

## Analysis of Factors related to Students' Indecisiveness Regarding University Admission in Central Punjab

Sajid Hasan<sup>1</sup>, Saima Nasreen<sup>2</sup>, Mubasher Munir<sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

The wide array of programs, specializations, and campus cultures can overwhelm students, making it challenging for them to confidently select the best fit. Students often face a significant level of indecisiveness when it comes to making decisions about university admissions. This uncertainty stems from various factors, including the access of available options and the pressure to make the right choice. The current study was aimed to explore the factors affecting students' indecisiveness regarding university admission. Further, to investigate the relationship among the variables which influenced the indecisiveness of students regarding their admission in university. An adapted questionnaire from Jung (2011) was used to collect data after getting his written permission. The data was collected from 520 prospective university students from 10 Degree Colleges of Central Punjab. Furthermore, it explored the relationship between the variables such as recognition for university entry, expectancy of university success, social family influence, enjoyment/interest of university study, desirable occupation and perceived income due to university study with indecisiveness regarding university admission. Only three factors such as expectancy for university success, enjoyment and interest of university study, social family influence had significant relationship with indecisiveness regarding university admission. While the other three factors including recognition for university success, desirable occupation and perceived income due to university study had no significant relationship with indecisiveness regarding university admission. The findings of the current study were contradictory to that of Jung (2011) which was conducted in Australian context. The difference might be due to socio-cultural differences in Pakistan and Australia. The indecisiveness among students regarding their admission could be minimized through awareness, guidance and career counselling.

**Keywords:** Indecisiveness, Recognition for University entry, Expectancy, Social family influence

### 1. Introduction

Students often face a significant level of indecisiveness when it comes to making decisions about university admissions (Laudardale & Oakes, 2021; Nawaz et. al., 2017; Rassin, 2007). This uncertainty stems from various factors including the overabundance of available options, the pressure to make the right choice, and the fear of potential regrets. Choosing a university is a crucial step that can greatly impact their academic and professional future. The wide array of programs, specializations, and campus cultures can overwhelm students, making it challenging for them to confidently select the best fit. Additionally, societal expectations and the desire to please family members or peers can further complicate the decision-making process. It is essential for students to approach this uncertainty with patience, self-reflection,

<sup>1</sup> PLC Chiniot, Literacy & NFBE Department District Chiniot. Email: [sajidhasanalvihfd@gmail.com](mailto:sajidhasanalvihfd@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha. Email: [saima.nasreen@uos.edu.pk](mailto:saima.nasreen@uos.edu.pk)

<sup>3</sup> PhD Scholar, Department of Public Administration, University of Sindh. Email: [mubeemspm@hotmail.com](mailto:mubeemspm@hotmail.com)

and thorough research to ultimately make a choice aligned with their personal goals and aspirations. Human Development in 21<sup>st</sup> century depends on creative and knowledgeable community based on sound structure of higher education. The development of knowledge and technology has transformed the world into a global village. Without knowledge and technology, it is a challenge for human beings to progress in this globalization. To overcome this challenge, higher education plays an important role (Farooq, 2010). The quantity and quality of higher education is backbone of economy and society in this era (Abbas & Ashiq, 2017). The quantity depends on rate of admission into higher education. The rate of admission is determined by the extent of higher education institutions' capacity of enrolment, and the students' decision to get admission. However, the enrolment capacity of majority of higher education institutions has increased many folds owing to opening of new universities, campuses and affiliated colleges offering higher education opportunities at doorstep, especially in Punjab, where the present study was conducted. While the factor of students' indecisiveness regarding university admission might become responsible for low enrolment in higher education.

The importance of decision-making regarding university admission could not be overlooked (Appel et al., 2021; Jung, 2013). The high rate of higher education in developed countries indicates the high rate of university admissions. The students after completion of college education decide whether or not to get admission in a university. The indecisiveness regarding university entry leads to lower admission rate in the universities, and similarly decisiveness to university entry leads to high rate of university admissions and enrolment (Jung, 2013). Pakistan is a developing state, and its institutions of higher education face a lot of problems and challenges (Sabir, 2013). The higher education institutions need in meaningful way to fascinate students and to raise their learning superiority. It might have an effect on students' decision to take admission in a university (Sabir, 2013). In Pakistan, university admission rate of students is low as compared to the other developing countries. However, the education policy 2009 intended to increase the admission rate of higher education up to 15% by 2015 which is far below right now (Government of Pakistan, 2009).

The students' indecisiveness is a common problem among students, particularly for those who are transitioning from high school to college or university. It is characterized by a lack of confidence in decision making, difficulty in making choices and a tendency to second guess oneself. This can lead to academic and personal challenges, including delayed graduation, poor academic performance and anxiety (Abbas et al., 2020a). The several studies explored the causes of indecisiveness among students (Cortese, 2003). The higher education played a vital role in the socio-economic development of the society in all over the world. The universities produce the workforce, managers and leaders so that efficiently and effectively run the matters of society. The number of admission rate increased in universities which reduced the unemployment, unawareness and poverty in the society in return. The higher education brings the sustainability in economic, politics and society, and it develops the knowledgeable society (UNESCO, 1998). The globalization of university education has big advantage as it is serious towards assurance of fairness in entry and achievement. As well it indorses excellence and admire societal assortment as well as nationwide domination. It was further emphasized that the linkages among countries develop recognized national certification system and excellence declaration system regarding superior education in the country. The creative knowledge scheme enhances our understanding of evolving encounters that advanced education should create reciprocally useful trusts with societies and public civilization to ease the disseminating information through suitable communication channel (Ashiq et al., 2020). New changing aspects are converting into countryside of upper

education and exploration. They demand for trusts and intensive exploit at countrywide areas and global levels to promise the excellence and sustainability of university education schemes (UNESCO, World Conference on Higher Education, 2009). In this regard, the important thing is appointing quality teachers for better enrolments and sustainability of students in universities (Farooq, 2010). The poor situation of higher education in Pakistan is due to economic crisis. The less funds are allocated for higher education as compared to UNSECO recommended percentage in Pakistan which leads to low enrolments of students in universities. It leads to unemployment in Pakistan.

Indeed, the better decision-making power is helpful in dealing daily life matters. The better decision-making power empowers the person psychologically. The decision making can be perceived as the intellectual practices which seek out possible alternatives among the available ways. The better ability to take decision making accelerates the actions. The ability of decision making reduces the indecisiveness among students. Likewise, decision making regarding university admissions is a crucial phase. Chapman (1986) explained that pupils and their parents were gone through adverse phases while getting admission in any university in different disciplines. Firstly, students incorporated their early decisions about the upcoming results, and the undergraduates assembled data about university education in different disciplines which were offered by higher education institutions. In the second stage, candidates enlist potential education suppliers and collect information about those institutions and alternatives of institutions to make up their attention. The institutions of higher education should provide accelerated data prospects to help them in the search process. In third stage, the students submit their admission forms to a certain educational institution. In the fourth stage, the individuals receive suggestion for a discipline. The university should have a face to face or online meeting with those students who have the potential to make strong relationship with them. In the final stage, students get admission in the university for a discipline which university offers. Furthermore, the universities organize refresher courses. It facilitates the students to accommodate with societal life of university and to understand the strategies, rules and regulations of university (Kaur, 2019; Sabir, 2013).

The literature revealed, there are various indecisiveness factors including recognition of university success, expectancy for university success, social family influence, motivation, desirable occupation, interest and enjoyment, perceived income due to university education, and peer influence. However, this study would focus on indecisiveness regarding university entry. In this modern era, there is a shift in job market, and it demands different kind of qualifications and skills. Moreover, now the universities are offering admission in a wide range of disciplines and specialization areas which have further confused the students regarding the university admission and increased intensiveness among students. Hence this study was aimed to point out those factors which become the cause of indecisiveness among students in the central Punjab.

## **2. Theoretical Framework of Study**

This study laid its foundation on two motivation theories such as self-determination theory and expectancy-value theory, alongside with study on indecisiveness in discipline of occupational thinking. The theory of self-determination advocates that the motivation occurs in a remarkable procedure which is different from other motivational theories. Motivation is an intension to act, which can be intrinsic or extrinsic. Amotivation refers to the condition in which one lacks an intent to act that may be due to the absence of any professed possibility between current deeds and upcoming results (Mofatteh, 2021; Deci & Ryan, 1985; and Guay et al., 2000; Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

Behaviours that were amotivated would in its place be defined as non-motivated, were neither extrinsically nor intrinsically interested (Vallerand & Bissonnette, 1992).

While in the works of educational scientists, the expectancy value theory has been well-known (Eccles & Wigfield, 1995; McCormick & McPherson, 2007). It was emphasized by Wigfield & Eccles (2000) that underneath this particular theory, the selections of people would be deliberated to be instantaneously determined by those beliefs which they would done on a particular task i.e., expectancy for success, and likewise, the degree to which that activity is valued by them i.e., values. While the expectations for success would be taken as existence which is linked to self-perceptions of one's existing self-efficacy capabilities (Bandura, 1997).

In the theory of expectancy-value, the values could be categorized into four classes that indicate how different requirements of persons are met by various actions such as firstly, the utility value which is the usefulness of the action, such as the ahead of revenue. Secondly, the attainment value which mentions the significance of an action's existence positive. Thirdly, the chance, expressive, time, or connected charges linked to an action. Fourthly, the intrinsic value, which indicates the internal motivation level for doing a particular task (Abbas et al., 2020b; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000; Eccles & Wigfield, 1995). Among these, the utility value and intrinsic value seems to have certain intersection with the ideas of extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, regardless of the freshness of the cognitive and theoretical origins of self-determination theory and theory of expectancy-value (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). A clash among standards had been well-known to be a forecaster of indecisiveness regarding university admission (Germeijs & Boec, 2003). Hence the decision making in regard of university admission plays a fundamental role to bring a significant increase in the rate of higher education enrolment. The high rate of indecisiveness among students regarding university entry causes the low rate of higher education. Few studies have been conducted to find out the determinants of indecisiveness regarding university entry. Present study intends to explore the determinants of indecisiveness regarding university entry in the central Punjab, Pakistan.

### **3. Methodology**

For the current research study, a descriptive survey was adopted as a research design. All the students of public sector colleges of general education at final stage of their bachelor degree in central Punjab were the population of the study. The sample of the study was 520 prospective students for university admission from the colleges of District Sargodha, Hafizabad and Chiniot. The multistage sampling technique was used to select 271 Female and 249 male students at final stage of their bachelor degree.

#### **Research Tool of the Study**

The questionnaire was adapted from a previous similar research study conducted by Jung (2011) in Australian context. A questionnaire comprising demographic information, seven (07) subscales and thirty-eight (38) items was used to collect data from the respondents. The seven subscales were: indecisiveness regarding university entry, expectancy of university success, recognition for university entry, social family influence, desirable occupation and interest/enjoyment/interest of university study, perceived income as a result of university study. Reliability of overall items of the instrument had Alpha value 0.864. The data were collected personally by researchers in classroom after getting after getting consent of principals, teachers and students respectively.

#### 4. Research Hypothesis

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no relationship between recognition for university entry and indecisiveness regarding university entry.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no relationship between expectancy for university success, social family influence, enjoyment, perceived income, desirable occupation and indecisiveness regarding university entry.

#### 5. Results

##### Correlates of Students' Indecisiveness

The researcher calculated correlation of regarding university entry with six factors one by one including expectancy for university indecisiveness success  $r_{(518)} = -.25$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , social family influence  $r_{(518)} = -.21$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , desirable occupation  $r_{(518)} = -0.69$ ,  $p > 0.05$ , enjoyment/interest of university study  $r_{(518)} = -.17$ ,  $p < .05$ , the perceived income due to university study  $r_{(518)} = -0.75$ ;  $p > 0.05$ , and recognition for university entry  $r_{(518)} = -0.69$ ;  $p > 0.05$ . The results revealed that only three factors were related to indecisiveness regarding university entry, namely: social family influence expectancy for university success, and enjoyment and interest of university study; their relationships were moderate negative with indecisiveness. The other three factors had no significant relationship with indecisiveness regarding university entry: recognition for university success, perceived income as a result of university study, and desirable occupation. The findings were contradictory to that of Jung (2011) in Australian context. The difference might be due to socio-cultural differences in Pakistan and Australia.

##### Gender differences

The independent sample t-test was used to compare female and male students regarding indecisiveness with university entry, social family influence, recognition for university success, expectancy for university success, perceived income due to university study, desirable occupation, and enjoyment/interest of university study.

No gender differences were noted regarding recognition for university success, expectancy for university success, and perceived income due to university study. The male students were more indecisive [ $t_{(518)} = 3.452$ ,  $p = 0.019$ ], expected more university success [ $t_{(518)} = 4.932$ ,  $p = 0.043$ ], had more social family influence [ $t_{(518)} = 2.099$ ,  $p = 0.02$ ], and perceived to get more income due to university study [ $t_{(518)} = 1.959$ ,  $p = 0.003$ ] than their female counterparts.

##### Class wise difference of BA/BSc/B.Com

ANOVA was run to check the class wise difference of students of bachelor classes in general education (BA/BSc/B.Com) regarding indecisiveness with university entry, recognition for university success, social family influence, expectancy for university success and enjoyment/interest with university. There was no significant difference among the students of bachelor classes in general education (BA/BSc/B.Com) at  $p < 0.05$  regarding indecisiveness with university entry [ $F(2,517) = 2.740$ ,  $p = 0.065$ ], recognition of university success [ $F(2,517) = 1.163$ ,  $p = 0.313$ ], expectancy for university success [ $F(2,517) = 1.059$ ,  $p = 0.348$ ], social family influence [ $F(2,517) = 0.226$ ,  $p = 0.798$ ], interest & enjoyment with university study [ $F(2,517) = 3.454$ ,  $p = 0.036$ ].

Class wise differences were significant only in two variables: perceived income due to university study [ $F(2,517) = 3.477$ ,  $p = 0.032$ ] and desirable occupation [ $F(2,517) = 13.216$ ,

$p = 0.000$ ]. While the post hoc comparisons using the least significant difference (LSD) test further indicated that perceived income due to university study of BA students was greater than BSc students. Similarly, the BA students perceived more than BSc students that they would go to their desirable occupation due to university study.

### Multiple Regression Results

The researcher applied “the Multiple Regression Analysis for forecasting value of the dependent variable (indecisiveness with university entry) from the forecaster variables (recognition for university entry, expectancy for university success, social family influence, perceived income due to university study, desirable occupation and interest/enjoyment of university study). The model summary of the predictor variables and the dependent variable students' indecisiveness regarding university entry indicated that expectancy for university success, social family influence and interest/enjoyment of university study R value .269 and R square value .072 and also R adjusted 61% impact on students' indecisiveness with university entry with F value 5.889”.

The results revealed that the variable expectancy for university success has significant impact on indecisiveness regarding university admission at  $p < 0.05$  ( $b = -.222$ ,  $t = -3.90$ ,  $p = .000$ ). The second variable social family influence was found to have significant impact on indecisiveness ( $b = -.104$ ,  $t = -2.074$ ,  $p = .030$ ). The third variable perceived income due to university study has also significant impact on indecisiveness ( $b = .111$ ,  $t = 1.972$ ,  $p = .040$ ). Moreover, the fourth variable desirable occupation was also found to have significant impact on indecisiveness ( $b = .132$ ,  $t = 2.403$ ,  $p = .017$ ). While the variable recognition for university entry study was found to have no significant impact on indecisiveness at  $p < 0.05$  ( $b = .068$ ,  $t = 1.299$ ,  $p = .194$ ). Furthermore, the other variable interest/enjoyment of university study has no significant impact on indecisiveness at  $p < 0.05$  ( $b = -.108$ ,  $t = -1.848$ ,  $p = .065$ ) regarding university admission.

## 6. Conclusions

In the light of results, three factors were related to indecisiveness regarding university entry have significant strong positive relationship exist such as social and family influence, expectancy for university success, and enjoyment/interest of university study. The other three factors had no significant relationship with indecisiveness regarding university entry: recognition for university success, perceived income due to university study, and desirable occupation. The male students were more indecisive, expected more university success, had more social and family influence, and perceived to get more income due to university study than their female counterparts. No gender differences were noted regarding recognition for university success, perceived income as a result of university study and expectancy for university success. Astonishingly, Bachelor of Arts (BA) students perceived to earn more income as a result of university study as compared to Bachelor of Science (BSc) students; similarly, BA students were more confident that they would go to their desirable occupation due to university study than BSc students. There was significant impact of expectancy for university success, social family influence, perceived income due to university study and desirable occupation on indecisiveness with university entry. Whereas, recognition of university success and interest & enjoyment of university study have no impact on indecisiveness with university entry

## 7. Discussion

The current study was aimed to explore the relationship of different factors of students' indecisiveness regarding university entry. The results showed that there was negative relationship among enjoyment/interest of university study, social family influence, and

expectancy for university success. While, there were no relationship among the variables recognition for university success, perceived income as a result of university study, and desirable occupation. This study also discovered that there were gender wise differences among the mean scores of indecisiveness of university admissions, perceived income as a result of university study, expectancy of university success, and social family influence. While, there were no gender wise differences among the mean scores of recognition of university success, desirable occupation, and enjoyment/interest of university study.

The study also identified the differences among the mean scores of class wise perceived income due to university study and desirable occupation. Whereas, there were class wise no differences among the mean scores of indecisiveness with university entry, recognition of university success, expectancy of university success, social family influence and interest & enjoyment of university study. This study also finds out the impact of expectancy, social family influence, perceived income due to university study and desirable occupation on indecisiveness with of university entry. While, there were no impact of recognition for university success and interest & enjoyment of university study on indecisiveness regarding university entry. The similar research study on university entry was conducted in Australia in 2011 by Jung. In this study, eight factors were taken regarding university entry such as a motivation of university entry, indecisiveness of university entry, recognition of university success, expectancy of university success, income as a result of university study, desirable occupation, and enjoyment/interest of university study. The results of this study showed that the factors such as recognition of university entry, expectancy of university success, enjoyment/interest of university study, desirable occupation and income as a result of university study had relationship with indecisiveness regarding university admission. The differences of results between Jung's and this study were due to difference in the culture and context of both countries. While the results of this study are related with the results of previous study which was conducted in Australia by Robinson and Bornhot (2007). And it was found that the admission choice of students is greatly dependent upon some factors which include their demographics, family background, students, and also learning environment shifts from one to another. It was also concluded that university entry also depends upon university offering different disciplines, rules, codes, values, assessments, capability of students and staffs. In the curriculum perspective, course entry desires, staff and responses of other listed students, mode of teaching in course form the basis for selection of course. The results of this study were also consisted with the results of the study which was conducted by Armstrong (2001) who claimed that there were some other factors which involved students' social and financial background influenced the selection for university entry and course. Similarly, the results of this study are endorsed by the results of another study which was conducted by Steinberg et al. (1998). It explored that youths' peer relationships were associated to their educational accomplishment of consequences, though, to a smaller degree than parents' associations. Further research has discovered that scholars who had spent a great deal of their period with peers form ambitions and standards grounded on the way in which friend groups describe success (MacLeod, 1995).

## **8. Recommendation**

On the basis of results of this study, it is recommended that the higher education department should arrange awareness session in colleges and universities to reduce indecisiveness among students regarding university admission. The higher education commission should advise to the universities to constitute a committee or council for students' awareness and guidance regarding admission. The government should develop liaison among all higher education institutions for better guidance of students regarding admission. The universities should offer various subjects for admission which should meet.

the requirements of contemporary time so that the factors of indecisiveness among students might be minimized at the time of admission. The universities should offer maximum wide range disciplines, scholarships for students and also reduce the fee courses. The potential researchers may conduct other studies with different variables or region, and with a larger sample size for more generalization of results and for better understanding of this phenomena.

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