Liyanage (2014), children attend primary school (Grade 1-5) from the ages of 5-10, junior secondary school (Grade 6-9) from the ages of 11-14, senior secondary school (Grade 10-11) from the ages of 15-16, and college (Grade 12-13) from the ages of 17-18. There are 15 universities, 7 postgraduate institutions, 10 additional higher education institutions, and 1138 technical and vocational training institutions that make up Sri Lanka's tertiary education system. These organizations are government-run (Liyanage, 2014). University education can be regarded as the next level in the learning process (Premarathne et al., 2016). It is indeed a critical component that education is absolutely necessary for the labor market requirement. The socio-economic aspects including parental education and household income and household transactions affect children's education (Edirisinghe et al., 2022). The academic journey basically ends once they find an employment since individuals who perform well on pre-tertiary examinations do not see schooling as a utility function (Edirisinghe et al., 2022). The development of the nation's economy depends on the application and accumulation of knowledge and innovation added to the economy. Due to the competitive business nature and market orientation of tertiary education, students' choice of academic areas has become crucial as the job market always head hunts skilled and diligent personnel.

Throughout secondary and tertiary education in Sri Lanka, individuals have a chance and platform to expand their basic skills and competencies. However, tertiary education always leads to the economic development of the country as it enhances productivity of the country. Considering admissions to the public universities, it is completely based on A/L results which mean it relies on the Z-score of each stream of the A/L examination. Therefore, admissions are extremely competitive, and the resource availability and capacity of the government university system is limited. The key issue is that only 20% of applicants are accepted by state universities and are eligible for a university education. University choice decision has become more complex perhaps the most crucial decision in a student life is related to their higher education, whilst selecting a degree program. The employers prefer to recruit undergraduates only from relevant disciplines (Edirisinghe, 2020). Students remain unemployed purely due to the wrong selection of the right academic stream (Edirisinghe et al., 2021). The institutional attributes such as benefits, facilities offered by respective academic institutes and the location where the services are being offered may influence the students' choice (Edirisinghe et al., 2016).

Decision making phase of university choice is very crucial in a student life since the whole career of the

student depends on it. Students do not make university or undergraduate choice randomly as it determines the whole career and future of the students. Poor choice can negatively impact on motivation and career path. While making the university choice, students consider some factors such as personal preferences, courses, job opportunities, workload, quality of teachers, university reputation, tuition fee, academic facilities, location, parents' influence, parents' knowledge, parents education status, family socialization, university ranking, learning environments, graduate success, financial aids etc.

The key objective of this study is to review literature on students' university satisfaction and motivation. The post-secondary education is an important phase for students since it typically determines whether they will become entrepreneurs or professionals in the industry (Edirisinghe et al., 2022). Right academic qualifications are the key to improve productivity and competitiveness of (Mudunkotuwa and Edirisinghe, 2017).

A psychological paradigm shift in students' enrolment for academic disciplines is much needed and need for the hour in order to cater to the requirements of modern business world (Edirisinghe et al., 2022). This article basically produces a summary of higher education and an empirical survey as well as theoretical approaches. Further, it provides overview on what are the factors influencing university satisfaction and choice. Then, it introduces conceptual frameworks including models and factors that influence university choice and satisfaction.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The models related to university choice

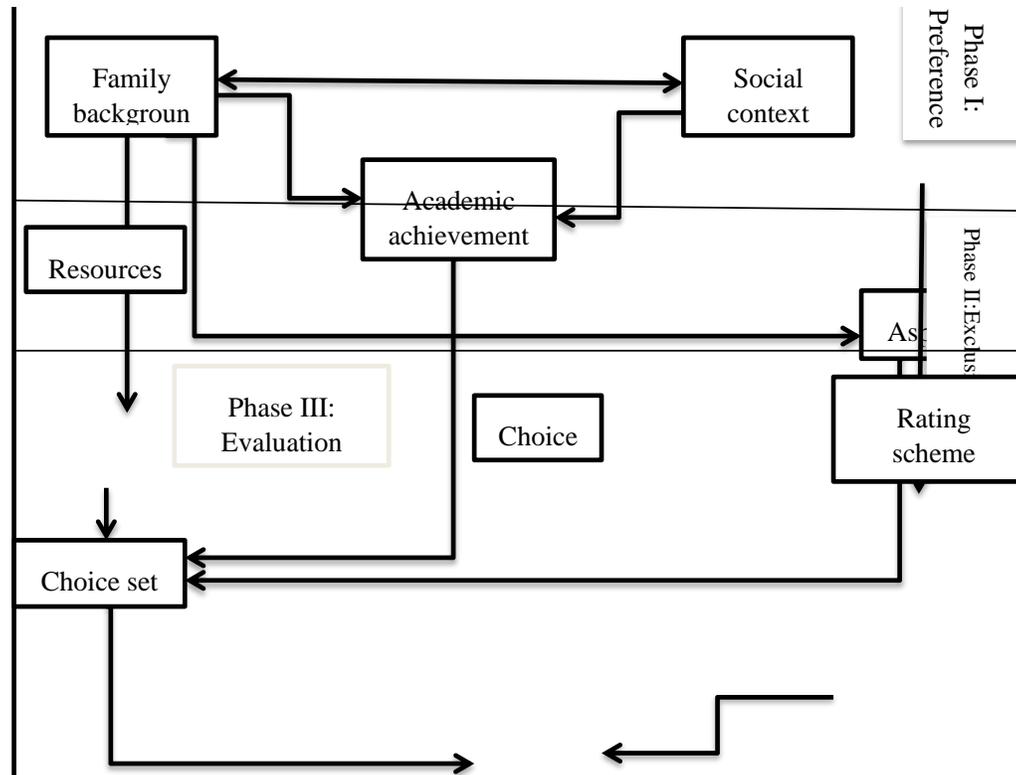
Most of the empirical studies used the following four models for the process of university choice of the students they are economic models, sociological models, the combined complex decision model, and the marketing mixed model.

#### *Economic model*

The decision between attending a college or university and pursuing a non-collegiate alternative is emphasized in economic models (Reddy, 2014).

These models often start with the premise that a student seeks to increase benefit while minimizing risk. The economic models' drawback is that they only consider students' reasoning as a deciding factor. Economic models of university choice are predicated on the idea that students make rational decisions based on their preferences at the time of the decision and evaluate all the information at their disposal (Aydin, 2015).

The most important economic model for students' college choices is the model introduced by Jackson in



**Figure 1.** Economic model of college choice.  
Source: Reddy (2014).

1982. It suggests that there are three stages involved in students' college decision-making: the preference stage, the exclusion stage, and the evaluation stage. In the preference stage, a student's academic standing, family history, and social milieu (such as the impact of peers, neighbourhood, and school) determine his or her educational goals and attitudes toward enrolling in college. The student goes through a process of removing some colleges from the potential list during the exclusion stage. Higher education institutions may be eliminated based on a variety of criteria, including tuition costs, location, and academic standards. Before making their final decision, students must first evaluate a variety of institutions (Reddy, 2014). The Jackson-introduced economic model is shown in Figure 1.

### **Sociological model**

Sociological models that emphasized the goals of people aspiring to attend higher education institutions were created from research on educational attainment and status.

In terms of students' choice, the most important model is Chapman's model of student choice which is introduced in 1981. It concentrated on the traits of the prospective student and the student's family as well as

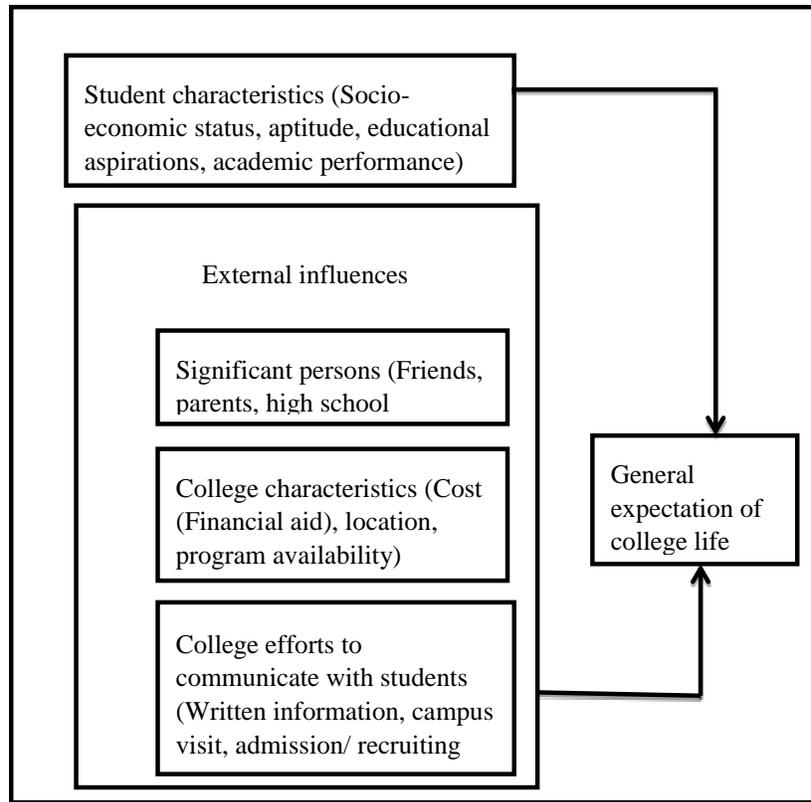
the traits of his or her college, which he labels as the price, location, and program availability. It also identifies decision-makers, such as the guidance counsellor at the school, instructors, friends, and parents (Reddy, 2014). The Chapman economic model is shown in Figure 2.

### **Combined complex decision model**

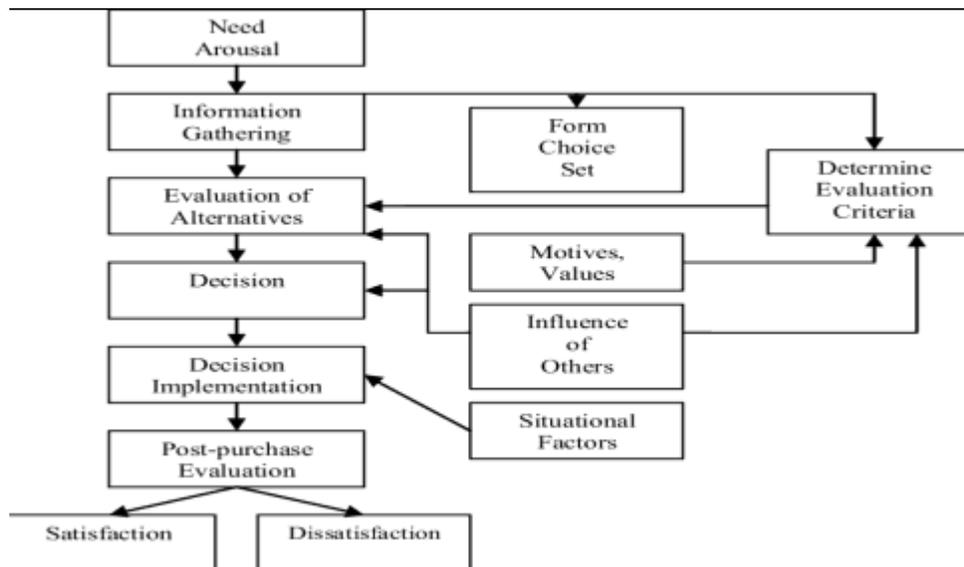
This model, developed by Holdsworth and Nind in 2006, identified a number of variables that affect a student's decision regarding a university, including cost, geographic proximity to home, the quality and flexibility of the degree and course options, the availability of housing, the likelihood that an employer will hire from that university, and the availability of accommodation (Figure 3).

### **Marketing mixed model**

The program, the site, the price, the promotion, the physical facilities, the people, and the process are the seven components that make up the marketing mix model for higher education developed by Kotler and Fox (1995). Similar to this, consumer behaviour refers to how individuals or groups choose, acquire, and use goods



**Figure 2.** Sociological model of college choice. Source: Reddy, 2014.



**Figure 3.** Combined complex decision model. Source: Holdsworth and Nind (2006).

and services. Students have five options when choosing a university: needs and motivations, information

gathering, weighing options, decision-making, and post-choice evaluation.

## Factors affecting for university choice

Many studies mention various criteria of students' university choice making process. They can be categorized as follows: family background, location, university fees, financial aids/ scholarships, information sources and institutional factors. In order to recruit students, universities need to know what the factors are determining students' university selection.

### *Family background*

Numerous studies suggest that there is a connection between a student's familial history and the university they choose to attend. The following areas are where families have a greater influence: finances, information, expectations, persuasion, educational status, and competition.

Additionally, Ogawaa and Imuraa (2010) examined the demand-side factors that affect access to postsecondary education in Indonesia. The multi-nominal logit model's findings revealed that while the education level of the household spouse is positively significant, the education level of the head of household and family income per household member have significant positive effects on the decision to pursue tertiary education in urban areas.

Cajucom (2019) looked into the individuals who persuaded the College of Management and Business Technology's (CMBT) freshmen to enrol in their course. To collect data, 211 survey forms were issued. The statistical methods utilized to analyse and interpret the acquired data included descriptive statistics like frequency, percentage, and weighted mean. Results revealed that the respondents' parents' recommendations greatly influenced their decision to enrol in a particular college course. Saitia and Prokopiadou (2008) looked at the factors influencing the demand for higher education enrolment in Greece. The findings indicated that Greek students chose to pursue higher education mostly because it provides advanced information that opens up professional opportunities. The desire for higher education in Greece was also influenced by factors such as monthly family income. Sojkin et al. (2011) claim that family opinion and expectations, as well as living like a student, are the driving forces behind decisions regarding pursuing higher education. Using survey data from the Italian National Institute of Statistics, Gaeta and Maio (2014) conducted an empirical analysis of individual-level predictors of Italian secondary school graduates' educational choices. The findings showed that enrolling in a university rather than ceasing education is connected with having a good family background, including highly educated parents who hold renowned professional jobs.

### *Location*

Another important consideration in choosing a university

is the institution's location. This element relates to a university's physical location and how near it is to a student's residence or the city's core. According to Weerasinghe and Fernando (2018) research, student satisfaction levels are influenced by the university's physical surroundings. Kunwar (2017) say that location also influences for university choice. Further, Douglas et al. (2006) established a conceptual framework of student satisfaction with their educational experience in higher education.

Results revealed that access to university is the most important factor. Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013) and Simões and Soares (2010) pointed out geographical proximity is most important choice factors for higher education institutions.

When choosing a university, undergraduate students at regional university campuses were investigated by Binney and Martin (1997). Students from the University of Melbourne's Glenormiston campus and the University of South Australia's Whyalla campus participated in this study as respondents. The information came from a self-administered survey that first-year, first-time undergraduates at the universities were asked to complete. According to the study, both groups' choice of university was most influenced by career preparedness. Students at the Whyalla campus gave consideration to things like accessibility to lodging and distance from home. Drewes and Michael (2006), Cruz (2018) identified location as one attribute in university choice.

### *University fees*

Students essentially take university expenditures into account. They calculate how much money they will need to spend on education before making a decision. It can refer to more than just tuition; it can also refer to living expenses and travel expenses. The expense is further increased by the distance from home, which may have an adverse effect on actual preferences and drive students to make fewer choices. A quite a lot of scholars have researched the influence of cost in the selection process of university selection process. For example, Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013), Abeygunawardena (2018) and Maniu and Maniu (2014) and Kunwar (2017) its further validate the importance of expenditure on university selection process. Semsia et al. (2018) investigated various predictors of high school students' college and university choice decisions in Qatar by using 1,427 participants. Results found that the cost of education is highly affected to college and university choice decisions.

Using school-level data, Çokgezen (2014) investigated the factors that influence university decision in Turkey. According to regression analysis, factors that influence university choice include tuition costs, the size of the city where the school is located, its academic standing, and the language of teaching. The findings also show that tuition prices have a greater influence on public university

students, whereas private university students place a higher value on academic achievement than do their peers at public universities. Further, Dunnett et al. (2012) examined the impact of university fee changes on how students' grade and rank their university choices by employing conjoint analysis. Online questionnaires are distributed for 400 respondents. According to the study, students from homes where going to college has never been a tradition will be more negatively affected by the higher tuition. Cruz (2018) looked into why 152 first-year graduate students selected the Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology (NEUST) as their graduate school of choice. According to the findings, students are very worried about reasonable fees. Additionally, Ming (2010) created a conceptual framework to investigate the institution-related variables influencing students' college choice decisions in Malaysia. The university cost is one of the independent factors that have been acknowledged as influencing students' college selection choices.

### ***Financial aids/ scholarships***

Financial aid and scholarships help students afford their education. As a result, another important element influencing students' institution choices is the impact of financial help. Some students base their college selection on their financial situation, financial aid, and scholarships.

Agrey and Lampadan (2014) and Azizan et al. (2018) emphasized that financial aid is one of the most significant factors influencing the students' decision making in choosing a pre-university program. Cajucom (2019) explored scholarships and grants are highly influenced for university choice. The availability of scholarships, according to Cruz (2018) and Burns (2006) is the institutional characteristic that influences students' decisions the most. Using a special set of micro data on college applications, Drewes and Michael (2006) investigated the impact played by institutional qualities in decisions made by high school graduates between the 17 universities in the Province of Ontario, Canada. According to a research, applicants like colleges that provide more scholarships.

### ***Institutional factors***

These factors are highly affected for every student's university selection process. Agrey and Lampadan (2014) have done a review on the various elements that goes into decision-making in university choice in Central Thailand by distributing 261 questionnaires to the respondents. The study found that factors like having good sporting facilities, a strong student life program (health care services, residential accommodations), activities (wide range of extracurricular activities), support systems (e.g., bookstore, guidance/counselling office),

learning environment (modern learning environment and facilities, reputation, beautiful campus, library, and computer lab), and finally a safe and friendly environment (safe campus as well as supporting faculty) were important. Researchers Weerasinghe and Fernando (2018) examined the important variables influencing Sri Lankan students' satisfaction with higher education. The regression results showed that the quality of the academic staff and the quality of the administrative staff had a statistically insignificant impact on the levels of student satisfaction. Further, university infrastructure facilities, marketing strategy, university characteristics, and programme evaluation have been identified as the most influential factors which affect in selecting a bachelor's degree from the international degree programmes (Abeygunawardena, 2018). Azizan et al. (2018) found that factors such as academic quality, campus and socialization were significantly influenced the students' decision making in choosing a pre-university program. Lee (2014) stated that quality of education, learning environments, quality of teachers, the reputation and information about the institution are important factors for international higher education students. At the Trincomalee Campus of Eastern University in Sri Lanka, Perera and Pratheesh (2018) conducted a study to identify the variables that have the most impact on a group of management students' decisions on their areas of specialization. 75 undergraduate students participated in this study as respondents. According to the study's findings, academic standing and criteria connected to employment are the most crucial considerations when choosing a major.

### ***Information source***

Information sources are recognized as influencing factors in the decision-making process based on the pertinent literature. In a study based on undergraduates in foreign degree programs, Abeygunawardena (2018) investigated the deciding criteria for choosing a bachelor's degree from private higher educational institutions in Sri Lanka. Results found that the most important influential information sources are messenger and peers. Ahmad et al (2016) identified that recommendations from various groups are one of the push factors influencing for studying tourism and hospitality in abroad. Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013) and Simões and Soares (2010) pointed out recommendations of teachers and career counsellors, mass media and university website cause for students' decision to enrol in higher education.

When choosing a university, undergraduate students at regional university campuses were investigated by Binney and Martin (1997). The guidelines provided by the individual state tertiary entrance centres, academic sources, and the students' peers served as their primary sources of knowledge. Furthermore, Reddy (2014)

looked into how social media affects choices of colleges and courses made by international students. The survey's questionnaire received responses from 167 international students. The study discovered that international students actively use social media, that social media plays a factor in international students' decisions about their choice of course and university, and that social media plays a part in providing their information demands.

### The models of university satisfaction

This section provides some empirical evidence with reference to the models and conceptual frameworks applied by researchers to escalate the students' satisfactions in higher education. According to Waugh (2002), SERVQUAL is the most well-liked and frequently applied service quality model. This is true when assessing student satisfaction all across the world. In order to assess a company's level of customer satisfaction and service quality, Parasuman created the SERVQUAL questionnaire in 1985. It takes into account five factors: tangibility, dependability, empathy, responsiveness, and assurance. Additionally, SERVQUAL is often criticized in higher education and is widely used in industry, according to Waugh (2002).

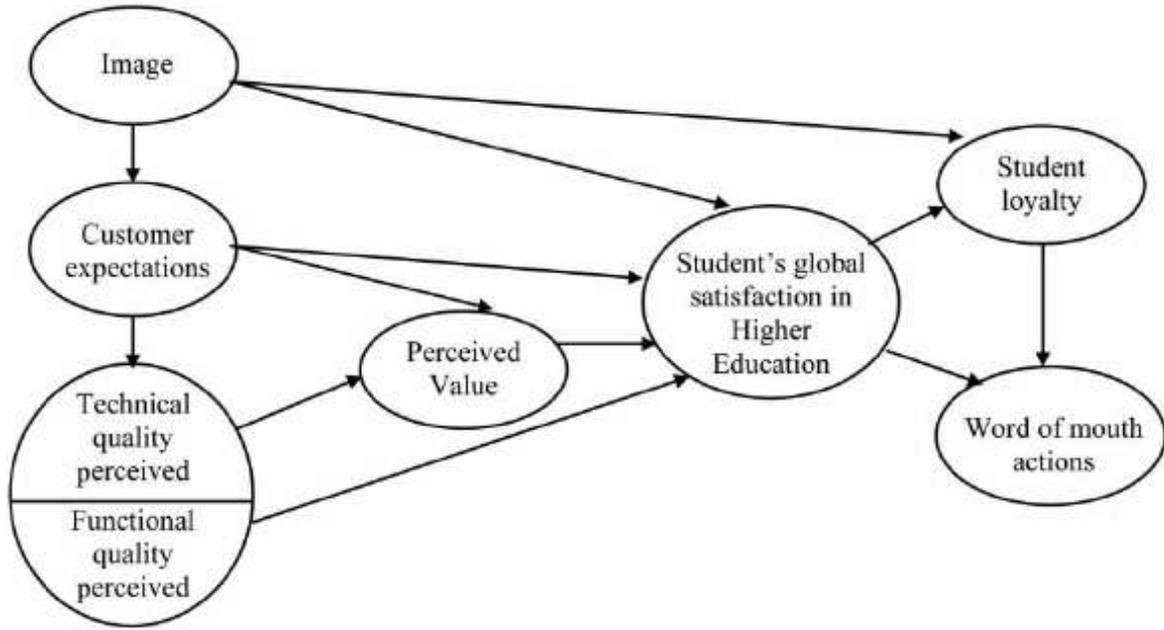
The interplay of the tangibles, dependability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy aspects of service quality (SERVQUAL) and student satisfaction (SS) was studied by Alsheyadi and Albalushi (2020). The direct and mediated impacts were investigated using the structural equation model. Information gathered from a survey of 352 students from 18 Oman-based higher education institutions Results showed that the direct effect model successfully established the centrality of the tangibles, reliability, assurance, responsiveness, and empathy aspects of service quality, while the mediated effect model failed to successfully demonstrate the significance of the tangibles and responsiveness. The "Happy-Productive Theory" was subsequently introduced by Cotton et al. (2002) with a moderating component. The model suggests that students' suffering moderates their enjoyment. As a result, when student anxiety is low and when it is high, student satisfaction rises. The models' focus on a particular, insignificant aspect of happiness was too narrow (Weerasinghe and Fernando, 2018). In order to investigate factors influencing student satisfaction in higher education, Douglas et al. (2006) created the "Service Product Bundle" method in 2006. They took 12 dimensions into account, including the classroom's professional and comfortable environment, students' assessments and learning experiences, lecture and tutorial facilitation goods, textbooks and tuition fees, student support facilities, business procedures, relationships with teaching staff, and knowledgeable and responsible behaviour. Physical commodities, enabling goods, implicit services, and explicit services were the

four variables used to group the dimensions (Weerasinghe and Fernando, 2018). A conceptual model of the causes and effects of student happiness in higher education was tested by Alves and Raposo (2007). The model was put to the test using structural equations, and the results revealed that image, followed by value and then perceived quality, has the greatest impact on student happiness in higher education. The findings of this study also point out that the changing expectations may have a detrimental effect. It was also evident that student loyalty, which resulted from word-of-mouth from one student to another, was the primary effect of satisfaction. The conceptual model of student satisfaction in higher education is depicted in Figure 4.

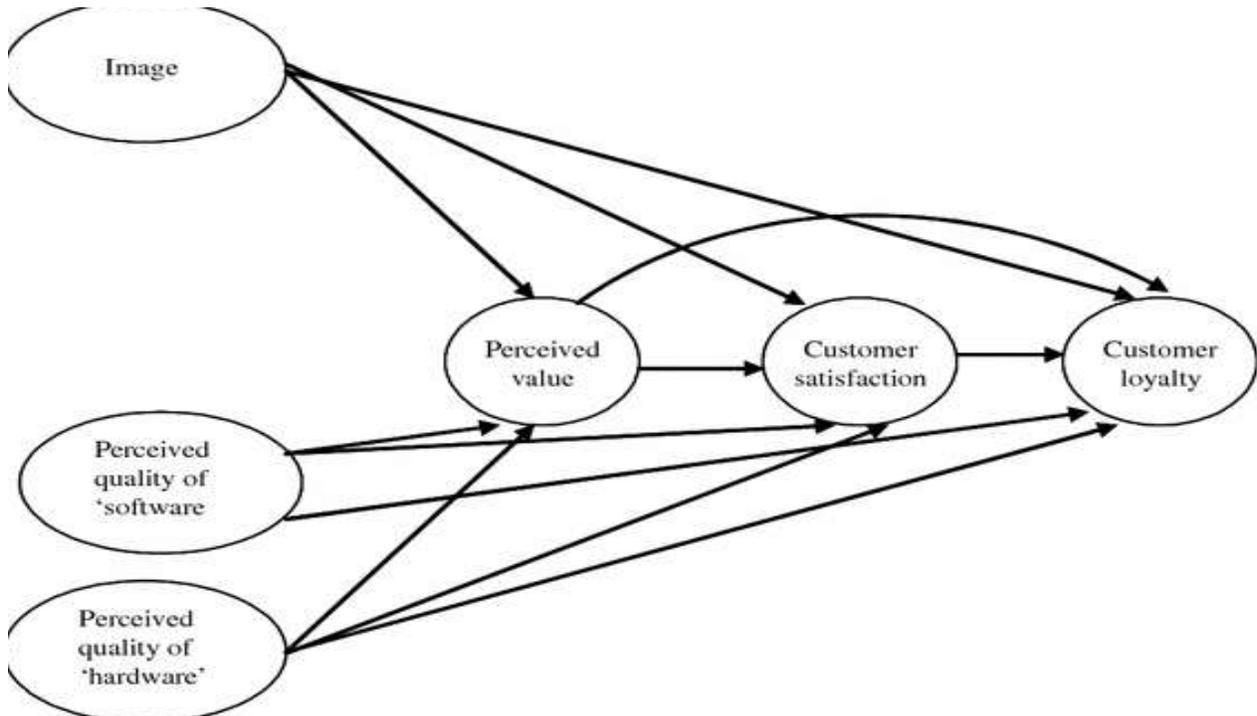
Partial least squares (PLS) structural equation approach was used by Brown and Mazzarol (2009) to test a customer satisfaction model of the factors influencing student happiness and loyalty in higher education settings. Students attending four different 'types' of Australian universities make up the sample. According to the findings, student contentment, which is itself predicted by the host university's perceived reputation, is a strong predictor of student loyalty. Although the perceived quality of "human ware" (such as people and processes) and "hardware" (such as actual service pieces and infrastructure) has an effect on perceived value, this was found to be weak and ambiguous. The influence of the institution's institutional image, which significantly predicted perceived value and, to a lesser extent, student satisfaction, was of utmost significance. The findings have ramifications for less prominent, more recent universities looking to compete in an environment where the market is more deregulated. The model for evaluating the factors that influence student happiness and loyalty in a higher education context in Australia is shown in Figure 5.

Hartman and Schmidt (1995) looked at the connections between the learning environment (service provider performance), perceived outcomes, and student/alumni overall satisfaction with their educational experience. The findings show that the process of forming satisfaction judgments is multifaceted and that it depends on how much a student has developed goals for a certain area of his or her educational experience. Students who have poorly defined educational goals are more prone to rely their satisfaction assessments on the performance of the institution. They are likely to base satisfaction assessments on the results of the institutional performance if their aims are well defined. However, in general, both the perceived quality of the service provider's performance and the perceived consequences of that performance affect student/alumni judgments of satisfaction with higher education. The research model is depicted in Figure 6.

Shuxin et al. (2014) introduced a hybrid model to measure students' satisfaction and loyalty. This conceptual model integrates two mainstream analyses:



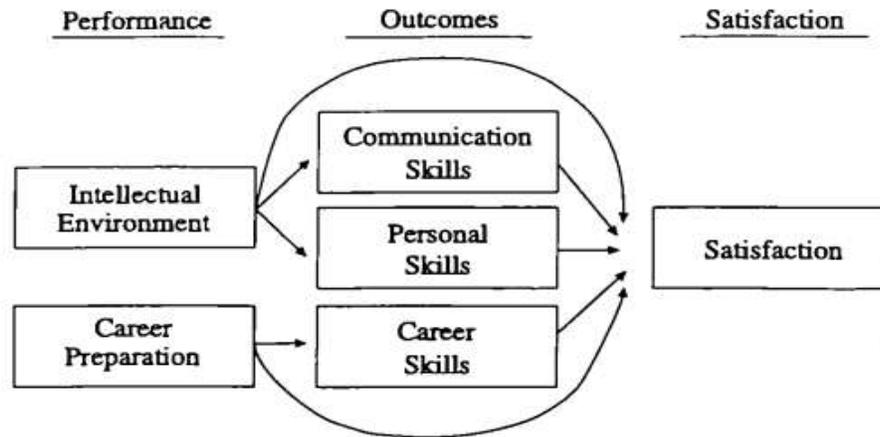
**Figure 4.** Conceptual model of student satisfaction in higher education. Source: Alves and Raposo (2007).



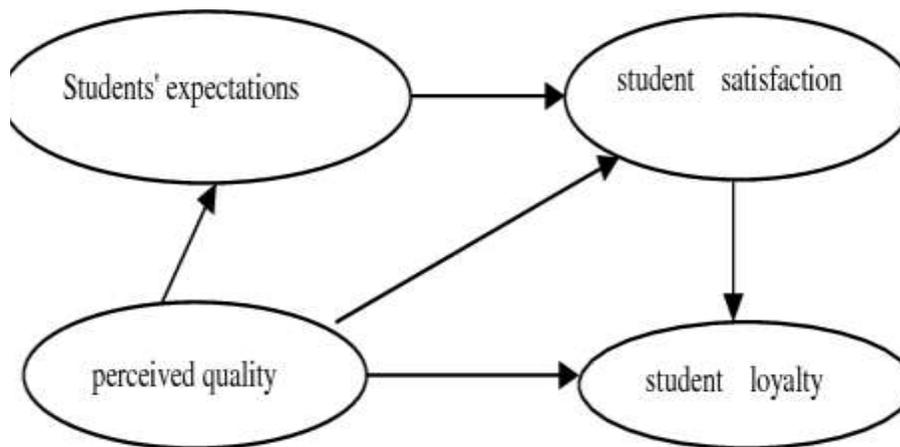
**Figure 5.** Model for testing drivers of student satisfaction and loyalty in an Australian higher education setting. Source: Brown and Mazzarol (2009).

factor analysis and path analysis. Direct path of the model explains the impact of perceived quality on student loyalty and indirect path describes the impact of perceived

quality and student expectation on loyalty through student satisfaction. Figure 7 shows the hybrid conceptual model introduced by Shuxin et al. (2014).



**Figure 6.** Theoretical outcomes-satisfaction model.  
Source: Hartman and Schmidt (1995).



**Figure 7.** China satisfaction evaluation model.  
Source: Shuxin et al. (2014).

DeShields et al. (2005) looked at factors that are thought to affect students' college experiences, such as retention rates and student satisfaction, in colleges and universities. They have applied the Herzberg two-factor theory, which Keaveney and Young first proposed in 1997. Along with faculty services, the advising team, and class type, it assesses the effect of college experience on students' satisfaction while taking experience into account as a mediating variable.

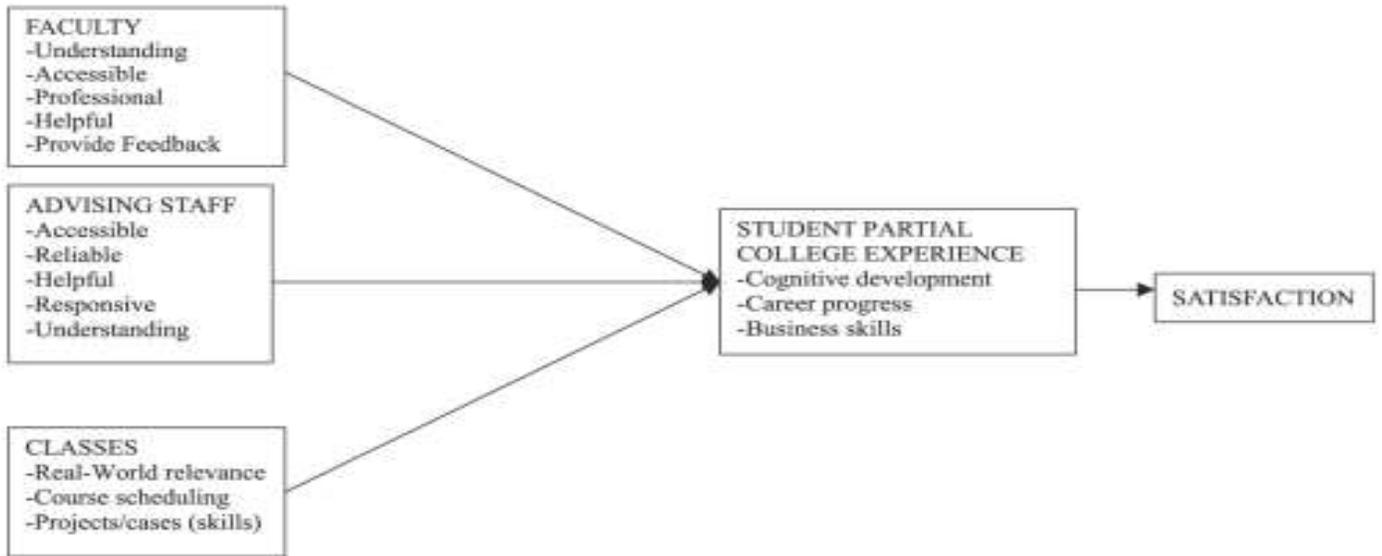
The findings support the hypothesis that faculty and classes are major determinants of students' incomplete college experiences based on the path coefficients connecting them to those experiences. Herzberg's two-factor hypothesis was supported by the path coefficient from partial college experience to satisfaction (Figure 8). Additionally, students who have a great college experience are more likely than students who do not to

be satisfied with the college or university.

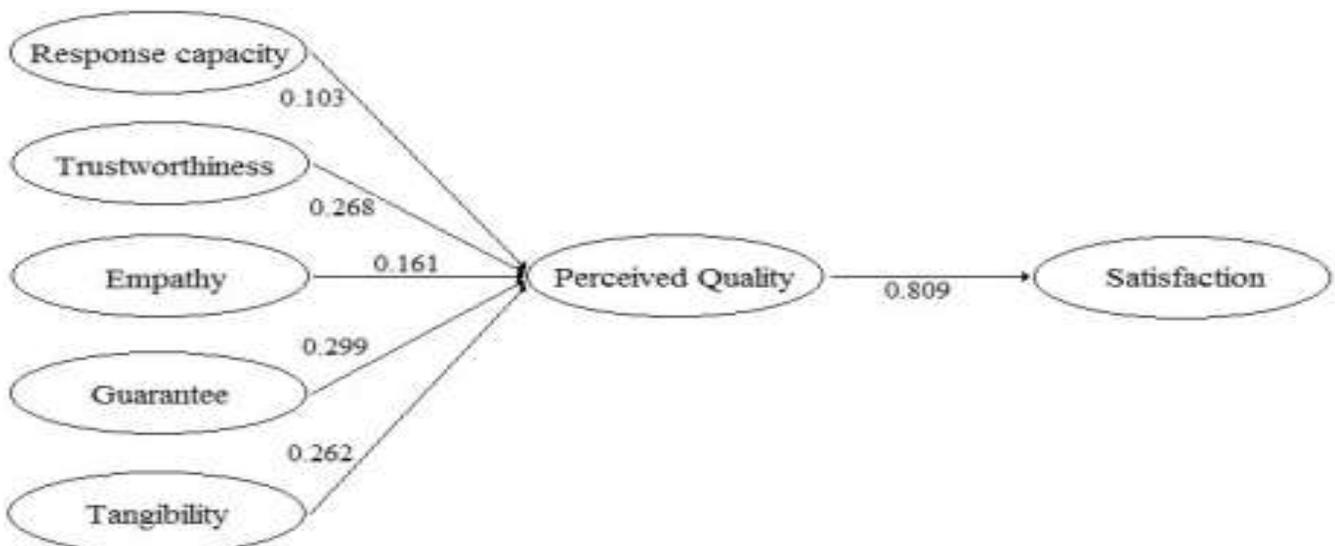
Pedro et al. (2018) examined what drives students' satisfaction and how it may contribute to retention in higher education institute context. A quantitative study was conducted at a Portuguese Faculty of Health Sciences using 359 students. Through the use of a structural equation model, the data were analysed (Figure 9). The findings showed that perceived quality (PQ) and satisfaction are considerably different when students are exposed to various teaching philosophies, and that PQ and satisfaction are positively correlated in the context of higher education institutions (HEI).

#### **Factors affecting for university satisfaction**

Many studies mention various criteria of students'



**Figure 8.** Herzberg's two-factor theory.  
 Source: DeShields et al. (2005).



**Figure 9.** Structural model.  
 Source: Pedro et al. (2018).

university satisfaction process. El-Hilal et al. (2015) looked at the variables that affect students' satisfaction, success, and capacity for learning. A Kuwaiti private college's 146 business diploma students are included in the study. The findings show that students' satisfaction is influenced by the college's reputation, academic program, and teaching strategies. Participation, satisfaction, instructional strategies, and programs all had an impact on students' ability to learn and absorb information. The only aspect of service quality that directly affects pupils is

tangible. In a sizable division of Pakistan's Punjab province, Danish et al. (2011) examined the effects of various quality services on student satisfaction in higher education institutions. This study includes both public and private sector institutions. Data was gathered from 240 business students in the Gujranwala region who were either enrolled in master's programs or graduate programs at provincially chartered universities. Equal numbers of male and female students made up the sample. According to the findings, students are generally

satisfied with services such as tangibility, assurance, dependability, and empathy, but not so much with parking facilities, computer labs, cafeteria services, or the complaint management system. Recommendations and policy consequences are presented, as well as guidelines for further research. Hill and Epps (2010) investigated the impact of classroom environment elements on individual student satisfaction measures and student assessments of university teaching. According to the findings, pupils notice considerable distinctions between ordinary and enhanced classrooms. Additionally, children exhibit a preference for updated classroom features such as tiered seating, lighting, and classroom noise management. Finally, students in updated classrooms score course enjoyment, classroom learning, and instructor organization higher than in ordinary classrooms. Dalton and Denson (2009) used a student evaluation of course instrument at an Australian research-intensive institution to investigate factors of overall satisfaction at the course level. During the 2007 academic year, all semester 1 and semester 2 course assessments were administered at the institution. The original sample included 63,891 student course evaluations from 2717 different courses. While student characteristics and reasons for enrolling in a course are predictors of overall satisfaction, the assessment questions explain the majority of the variation in course satisfaction.

The data also show that faculty-selected optional questions predict overall satisfaction better than required questions. Ginns et al. (2007) identified five elements influencing total student satisfaction with their degree: competent teaching (including feedback); clear goals and standards; adequate assessment; suitable workload; and generic skills. Spooen et al. (2007) found ten criteria that have an impact on total student satisfaction. They are clarity of objectives, subject matter value, subject matter build-up, presentation skills, and harmony in the organization of the course-learning process, (course materials to understanding the subject matter, course difficulty, and teacher assistance during the learning process, examination authenticity, and formative examinations. Annamdevula and Bellamkonda (2014) suggested a structural model based on theoretical and empirical evidence about the linkages between students' perceived service quality (SPSQ), satisfaction (SSt), loyalty (SL), and motivation (SM). The findings show that students' perceived service quality has a direct positive effect on satisfaction, loyalty, and motivation. Masserini et al. (2018) studied whether the quality of educational services and the institutional image of the university influence students' overall satisfaction with their university experience, as well as the potential ramifications of these interactions on student loyalty.

A web questionnaire was used to collect data from 14,870 students at the University of Pisa. Among the more academic components of the educational service, the results suggest that teaching, lectures, and course

organization are the key drivers of students' satisfaction and loyalty. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the pivotal role that university reputation has in influencing student happiness, loyalty, and teaching and lectures through both direct and indirect consequences. Bini and Masserini (2015) investigated the elements influencing students' satisfaction with their university experience, concentrating on the aspects that characterize the educational offer's teaching efficiency. Using survey and administrative data from the University of Pisa, a structural equation model with latent variables is estimated. The findings indicate that instructional efficiency has a positive effect on satisfaction and that when it is inadequate, or is perceived to be inadequate, students are less satisfied with their university experience. Other elements influencing student satisfaction are also explored, such as study organization, social capital, and internship experience. In a large-scale Italian university, Bassi (2019) examined the changes in students' happiness over time as well as how these changes were influenced by the didactic practices, pedagogical ideas, and requirements of the professors. To analyse the gathered data, a mixture conditional latent growth model is estimated. The model's findings revealed a sizable group of university courses with high levels of satisfaction that remain constant over time and a small number of challenging courses with low levels of satisfaction that decline during the three academic years under consideration. Covariates associated with both the instructor and the didactic activity is anticipated to have interesting and statistically significant impacts. Weerasinghe and Fernando (2018) evaluated significant elements influencing student satisfaction levels in selected Sri Lankan state universities. The study sample is made up of undergraduates from four different state colleges, and the data collected was evaluated utilizing factor analytics, correlational analysis, and regression analysis. The quality of the academic staff, university facilities, degree program, administrative staff, university location, and university image were all shown to be strongly connected with student satisfaction levels of 0.45, 0.47, 0.51, 0.31, 0.39, and 0.66, respectively. The quality of university facilities, the quality of the degree program, and the institution's image are statistically significant predictors, with the image being the best predictor. Appleton-Knapp and Krentler (2006) identified two types of influences on student satisfaction levels in higher education: personal factors such as gender, employment, preferred learning style, and GPA, and institutional factors such as instruction quality, promptness of instructor feedback, clarity of expectations, and teaching style. Karna and Julin (2015) investigated the level of satisfaction with university facilities and services as assessed by students and faculty on two campuses in Finland. According to the findings, fundamental university activities such as research and teaching have a bigger impact on total student and staff

satisfaction levels than supportive facilities. Martirosyan (2015) explored factors influencing student satisfaction in Armenian higher educational institutions (AHEIs). This study investigated factors that affected student satisfaction in the college environment at AHEIs using an ex-post facto, non-experimental technique. A self-reported questionnaire was used to collect data from 372 students from nine public and three private institutions in Armenia's rural and urban districts. The ANOVA results revealed that various demographic variables and student satisfaction had substantial main effects. A link between various selected satisfaction assessment parameters and overall student satisfaction was discovered using multiple regression analysis. Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) investigated student satisfaction factors at foreign branch campuses in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The findings revealed that student satisfaction ratings at UAE branch campuses were generally good. As important indicators of student happiness, the most influential elements were the caliber of lecturers, the quality of physical facilities, and the effective use of technology. Sojkin et al. (2011) discovered several elements that influence student university satisfaction. They are classroom quality, feedback quality, and the lecturer-student relationship, interaction with fellow students, course topic, available learning equipment, library facilities, and learning materials.

## METHODOLOGY

The study's approach is based on the dimensional aspects of student selection. Hossler (1999), Kotler and Fox (1995), the Marketing Mix Model for Higher Education, and the Combined Complex Decision Model (Holdsworth and Nind, 2006), are examples of decision-making models. And students' satisfaction is based on several models such as SERVQUAL model, Happy - Productive Theory, Service Product Bundle, Herzberg's two-factor theory, Conceptual model for satisfaction, Satisfaction Evaluation Model etc. The study used literature reviews, archived literature reviews, case studies, assumptions, different conceptual frameworks, models and theories to explain theoretical and empirical literature of students' choice and satisfaction.

## RESULTS

The proposed conceptual frameworks identify the factors affecting students' university choice and students' satisfaction in Sri Lanka (Table 1 and Figure 10). Reference to the admissions to the public universities completely based on A/L results and similarly it relies on the Z-score of each streams of the A/L examination. Therefore, the admissions are extremely competitive, and the capacity, available resources of the state university system is absolutely limited. Further, university satisfaction is also very important component in higher education. Many scholars have tried to touch different aspects of students' satisfaction using different models and frameworks. Models and frameworks have been

made using different criteria and they applied in different geographical areas in different times. Table 2 and Figure 11 show the factors affecting for university satisfaction.

## Conclusion

The university selection process can be varied from one person to another. Every student doesn't have the same choices when selecting their higher education institution and programme. They consider various factors such as university fee, location, quality of education, institutional factors, scholarships, etc. to make the most suitable choice for themselves. Due to the ever-evolving job market, the university selection process has become more critical and complex. As a result, there is a huge competition among universities when recruiting students to their institutions. As a result, each higher education institution needs to recognize that the university selection process has become a tool for creating a recruitment plan in order to gain a competitive advantage over other institutions. Furthermore, the research suggested that students are more likely to choose universities that offer good academic reputation, excellent student services, and potential job opportunities after graduation. Moreover, it was found that the reputation of the university and its alumni network, the quality of teaching and research, and the quality of the facilities are important considerations for the selection of a university. Additionally, the analysis showed that university rankings, social networks and personal visits are also significant influencing factors in the university selection process. Finally, a conceptual framework is introduced in terms of the decision-making process, which will benefit university recruitment managers in making decisions. This study also invites other scholars to discuss and investigate this problem in order to establish university selection models and criteria that may be used to create an effective recruitment plan.

The university satisfaction may be differed from one person to another since every student does not have similar satisfaction when they are studying. There are several factors affecting for students' university satisfaction. They are tangibility, competence, empathy, curriculum, delivery, reliability, departments and faculty, consulting staff, classes, student's higher education experience, empathy, responsiveness, assurance etc. using these factors affecting university selection, a conceptual framework is prepared.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors wish to acknowledge the funding of this research by the World Bank through the Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development (AHEAD) project.

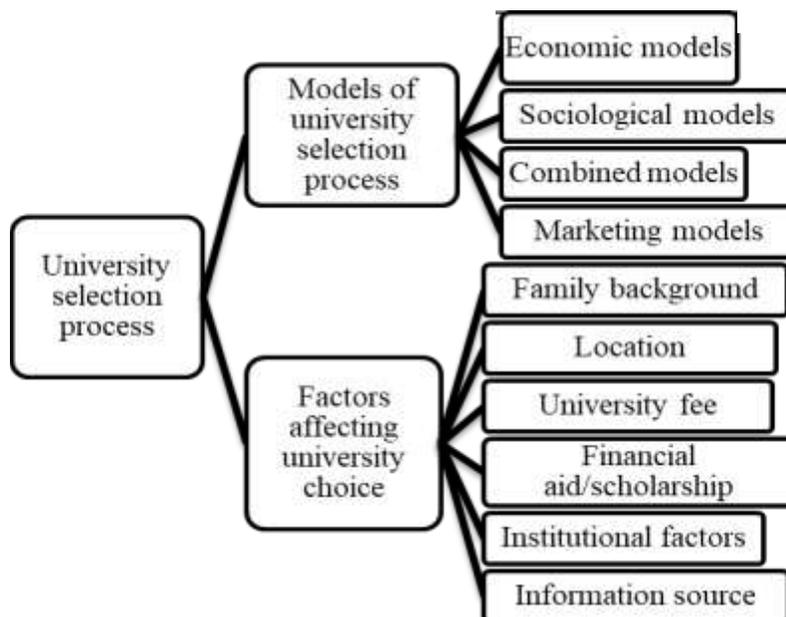
**Table 1.** Factors affecting for university choice.

<b>Name of the university choice factor</b>	<b>Literature evidence</b>
Family background	<p>Ogawaa and Imuraa (2010) – Determinants of Access and Equity in Tertiary Education: The Case of Indonesia.</p> <p>Cajucom (2019) – Appraisal of the Choice of College among Management and Business Technology Freshman Students.</p> <p>Saitia and Prokopiadou (2008) – The demand for higher education in Greece.</p> <p>Gaeta and Maio (2014) – Post high school education choices in Italy: an empirical analysis.</p>
Location	<p>Kunwar (2017) - Factors influencing selection of higher education institutions in Finland by foreign students.</p> <p>Maniu and Maniu (2014) – Educational marketing: Factors influencing the selection of a university.</p> <p>Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013) – Factors influencing school-leavers decision to enrol in higher education.</p> <p>Simões and Soares (2010) - Recruiting Higher Education Students: Information Sources and Choice Factors.</p> <p>Binney and Martin (1997) – How Do Rural Students Choose Their Higher Education Institutions? Two Regional Australian Cases.</p> <p>Drewes and Michael (2006) - How do students choose a university? An Analysis of Applications to Universities in Ontario, Canada.</p>
University fees	<p>Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013) – Factors influencing school-leavers decision to enrol in higher education.</p> <p>Abeygunawardena. (2018) – Influential Factors in Selecting a bachelor's degree from Private Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka: A Study Based on Undergraduates of International Degree Programmes.</p> <p>Maniu and Maniu (2014) – Educational marketing: Factors influencing the selection of a university.</p> <p>Semsia et al. (2018) – Determinants of College and University Choice for High-School Students in Qatar.</p> <p>Çokgezen (2012) – Determinants of University Choice: A Study on Economics Departments in Turkey.</p> <p>Cruz (2018) – Choosing an Ideal Graduate Education: The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Experience.</p>
Financial aids/ scholarships	<p>Agrey and Lampadan (2014) – Determinant Factors Contributing to Student Choice in Selecting a university.</p> <p>Azizan et al. (2018) – Factors that influence program selection and its relationship with students' achievement in pre- university study.</p> <p>Cajucom (2019) – Appraisal of the Choice of College among Management and Business Technology Freshman Students.</p> <p>Cruz (2018) – Choosing an Ideal Graduate Education: The Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology Experience.</p> <p>Drewes and Michael (2006) - How do students choose a university? An Analysis of Applications to Universities in Ontario, Canada.</p>
Institutional factors	<p>Agrey and Lampadan (2014) – Determinant Factors Contributing to Student Choice in Selecting a university.</p> <p>Weerasinghe and Fernando (2018) – Critical factors affecting students' satisfaction with higher education in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Semsia et al. (2018) – Determinants of College and University Choice for High-School Students in Qatar.</p> <p>Abeygunawardena (2018) – Influential Factors in Selecting a bachelor's degree from Private Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka: A Study Based on Undergraduates of International Degree Programmes.</p> <p>Azizan et al. (2017) – Factors that influence program selection and its relationship with students' achievement in pre- university study.</p> <p>Perera and Pratheesh (2018) – Factors Influence on Student Course Selection: A Case of Trincomalee Campus.</p> <p>Abeygunawardena (2018) – Influential Factors in Selecting a bachelor's degree from Private Higher Educational Institutes in Sri Lanka: A Study Based on Undergraduates of International Degree Programmes.</p>

Table 1. Contd

Information source	Binney and Martin (1997) – How Do Rural Students Choose Their Higher Education Institutions? Two Regional Australian Cases. Reddy (2014) - The influence of social media on international students' choice of university and course.
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Source: Author Developed (2023)



**Figure 10.** Conceptual framework for university selection.  
Source: Author developed (2023).

Table 2. Factors affecting for university satisfaction.

Author and Year	Variable
El-Hilali et al. (2015) - Students' Satisfaction and Achievement and Absorption Capacity in Higher Education	The image and prestige of the college, the academic curriculum, and instructional techniques
Wilkins and Balakrishnan (2013) - Assessing student satisfaction in transnational higher education	Lecturer quality, physical facility quality, and effective use of technology
Hill and Epps (2010) - The Impact of Physical Classroom Environment on Student Satisfaction and Student Evaluation of Teaching In the University Environment	Classroom learning environment, course enjoyment, and instructor organization
Ginns et al. (2007) - Student evaluation: what predicts satisfaction? in The Student Experience	Good instruction (including feedback); defined goals and standards; proper evaluation; adequate workload; and general skills
Spooreen et al. (2007) - Student evaluation of teaching quality in higher education: development of an instrument based on 10 Likert-scales	Clarity of objectives, subject matter value, subject matter development, presentation skills, harmony in the organization of the course-learning process, contribution of course materials to subject matter understanding, course difficulty, teacher assistance during the learning process, authenticity of examinations, and formative examinations
Weerasinghe and Fernando (2018) - Critical factors affecting students' satisfaction with higher education in Sri Lanka	Academic faculty quality, university amenities, degree programs, administrative personnel, university location, and university image

Table 2. Contd.

Sojkin et al. (2011) - Determinants of higher education choices and student satisfaction: the case of Poland	Classroom quality, feedback quality, lecturer-student relationship, interaction with other students, course content, available learning equipment, library facilities, and learning materials
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Source: Author Developed (2023).

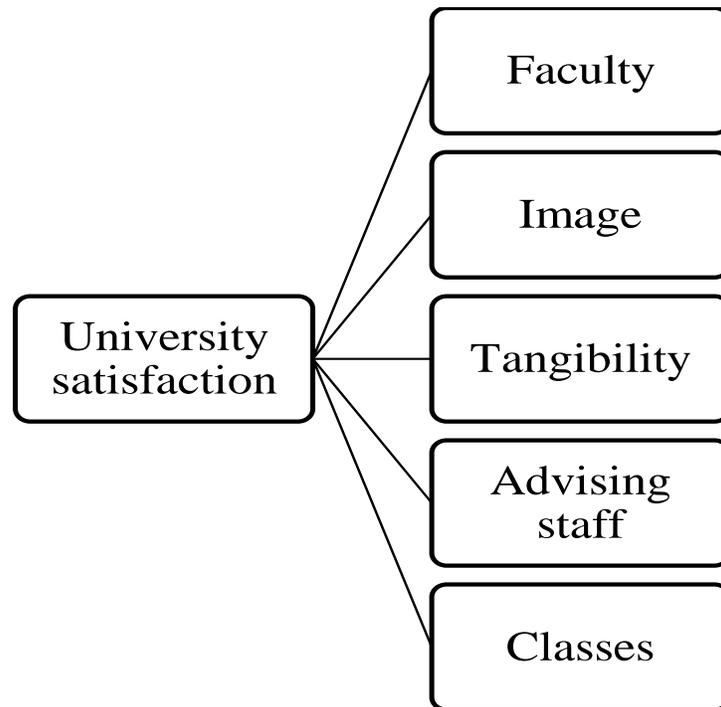


Figure 11. Conceptual framework for university satisfaction. Source: Author Developed (2023).

**CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The authors have not declared any conflicts of interests.

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