

Exploring the Consumer Behavior That Influences Student College Choice

Cheng-Chuan Shen¹

Abstract

This study examined consumer behavior influencing student college choice. The study focused on the choice stage, which is the last of Hossler and Gallagher's three-stage college-choice process.

To understand how students select their institution, a survey was administered to the 395 freshmen who received recommended admission from a private university in northern Taiwan. The survey asked respondents to assign numerical ratings to statements regarding consumption values influencing their college choice; Descriptive analyses were conducted to determine the extent to which students used each of consumption values. Inferential analyses, including one-way ANOVAs, and independent sample *t* tests were then used to determine the differences to which students perceived each of the characteristics of the selected university.

The findings revealed that students considered the consumption values to have a neutral effect on their college choices. However, students' opinions on the impact of the functional value upon the selected university's characteristics varied between neutral and agreement. Furthermore, significant differences regarding characteristics based on students' demographic characteristics were found. Students with higher GPA scores perceived the selected university has a friendly, open atmosphere to be significantly more important than did students with lower scores, and males perceived the university is located near many city activities to be significantly more important than did females. These findings provide practical information in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the selected university. Institutions, especially the selected university, can utilize the results to apply institutional marketing to accommodate the demands of its current and potential students.

Keywords: Consumer behavior; College choice; Recommended admission.

¹ Associate Professor, Department of International Trade, Aletheia University