FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' CHOICE TO ENROLL AT PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN HO CHI MINH CITY, VIETNAM

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Factors Affecting Students' Choice to Enroll at Private Higher Education Institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, VIETNAM

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this quantitative, descriptive, and co-relational study was to analyze the factors affecting students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The three specific objectives of the study included, to identify the factors influencing students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions, to predict students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions and, to determine the differences in factors influencing students' choice among private higher education institutions.

Data was collected using a valid and reliable questionnaire through a survey of 560 stratified randomly sampled first year students from four higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Data collection was done through survey using a valid and reliable questionnaire constructed based on the information gathered from the literature review. A five-point Likert's scale was adopted to measure the students' choice of institution and, intention to enroll at private higher education institution. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, principal component analysis, multiple regression analysis and analysis of variance.

Principal component analysis revealed seven factors affecting students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions. Multiple regression analysis revealed that out of the seven factors, only five factors were found to be significant predictors of students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions. These five factors were characteristics of (a) Marketing/Communication Strategies, (b) Programs and Courses Offered, (c) Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid, (d) Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life, and (e) Influence from Surrounding People. Analysis of

variance determined that no factors were significantly different among the four institutions in the study. Based on the findings, implications for policy and practice were discussed and appropriate recommendations were made.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Choosing a university and deciding on a major are one of the most important milestones in every person's life since they shape people's future careers, and thus they have a great impact on their whole life. It not only affects students' orientation of future career but also influences their motivation to study, commitment, and interaction with the university. In fact, irrationality in choosing a university may cause students to have difficulties in maintaining learning motivation, achieving high academic results and getting a desirable job. Once a student has completed the application process and has been admitted to multiple institutions, the student's process of determining which institution to attend is influenced by many factors (Pampaloni, 2010). Exploring factors which drives to students' choice of universities is, therefore, necessary to consult them for the more informed decision. As to educational institutions, understanding factors impacting students' choice of university is the basis for recruiting strategies and the implementation of training programs, which decides the survival and development of each university in the competitive environment of higher education provision. This is also the situation that the private higher education institutions in Vietnam have been currently coping with.

Private higher education institutions are more adaptable to the changing needs of the market and, therefore, to provide a wider choice of job-related skills to students and employers. According to Levy (2007:17), these institutions are generally more "secular", "culturally diverse", "less politicized" and "learner-friendly". The distinctive features of private higher education include vocational orientated learning with opportunity for

students to undertake work experience while studying; high quality of teachers; small class size; personalized academic support services; and high student satisfaction when compared to the public and traditional universities (Shah and Brown, 2009; Shah and Nair, 2011).

The changes in current economy and the job-market situation across the world have also changed the mind of education service consumers (students) as well as the education service providers (institutions). Therefore, there is a shift in preference of higher education from traditional/public institutions to private institutions. Consequently, public or traditional universities and colleges across the world which dominated in the provision of higher education for long periods are losing their monopoly as large numbers of private higher education institutions are entering the higher education sector. The growth of private higher education institutions has given a wide scope to prospective students to make a choice for their preferred institution. The growth of institutions and the students' choice of institutions for their study have led to competition among the institutions, as each institution aims to attract more students so as to get more revenue for its survival as well as growth.

1.1 Background of the study

Researchers have concluded that some of the expected tangible benefits of a college education include higher potential earnings and lifelong learning (O'neil, 2013). As this research illustrated, there are benefits to attending college, and the determining of which benefits aid in the college choice decision-making process is the crux of this research study.

Even though all the benefits of a college education are not tangible, factors that are important in the college decision process are viewed in college choice modeling. Choice modeling is an approach to determining factors that influence students' college choice. Luce (1959) developed his model of choice to find the probability for a product to be chosen against another similar item. The Luce model was a commonly used paradigm in the marketing industry (McFadden, 1980). The Luce approach to modeling was further enhanced by Thurstone's Multi-Nominal-Probit (1968), which took the Luce model and expanded it to include more than one outcome choice. McFadden (1980) expanded on earlier models to create a Noble Peace Prize-winning model that provided further exploration into the reasoning behind decision making. Hossler and associates also (Hossler, Braxton, & Coopersmith, 1989; Hossler & Gallagher, 1987) developed a college choice model expanding on the works of Luce, Thurstone, McFadden, and others that provided information about the college choice process of high school students. Past models have provided an understanding of the process of college enrollment as a student transitions from a prospective student to an applicant. This research provides an understanding of the process from admitted student to enrolled student.

Many variables surrounding high school seniors/university freshmen have been studied to determine their importance in the college choice process. These categories included: (a) demographic influences, (b) social influences, and (c) institutional influences (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Hayes, Walker, & Trebbi, 1995; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997; Kim, 2004; Shank & Beasley, 1998; St. John, 1999). The first category of demographic influences includes: (a) gender, (b) race, and (c) socio-economic status (SES). Researchers have found that gender has a strong impact on the

college decision process specifically with certain university characteristics (Shank & Beasley, 1998). Men have been shown to value athletics and social aspects of the campus while women are more concerned with the safety and diversity of an institution (Hayes, Walker, & Trebbi, 1995). Race has been cited as a demographic factor in which significant differences occur among racial groups in a high school senior's college choice. Many minority students perceive the most important factors in choosing a college as financial need, availability of financial aid, and proximity to home (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Kim, 2004; St. John, 1999). Socio-economic status of a student's family can play a vital role in a student's college choice with tuition increases occurring in many institutions (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Hurtado, Inkelas, Briggs, & Rhee, 1997).

Social differences among high school seniors have been found to play an important role in the college choice process (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Choy & Ottinger, 1998, Helwig, 2004; McDonough, 1997; Toma & Cross, 1998). Four sources have been highlighted as having the most influential social power over high school seniors. These social influences include: (a) parents, (b) secondary level (guidance counselor, teachers, peers, and friends), (c) collegiate athletics, and (d) reputation of the institution (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Choy & Ottinger, 1998, Helwig, 2004; McDonough, 1997; Toma & Cross, 1998). Parental influence has been regarded as the single most powerful factor for high school seniors in their college choice process (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Chapman, 1981). High school influences including peers, friends, guidance counselors, and teachers play a significant role in high school seniors' decision to apply and ultimately enroll at particular colleges (Helwig, 2004; Hossler, et al., 1999; Rosen, Curren, & Greenlee, 1996). Toma and Cross (1998) reported that collegiate athletic rankings and

championships attained have an effect on student choice. The rankings provided by the U.S. World and News Report are often viewed as prestigious and can affect a high school senior's decision on where to enroll (Broekhemier & Seshadri, 1999; Monks & Ehrenberg, 1999).

Researchers have found that higher education institutions have specific factors that the institution can control to influence a high school senior's college choice (Jackson, 1982). Those specific factors include: (a) promotional materials, (b) proximity, and (c) campus infrastructure (Capraro, Patrick, & Wilson, 2004; Hite & Yearwood, 2001; Pampaloni, 2010). Promotional materials are often sent to high school students after national test sessions, and they continue to be delivered until a student enrolls in a particular institution. Parents and students have been critical of these publications as they are often unsolicited. The material is distributed in the guise of information but often appears to be only propaganda (Armstrong & Lumsden, 1999; Hossler, et al., 1999). Reviewing materials sent from an institution is an important step of the decision process, but a campus visit has been viewed as an important opportunity for an institution to sway a student in a positive or negative manner (Rosen, Curren, & Greenlee, 1998). The organizational image that a campus exudes plays a role in the application and enrollment choice of a high school senior (Elliot & Healy, 2001; Pampaloni, 2010).

The increasing numbers of both the prospective students and higher education institutions have created a competitive market for higher education in terms of the intake of students because every institution targets to collect higher revenue through tuition fee. The tuition fee is the primary revenue source for most private higher education institutions. Private colleges and universities depend on enrolment as a significant portion

of their budget, and this portion is comprised of tuition fee (Dezhbakhsh and Karikari, 2010). As competition for students intensifies, private universities and institutes of higher education have been aggressive and creative in the use of the marketing approach and techniques to recruit and attract students. It is important to note that colleges and universities exist for students. So, a better understanding of what students need and seek is the best strategy not only to increase enrolment, but also to improve the reputation and quality of the education institution. The atmosphere of higher education has increasingly become competitive, and institutions have to compete with each other to attract more students for enrolment (Maringe, 2006). Therefore, the higher education institutions are confronted with the question of how to deal with the challenge and competition for student enrolment to get higher revenue. The management of these institutions has to understand the criteria that prospective students consider when selecting a higher education institution for their enrolment.

Understanding how students choose an institution is critical for administrators of the colleges and universities. Students "are the lifeblood of colleges and universities, and student characteristics often define the distinctiveness of individual campuses" (Kinzie, Palmer and Hayek, 2004:31). Competition for students is continually increasing, with the majority of prospective students applying for colleges (Kinzie et al., 2004:34). Additionally, "students of high academic ability are more likely to attend selective institutions" (Kinzie et al., 2004:37).

While the private higher education sector has experienced tremendous growth in the last few years in many parts of the world including Ho Chi Minh City, with predictions of future growth, there is limited research on factors influencing students'

choice to study in private higher education institutions. Most studies on factors influencing students' choice of institution of higher education are conducted on public universities. No study of such nature, particularly on private higher education institutions, has been conducted in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Therefore, this study intends to bridge that gap in the literature by investigating the factors affecting student's choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Based on the students' choice factors, the study also predicts intention of students to enroll at private higher education institutions in the country.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Scholars and practitioners in the field of higher education marketing and student recruitment concur that the selection of the higher education destination is similar to a service purchase (Choudaha et al., 2015; Anctil, 2008; Vrontis et al., 2007; Briggs & Wilson, 2007), and recognize that "increasing customer power demands for quality and customization" (Vrontis et al., 2007, p. 987). At the same time, against declining enrollments and tighter budgets, higher education institutions are under pressure to deliver better recruitment results with fewer resources. The existing body of research on college choice provides many insights into who and what influences a prospective student to think about pursuing higher education, to seek out information about specific colleges or universities, and what, ultimately, contributes to the student's enrollment in a particular institution (Han, 2014; Abubakar et al., 2010; Anctil, 2008; Chen, 2007).

Private higher education is perhaps the fastest growing segment of post-secondary education worldwide. Yet it is little understood (Altbach, 1999). This certainly is the case in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, particularly during the current decade when Ho Chi Minh

city higher education experienced a great expansion. Apart from government policies and external factors, students' choice has also played a key role in the ongoing growth of private higher education institutions. The growth of private higher education institutions provides students with an alternative choice to access and participate in higher education (Shah and Nair, 2013). As Crossman (2010) reminds us, people tend to consider opportunities and appraise the possible costs and benefits of future engagement before making their decision on what to do. The alternative choices of institution for students have created a high level of competition among the tertiary education institutions. There is a crisis of the survival of higher education institutions. As a result, every institution wants to attract more students to get higher revenue through the tuition fee. Consequently, students' enrollment decisions directly affect the institution's revenue streams and, obviously, their survival.

Due to increasing competition among higher education institutions, they need to be aware of underlying factors which are considered by prospective students when selecting a higher education institution. In order to attract more prospective students, private higher education institutions need to know students' reason for choosing one institution over the other, the importance to them and their parents, and the way they perceive the institution relative to their competitors on certain choice factors. Students entering institutions of higher education today are different from those of previous generations (Abrahamson, 2010). When making decisions about attending an institution, and ultimately which institution to attend, they consider factors differently from previous generations. Therefore, from time to time, higher education institution administrators

need to understand the underlying factors that influence students to choose higher education institution.

However, research on students' choice of private college/university is still scarce (Maringe & Carter, 2007; Hempsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015). To successfully implement their recruitment, private colleges and universities must know their strengths as well as understand the process and factors that motivate prospective students to make them their institutions of choice. A number of studies have been conducted on factors influencing student choice of higher education institutions worldwide, but no research has been conducted in the context of private higher education in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. It is desirable for institutions of higher education in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam to improve their understanding of college enrollment decisions as they decide on their policies regarding such activities as financial aid, tuition, recruitment, program planning and expansion. Therefore, this study investigates the factors that influence students' decision to enroll at the private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the factors influencing students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions.
2. To predict the relationship between the factors influencing students' choice and their intention to enroll at private higher education institution.

3. To determine the differences in factors influencing students' choice among the private higher education institutions.

1.4 Research questions

The objectives of the study were achieved by answering three questions:

1. What are the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions?
2. To what extent do these factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions?
3. Are there significant differences in the factors influencing student's choice among the private higher education institutions?

1.5 Research hypotheses

The research questions of the study were answered by testing three research hypotheses:

1. There are factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions.
2. The underlying factors do significantly predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution.
3. There are significant differences in the factors influencing students' choice among the private higher education institutions.

1.6 Theoretical and Conceptual framework

A number of theoretical frameworks and models have been developed and used by researchers to provide details and insights on the college choice process, the process through which students make decisions about whether and where to go to college

(Bergerson, 2009) and the factors that influence their decision. These frameworks have been used to develop three theoretical, conceptual approaches to modeling college choice: (a) economical models, (b) sociological models, and (c) combined models. The economic models focus on the econometric assumptions that prospective college students rationalize about and make careful cost-benefit analyses when choosing a college (Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999). The sociological or status-attainment models assume a utilitarian decision-making process that students go through in choosing a college, specifying a variety of social and individual factors leading to occupational and educational aspirations (Jackson, 1982). The combined models incorporate the rational assumptions in the economic models and components of the sociological models. Most combined models divide the students' decision-making process into three phases: aspirations development and alternative evaluation, options consideration, and evaluation of the remaining options and final decision (Jackson, 1982). The choice of prospective candidates for higher education is influenced by many factors including social economic and other factors. Therefore, this study used the combined model given by Haron, Hamid, Jamaludin & Azan (2017), Rudhumbu, Tirumalai & Kumari (2017), Đỗ, T.H.L., Nguyễn, T.N.H., Nguyễn, T.L.A. (2015), Baliyan, S.P. (2016), and Sedahmed, Z.M. & Noureldien, N.A. (2019) as the basis of theoretical framework for investigating the factors influencing the student's decision to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam.

1.7 Definitions of key terms

For the purpose of better understanding of this study, the researcher identified and defined the following terms to assist the readers to comprehend the contents of this study and to avoid or eliminate any misinterpretation.

Higher education or tertiary education. Higher education refers to all formal education programs that require a minimum entry requirement of senior secondary education. These refers to certificate or diploma, degree and other advanced courses offered by the various institutions. The terms ‘higher education’ and ‘tertiary education’ are used interchangeably in this study.

Institution or College or University. Institution or College or University refers only to institutions of higher learning in Vietnam where a certificate, diploma or bachelor’s degree program are offered.

Public higher institution or Public College or Public University. Public higher institution or Public College or Public University refers to a state-funded institution of higher learning where the minimum degree offerings will include certificate, diploma, or bachelor’s degree.

Private higher institution or Private College or Private University. Private higher institution or Private College or Private University refers to a privately funded institution of higher learning where the minimum degree offerings include a certificate, diploma or bachelor’s degree.

Prospective or Potential College Student refers to any undergraduate student who could potentially attend a college institution or university in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam in the future regardless of age, gender, or education level.

Choice is a stage in which students assess their list of colleges, select a college or colleges to apply to, and make a decision to enroll (Hossler, Braxton and Cooppersmith, 1989).

Students' choice refers to the decision on preference of a higher institution for possible further education. This decision is assumed to be made in relation to the need satisfaction (Glasser, 1998) and the consideration of opportunity and appraisal the possible costs and benefits for their future life (Crossman, 2010).

College Choice deals with a prospective college student's choice to attend one particular type of college over another.

College choice process is "A complex, multistage process, during which an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, followed later by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution of advanced training" (Hossler, Braxton and Coopersmith, 1996:234). The terms "college choice" and "college choice process" are used interchangeably in this study.

College characteristics are the attributes presumed to be significant during the college choice process including academic reputation, academic programs, educational facilities, location, and social atmosphere.

Gatekeeper. It is an individual who allows access to a group of people (Gatekeeper, 2013).

1.8 Significances of the study

This study was set to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The

investigation of factors influencing students' choice to study in a private higher education institution is important for a number of reasons.

First, the findings of this study should be of practical value to administrators of private higher education institutions. Faced with the need to increase their student enrollment, administrators must gain a comprehensive understanding of the relevant factors affecting a student's decision to choose a private higher education institution. A clear understanding of the factors influencing college choice is needed if student recruitment efforts are to yield better results in terms of increasing enrollment. The knowledge on students' choice of a higher education institution could also help institutions to understand student expectations and strategies that could be implemented to improve the student experience. Considering the fact that no such study has been conducted in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam so far, this study may enable administrators of private higher institutions to develop a better understanding of the process of students' college choice to improve their marketing and recruitment strategies so that they could target potential students and enhance enrollment and revenue.

Second, understanding of the college choice process is beneficial to parents, high school teachers and guidance counselors, who play a critical role in the students' choice of a college. Although choosing a college is an important decision for students, having a lasting impact on their lives, parents, high school teachers and guidance counselors often have little knowledge of the process. Findings from this study would help them to understand the college decision making process so that they may be in a better position to assist and advise their students.

It is hoped that the study would reveal valuable information about factors that affect and influence students' choice to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. It would also predict the students' choice based on the factors including the information if the choice factors are different among the private higher education institutions. The administrators and policy makers could use the findings to alter their policies to attract more prospective students and thus increase enrollment. The study contributes to the current body of research in the area of students' choice of college. Due to the absence of college choice literature in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, little is known about the college choice process of students attending higher education institutions, particularly private institutions. This is the first empirical study on factors affecting students' choice of private higher institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. Thus, it may serve as a literature reference for future research in the field. The findings may have relevance to other countries with similar cultural backgrounds, especially Laos, Cambodia, and other Asian countries.

The expectation is that the results would identify the factors which students consider in selecting a private higher institution for studies. The study would also inform which of the identified choice factors predict the students' choice in the selection of private higher education institutions. Thus, the results would help the managers and policy makers to adjust in their institutions as per the criteria of student's choice of selecting an institution.

1.9 Limitations and Delimitations of the study

Limitations are restrictions that arise based on the researcher's choice of methodology (Bryant, 2004). Limitations refer to "limiting conditions or restrictive

weaknesses" (Locke, Spiruduso and Silverman, 2007: 16). All research studies have limitations, possibly related to the difficulty of controlling variables within the research design or related to the limited types of data that can be gathered due to ethics or feasibility. There were a few limitations to this study. Limitations arose in trying to contact gatekeepers, as they were always occupied with their work and did not want to take part in the study because it was not related to work. The study drew samples from first year students enrolled in the institution and did not include the aspiring students to be admitted for higher education. Lastly, the honesty of the respondents in responding to the questions during the survey may be a constraint and may have influenced the results of the study.

Delimitations are factors that may prevent the researcher from asserting that the research findings are true for all people in all situations (Bryant, 2004). This study applied a quantitative approach, and the instrument (questionnaire) was rigorously developed based on the literature reviewed. Although the process of validating and measurement of the reliability of the instrument was completed before the final survey, evaluation made by the respondents may not be accurate due to misunderstanding of the concepts measured by the items provided in the questionnaire.

1.10 Summary of the chapter

This chapter focused on the introduction and overview of study. The chapter covered the introduction, background of the problem, the problem statement, research questions and research hypothesis of the study. The motivation for study and limitations of the study were also mentioned. The relevant terms used were defined. Finally, the

organization of the study was laid out and the chapter concluded with a summary. The review of literature regarding this study is presented in Chapter 2.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence students' college choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. In order to have a better understanding of the factors that influence the college selection by students, it was necessary to know the college choice process and the theories behind the choice process. A thorough review of three international studies was also conducted and presented. Therefore, the literature review in this study is presented in four sections: college choice process, choice models, factors affecting students' choice and, a review of international studies. The literature review was conducted by searching through peer reviewed journals, dissertations, and books about college choice theories and factors affecting choice decision. The educational research complete database was utilized including ERIC, EBSCOHOST, ProQuest, and Google Scholar.

2.1 The College Choice Process

Students' college choice is a basic and integral part of theory and research on higher education. Unlike elementary, primary, and secondary schools, post-secondary students have the freedom to choose (John, 1990a). They must decide whether to go to college, which college to enroll in, what to major in, which courses to take, and so on. The college choice process refers to the stages and factors that influence applicants when deciding which colleges to apply to, and what factors to consider when deciding which of the colleges or universities they have been admitted to and which they wish to attend (Ranero, 1999). In order to gain a better understanding of college choice process, it was important to know the stages through which a student passes during the college selection process. Hossler and Gallagher (1987) have indicated three stage model of college choice

process namely predisposition, search, and choice. At each stage of the model, an individual student and other factors interact to produce an outcome that influences the student college choice process.

The first stage of the college selection process is predisposition. This stage is also known as the college aspiration formation stage (Paulsen, 1990). This stage is characterized by students determining whether they would like to continue their education beyond the secondary school or not. Thus, at this stage a student decides to attend or not to attend a college. During this stage, background characteristics influence students in making the decision (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Martin and Dixon, 1991). These influences include socioeconomic status, race, gender, ability, achievement, attitudes, and educational background of parents and peers school characteristics (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Stage and Hossler, 1989; Nora and Cabera, 1992; Somers et al., 1999; Litten, 1982; Paulsen, 1990). The second stage of the college selection process is the search stage. Once students have decided that they are going to pursue higher education, they begin to seek for information and formulate choice about colleges and universities that they might be interested in attending (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Litten, 1982; Martin and Dixon, 1991; Paulsen, 1990). At this stage, students create a list of potential colleges and universities, which researchers refer to as a choice set. Using this choice set, students begin to examine certain attributes of these colleges and obtain information that will assist them in making their decision to apply to particular institutions for their study (Hosslerand Gallagher, 1987; Chapman, 1981, Litten, 1982; Martin and Dixon, 1991). The second stage of college choice process ends when the students have decided on the colleges or universities they will apply to and have

completed the applications for those preferred institutions. The students send in applications to their institutions of choice and wait to learn which colleges have accepted them (Paulsen, 1990). The third and the final stage of college selection process is the choice stage. At this stage, students make a decision to attend one of those colleges or universities which have notified them of their acceptance. The educational and occupational aspirations cost and financial aid and, college activities influence the decision making. At this stage, students will have different approaches to making their ultimate decision (Matthay, 1989; McDonough and Antonio, 1996; Paulsen, 1990), but the institutional characteristics and their own personal characteristics are the most important in final decision to attend an institution (Paulsen, 1990). This last stage of college selection process ends with the enrollment at the chosen college.

2.2 College Choice Models

College choice has been defined as "the process through which students decide whether and where to go to college" (Bergerson, 2009: 2). Choice models help in better understanding of the choices that are made when a person is confronted with multiple alternatives (Rose and Scarpa, 2008). A variety of models have been developed to provide rationale for students' college choice. These models generally fit into one of three categories, as identified by Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989): econometric, sociological, and combined models. Since no study has been conducted on students' college choice in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam, it will be worthy for educational administrators and other stakeholders to have an idea of all the college choice models. However, the focus of the study will be on combined models.

2.2.1 Econometric Models

The econometric models are also called economic models. The fundamental basis of econometric models is that "students maximize a utility (e.g., high quality, low cost), often using cost-benefit analysis" (Hossler et al., 1999:142). These models assume that, "as students consider colleges, they can detail the advantages and disadvantages of each, associate a utility or a value with the attributes of each, make reasonable assumptions about the outcomes of one decision over another, and then choose more or less rationally in order to maximize benefits and reduce costs" (Hossler et al., 1999:142). Econometric models (Kotler and Fox, 1985; McDonough, 1997) view college attendance as an economic benefit, where students who choose to attend college do so because the perceived benefits outweigh the benefits of any alternatives. McDonough (1997:3) proposed that "students maximize perceived cost-benefits in their college choices; have perfect information; and are engaged in a process of rational choice". Thus, an econometric model focuses on expected costs, expected future earnings, student background characteristics, and college characteristics as factors important to the study of college choice (Hossler and Stage, 1992). Econometric models assume that students possess perfect (or near-perfect) information and make rational decisions in order to maximize utilities; however, this is not always the reality (Hossler et al., 1999:144). However, econometric models fail to address how the college choice process is influenced by institutions (Espinoza, 2001:23). Therefore, some researchers have questioned the applicability of econometric models to studies of college choice, arguing that students often lack the ability to process information affecting matriculation

adequately and rationally due to socioeconomic constraints and limited information (Jackson, 1982).

2.2.2 Sociological Models

Sociological models are also called status-attainment models. The sociological models of college choice emphasize "how socialization processes, family conditions, interactions with peers, and school environments help shape students' college choices" (Hossler et al., 1999:144). These models assume that behavioral variables, such as students' academic performance or how their families spend their leisure time, interact with background variables, like the occupational and educational status of parents, to determine students' educational aspirations (Sewell and Shah, 1978). Unlike econometric models, which treat students' choice as a rational decision, sociological models assume that student choices are narrowed down through the socialization process. This process includes the interactive effects of family, school, and society (Hossler, Braxton and Coopersmith, 1989; McDonough, 1997). Factors presumed to influence students' choice are as follows: family socioeconomic background, student academic ability, and parental encouragement, influence of significant others, high school academic performance, motivation and high school academic standards (McDonough, 1997). Sociological theories as described by Paulsen (1990) and McDonough (1997) focus on the characteristics that influence both social and cultural capital, including socioeconomic status and academic ability. A sociological model considers the role of certain factors in the attainment of positions or occupations of prestige or status which influence the college choice.

2.2.3 Combined Models

Combined models, as the name indicates, integrate factors of both the econometric and the sociological models. The econometric models assume that students make rational decisions, but the sociological models have more interaction between variables that measure the traits of individual students and variables that assess broad social constructs (Hossler et al., 1999:144). Combined models, which incorporate facets of the economic and sociological models, may provide more explanatory power than any single prospective (Hossler et al., 1999:144). Combined models have the distinct advantage in that “the researcher can choose variables from either domain or concentrate on the sociological aspect of college choice as a process while maintaining the decision-making prospective of economics” (Hossler et al., 1999:144-145). Employing combined models to study college choice is better than employing either econometric or sociological models alone because combined models include a broad range of influential factors (Hossler, Braxton and Coopersmith, 1989:234) which enable researchers to examine a developmental, multi-stage process, during which "an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, followed later by a decision to attend a specific college". Hossler, Braxton, and Coopersmith (1989:247) describe the advantages of the combined models as follows:

The combined models are the most inclusive of the three approaches, as a wide range of variables is predicted to influence the college choice process. Moreover, the combined models incorporate more than a single stage of the choice process. The econometric models also include several variables of presumed influence and focus on one of two stages of the choice process: college-going and choice behavior. The

sociological models, however, include a limited number of variables and focus on only the aspiration stage of the choice process.

Thus, the combined models could provide more information on the factors influencing the student's choice of college selection. This study therefore conceptualizes the combined models of choice for investigating factors influencing the student's choice of students to enroll in private higher institutions. The combined models of Jackson (1982), Litten (1982), Chapman (1984), Hossler and Gallagher (1987) and Perna (2006) are the main combined models. All the combined models are briefly discussed as follows:

2.2.3.1 The Chapman Model

Chapman's model was developed by Chapman in 1981. His model suggested that students go through a sequence of five interrelated stages in university selection. The first stage is pre search behavior which begins when a student first recognizes the possible need and desirability of a university-level education with demographic factors playing a major influencing role. The second stage is the search behavior and this stage is characterized by extensive and active acquisition of information about possible university alternatives (Chapman, 1984). The third stage is the application stage, in which students apply to universities that they are interested in and to which they are likely to be admitted. Chapman (1981) points out that the fourth stage is the choice decision phase, and the last stage is the matriculation stage which relates to the student not turning up at the university they would have been admitted. Changed family or personal circumstances such as significant changes in financial situation and unexpected events may alter the original choice decision (Chapman, 1986). Figure 2.1 is adapted from the Chapman model.

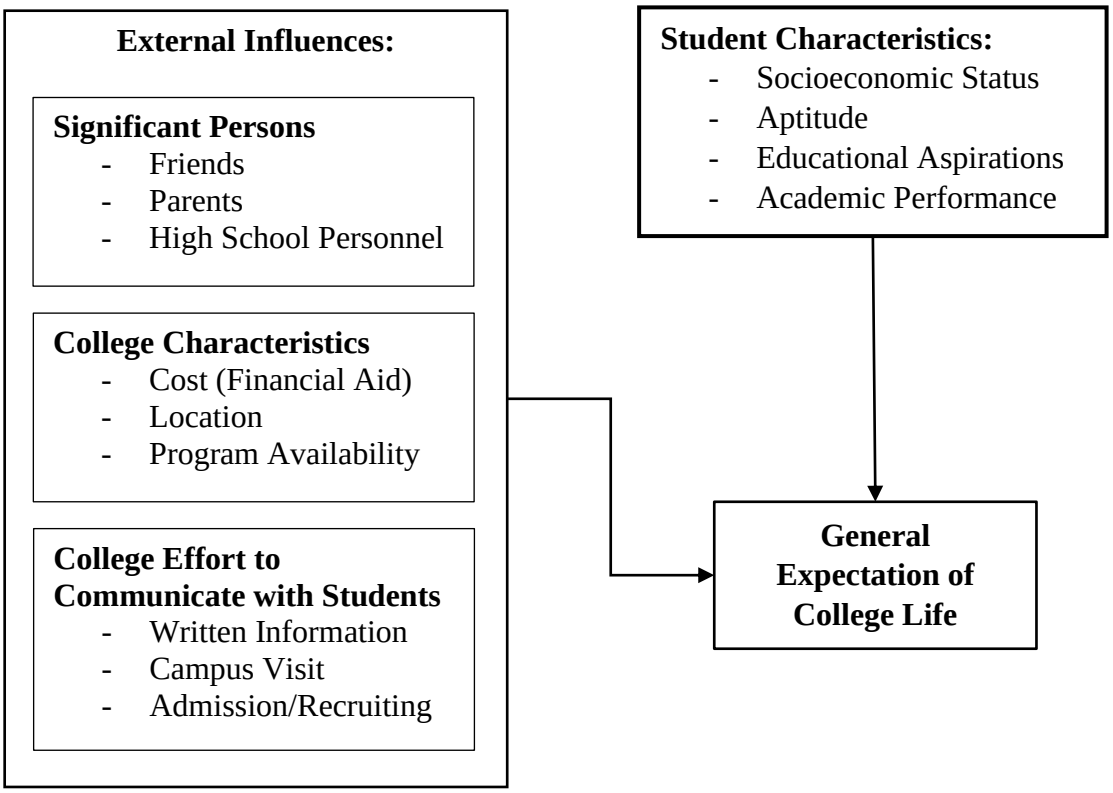


Figure 2-1 The Chapman Model

The Chapman model includes both the individual prospective and the institutional prospective whereby the student's characteristics and the external influences interact to form students' choice of a college to enroll (Figure 2.1). Chapman (1981) noted that the external influences were (a) significant persons (friends, parents, and high school personnel), (b) fixed college characteristics (cost, location, and availability of program), and (c) college efforts to communicate with students. He also stated that the result related to college choice comprises of a combination of both internal and external influences. According to his model, he listed the student's socioeconomic status (SES) and the student's aptitude as the internal influences. The author showed three specific ways in which significant persons can influence a student's college choice: (a) personal comments, (b) direct advice, and (c) where a close friend or family member may have

actually attended college themselves. The Chapman model does not include all possible variables presumed to be influential on college choice (Chapman, 1981). However, the model does consider the interrelationship of the major factors that shape college choice and lays a foundation for subsequent development of college choice models.

2.2.3.2 The Jackson Model

The Jackson's model (1982) reduces the number of stages in Chapman's model and consists of three stages: preference, exclusion, and evaluation. It proposes that a student goes through these three stages prior to making a choice. The first stage is the preference stage where it is suggested that academic achievement has the strongest correlation with students' educational aspirations. At this stage, Jackson (1982:239-240) suggests that students' aspirations develop in line with sociological findings, with the three strongest correlates of high school students' aspirations being (in decreasing order of strength): academic achievement, context, and family background. The second stage is the exclusion stage whereby the student goes through a process of eliminating some institutions from the prospective list. In the exclusion phase, Jackson utilizes economic theory to maintain that college decision-making is a process of excluding institutions (Hossler et al., 1999:146). He asserts that "students' choice sets depend on their exclusion criteria, which in turn depend on their anticipated financial resources and their academic experience" (Jackson, 1982:240). The last stage is the evaluation stage where a student is faced with the choice set of institutions from which they make their final choice using a rating scheme. During the evaluation phase, student assesses the remaining options in his or her choice set, perhaps implicitly "translating his or her preferences into a rating scheme, rating each option in the choice set, and selecting according to these ratings"

(Jackson, 1982:241). This last stage exists in the presumption that students do not always behave rationally hence the rating scheme leads students to a final choice of an institution. The strength of this model is that it incorporates both econometric and sociological perspective. Yet, this model fails to address the process of college choice (Hossler, Braxton and Coppersmith, 1989). Figure 2.2 is adapted from the Jackson model.

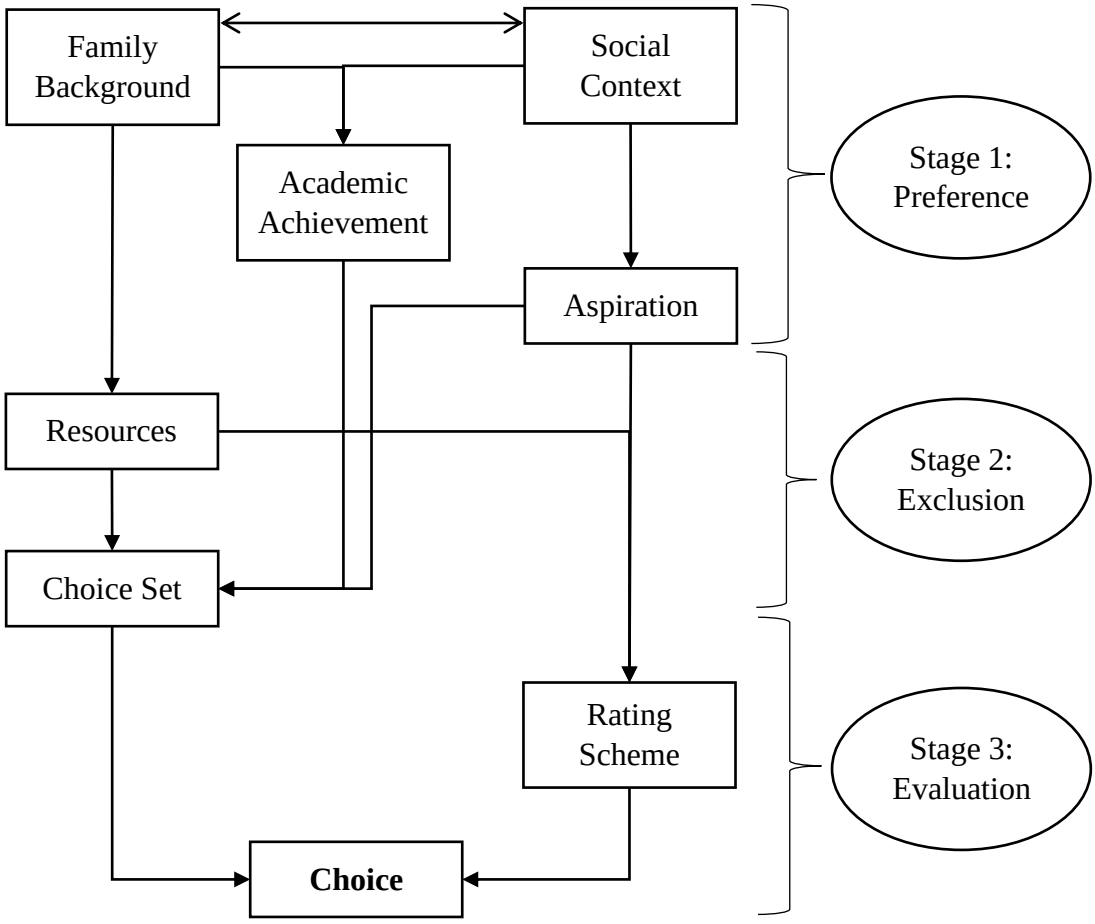


Figure 2-2 The Jackson Model

2.2.3.3 The Hanson and Litten Model

The Hanson and Litten model (1982) is a cross between Jackson's student-based model and the more institutional-based Chapman model as this model incorporates

students' characteristics and personal attributes as well as environmental variables and university characteristics and actions (Rashkov, 2010). Figure 2.3 is adapted from the Hanson and Litten model.

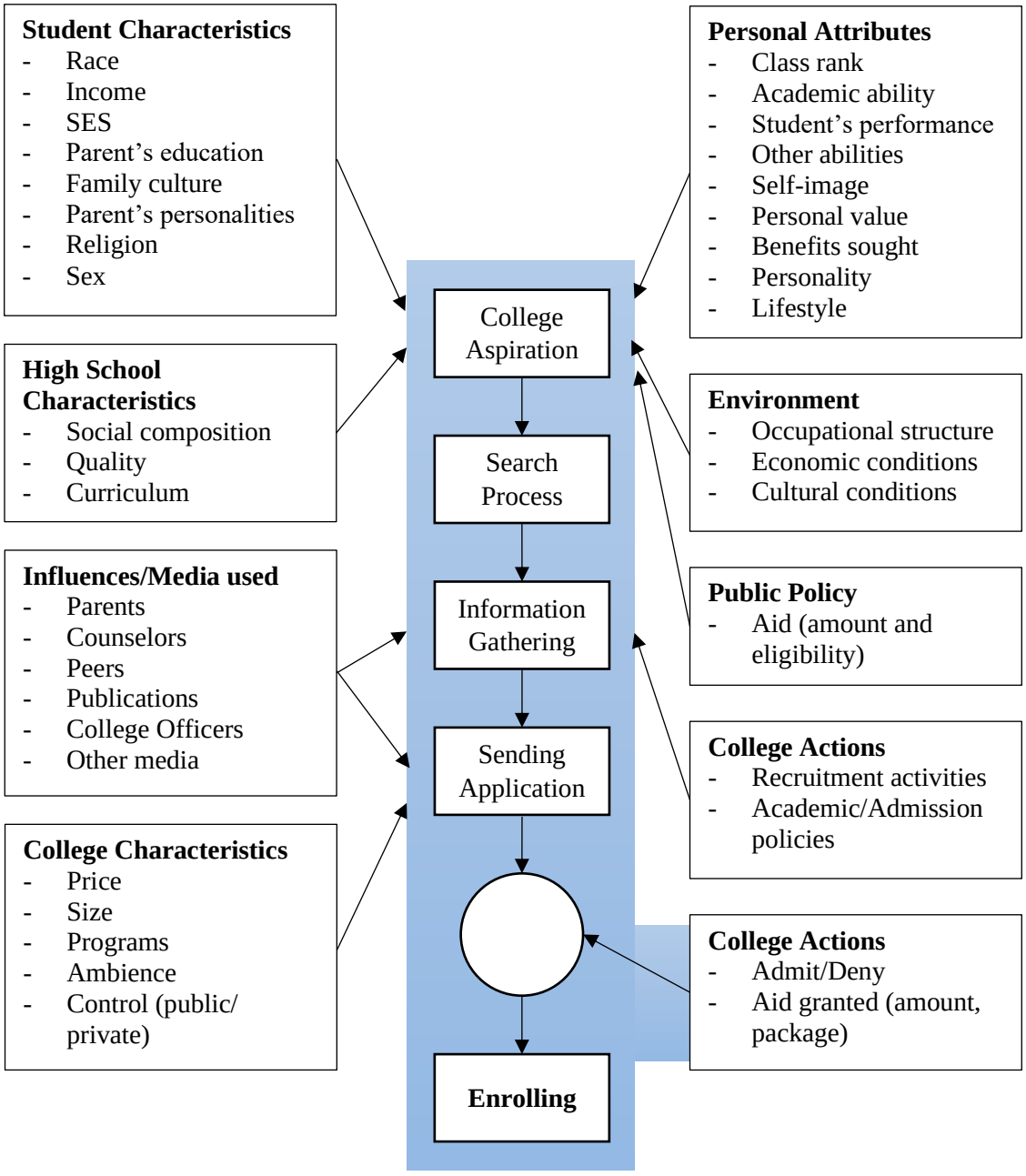


Figure 2-3 The Hanson and Litten Model

Hanson and Litten's model describes college selection as a continuing process of five steps. Firstly, having university aspirations; secondly, starting the search process; the

third stage, gathering information; fourth stage, sending applications; and finally, enrolling (Figure 2.3.). Hanson and Litten model recognized a diversity of variables influencing the college selection process of students. They indicated that primary influences affecting the college choice process were background characteristics, personal characteristics, high school characteristics, and college characteristics. They defined background or student characteristics as gender, race, parental education, socioeconomic status, parental personalities, family culture, religion, and parental income. Personal characteristics were shown to contain self-image, class rank, student performance, personal values, personality, lifestyle, benefits sought, and academic ability. High school characteristics listed social composition, programs, quality, and curriculum. Finally, the college characteristics incorporated size, ambiance, and timeliness in responding to student inquiries, price, control (public or private), and programs.

2.2.3.4 The Chapman and Jackson Model

Chapman and Jackson (1987:11) comprehensive model accounts for a wide spectrum of variables investigated within prior research studies, including "…student characteristics and background, student attitudes, student perceptions of colleges, college characteristics, money (parental income level, tuition, and financial aid), student self-reported preferences, and actual college choices of students". Viewing the college choice process as the formation of intermediate summary measures followed by the weight of intermediate constructs, Chapman and Jackson (1987) suggested that college choice is a result of the combination of the following three behaviors: perception formation, preference formation, and choice. The model proposes that students' perceptions about an institution are synthesized to form a comprehensive evaluation of the institution's value

(preference formation), which leads ultimately to observed college choices. According to Chapman and Jackson's (1987) model, a student's overall impression of an institution is formed at the perception formation stage. Chapman and Jackson's model (1987) supported the premise that early preferences for a particular institution are principally influenced by perceptions of academic quality, followed by perceptions of the school's social climate. Early perceptions of various colleges are formed by a combination of students' individual backgrounds of with students' previous exposure to the college and the brand that institutions have intentionally or non-intentionally promoted. Similar to perception formation, the formation of student preferences is believed to be dependent on the interactions between the student and the institution, and the influence of the particular college.

2.2.3.5 The Hossler and Gallagher Model

Hossler and Gallagher (1987:208), like Jackson (1982), and Litten (1982), posit that students move through phases, from the "initial step of establishing a predisposition toward higher education to the final step of selecting an institution to attend". Informed by The Hanson and Litten Model, Hossler and Gallagher's Model (1987) categorizes the selection process into three phases: predisposition, search, and choice (Bateman and Spruill, 1996; Bergerson, 2009; Shaw, Kobrin, and Packman, 2009). The predisposition phase entails students' decisions/aspirations to enroll in post-secondary education. The search phase is the process of considering types of institutions to which to apply. The choice phase is the selection of an institution to attend. In this model of college choice, the three processes typically do not occur concurrently, but rather simultaneously, often overlapping one another. The first stage of predisposition is defined as the phase in which

students decide whether to pursue formal education after high school. Several factors that have been found to predispose students toward college include socio-economic status, students' academic achievement, parents‟ education levels, ethnicity, gender, encouragement from high school counselors and teachers, support from peers, and parental expectations and encouragement (Hossler and Stage, 1992). During the search stage, students access information on specific colleges to further examine the opportunities and benefits. It is within this phase that students are most likely to consider external and institutional information sources. Factors that may be considered by students at this second phase include cost of attendance, availability and offers of financial assistance, and academic reputation. The third stage of college choice is the application of the predisposition factors combined with the information gathered during the search phase (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987). The Hossler and Gallagher Model is presented in Figure 2.4.



Figure 2-4 The Hossler and Gallagher Model

2.2.3.6 The Cabrera and La Nasa Model

Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) created a choice model that contains stages of college choice and includes multiple factors and outcomes at each stage. The stages in the model included secondary grade levels: (a) predisposition, (b) search, and (c) choice. Each stage presents factors consistent with the cognitive development for each age. This model uses a temporal approach for viewing the influences through the economic and

sociological lens of school students and their decision-making process with interactions between the stages (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2000).

2.2.3.7 The Perna Model

Perna (2006) developed the Conceptual Model of College Choice, which specified the social, economic, and habitus influence in the decision process. The Pernas' model is presented in Figure 2.5. This college choice model contains the four layers of: (a) social, (b) economic, and policy context, higher education context, (c) school and community context, and (d) habitus. In Perna's model, the outermost layer containing social, economic, and policy context of the decision, is influenced by "social forces" (e.g., demographic changes), economic conditions (e.g., unemployment rate), and public policies (e.g., establishment of a new need-based grant program)" (Perna, 2006:119). The second layer of this model includes higher education context and the role that higher education institutions play in college choice. In this layer of the model, higher education institutions influence college choice in three ways. The first way is through the information that the college provides prospective students and families. The second is the attributes and characteristics of each individual institution. The final influence is through the availability of enrollment slots at the institution (Perna, 2006).

The third layer of the model is the school and community context of college choice. This layer contains the social component of when a student is provided assistance in the process. Teachers and guidance counselors can provide information and assistance with college materials including providing the student with view books, catalogs, and other materials and information obtained by the college counseling or guidance office. The school context can be restrictive especially in low income high schools with fewer

materials and the potential for counselors to concentrate on career counseling instead of college guidance (Perna, 2006).

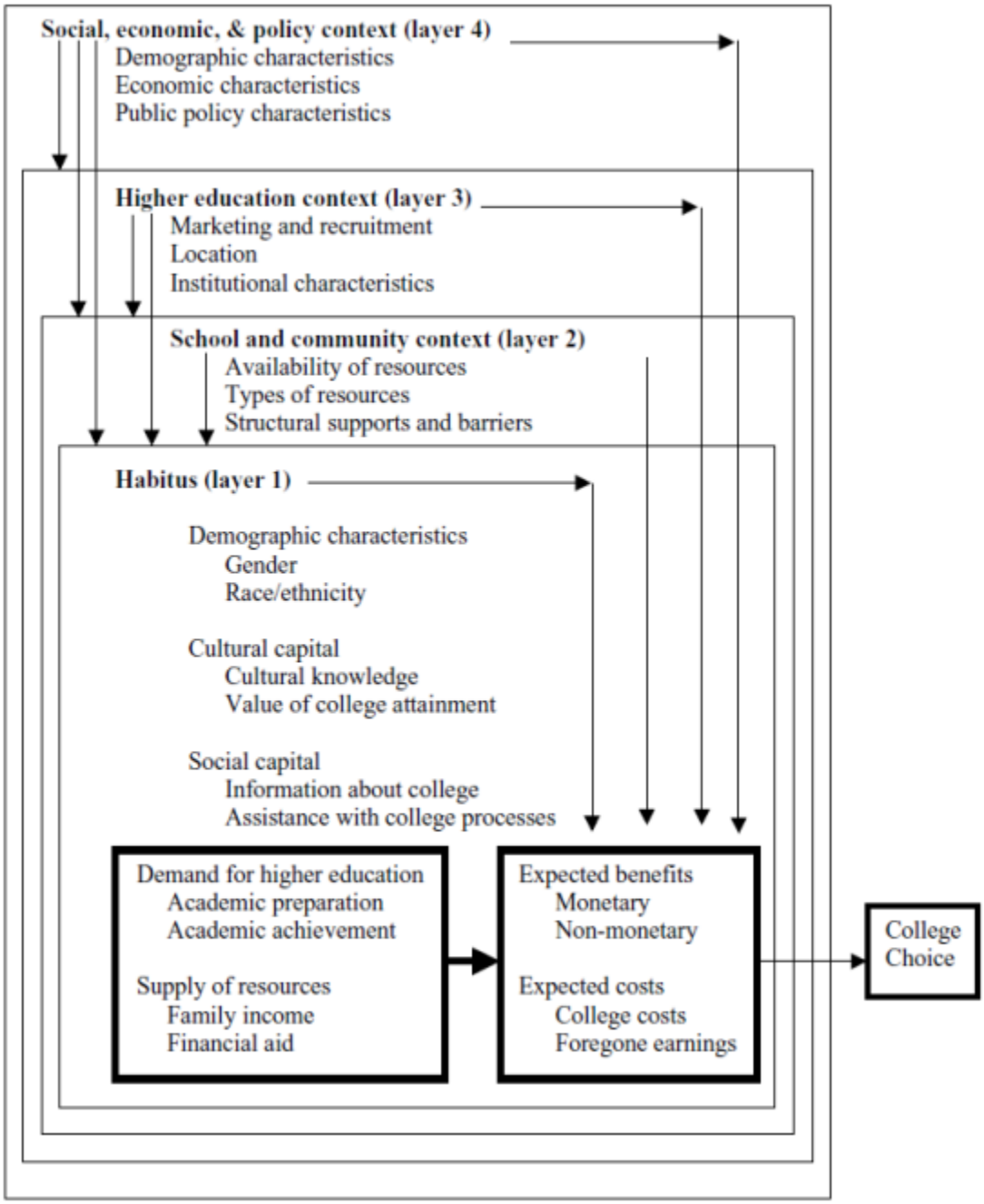


Figure 2-5 Perna's Model

The last of the four contextual layers in the model is individual's habitus which reveals "an individual's demographic characteristics, particularly gender, race/ethnicity,

and SES, as well as cultural and social capital" (Perna, 2006:117). This layer is viewed as the most important layer in the decision process because it looks at the individual student and the characteristics that are specific to that one student. The multiple layers included in this model are based on the assumption that influence on college decision making comes from multiple influential parts. The layers in this model hypothesize that "college choice is ultimately based on a comparison of the benefits and costs of enrolling, assessments of the benefits and costs are shaped not only by the demand for higher education and supply of resources to pay the costs, but also by an individual's habitus and, directly and indirectly, by the family, school, and community context, higher education context, and social, economic, and policy context" (Perna, 2006:119). The choice models reviewed in this study reveals an overlap and suggests that college choice may be conceived of as a sequential process. The choice process is influenced by both sociological and econometric factors. Although each model gives different names to the sequential stages, the concepts underlying the stages are the same and can be mentioned as predisposition stage, search stage and choice. The first stage is to decide whether they would like to pursue their formal education beyond school. The second stage is the search stage, in which students seek information and develop knowledge about different post-secondary institutions. Students gather information from different sources and then make a list of possible colleges they will consider for application. The third stage is the choice which ends with enrollment in college. At this stage of choice making, students choose a college or colleges from the list of colleges, apply to those colleges and then, from the list of colleges that have approved them for acceptance, decide on the institution in which they would like to enroll.

2.3 Factors influencing students' college choice

Regarding factors that affect students' choice of universities, a number of research has been conducted based on economic, social and collective perspectives (Kitsawad, 2013; Kim & Gasman, 2011). In terms of economic perspective, some studies showed that when choosing to enroll in a university, students often consider each university as "a product" and compare benefits gained from them (Hossler, Braxton & Coopersmith, 1985; Paulsen, 2001; DesJardins & Toutkoushian, 2005). Meanwhile, studies based on social perspective focused on individuals' needs and interest which are influenced by personal and social characteristics (Kitsawad, 2013; Perna, 2006). These characteristics can be social economic background, parents' encouragement, or previous academic results (Sewell & Shah, 1978). As to collective perspective, both social and economic aspects are considered, but the decision-making procedure are divided and analyzed in different steps (Perna, 2006). Besides study models based on the three mentioned perspectives, more recent researches refined the models of university choice by focusing on target groups (Kim & Gasman, 2011), separate steps of decision process (Pitre, 2006); or in some other researches, more comprehensive model were used to explore the interrelationship between selected factors (Cabrera & La Nasa, 2000; Vrontis, Thrassou & Melanthiou, 2007).

Despite various perspectives of studies, there are common groups of factors which are often considered in most research: Personal characteristics, characteristics of the university, influence from other people and communicative effort from the university. These four groups are in agreement with the theoretical framework for impacting factors of students' choice of university proposed by Chapman (1981).

The factors which impact choice of university involve significant decisions which set the foundation for success in life and career. The choice process has changed significantly during the past half-century as a result of changes in student demographics as well as the development of institutional admissions and marketing practices (Kinzie, et al., 2004). Choice factors stand for those criteria the deciding student uses to rate the available options (Kim and Gasman, 2011; Kotler and Fox, 2002). In this review, the following choice factors, namely, demographic factors, institutional factors and other factors are discussed the next sections.

2.3.1 Demographic factors

Results from previous studies revealed the role of personal characteristics such as personal interests, perception of ability or socioeconomic background of the family in students' choice of university. In a recent research, Mehboob, Shah and Bhutto (2012) showed that interest and career objective is the most important factor which affects students' choice of university. Besides, perception of personal ability being suitable with chosen major and the school requirements are proved to be crucial in students' decision (Cabrera & Nasa, 2000). In fact, the assessment of personal interest and ability before choosing a university to enroll not only influences students' retention rate but also tends to make more capable students to choose more competitive and private universities with longer training period (Paulsen, 1990).

The demographic information can have a strong influence on a student's college decision making process. While demographic information is an important factor, it cannot be influenced by a higher education institution (Kim, 2004). Understanding the

importance of the demographic factors is imperative for the institution to find ways to counteract what could be deemed an unappealing issue for a specific demographic group (Horvat, 1996; Perun, 1982). The literature review on the major components of demographic factors and their influence on college choice is presented as follows.

2.3.1.1 Student and family characteristics

The history of the literature demonstrates that students and family characteristics such as race, gender and social status have the strongest relationship with educational attainment (Kinzie, et al., 2004). According to McDonough (1997:5), "African-Americans, women, and low-SES students are especially likely to attend less selective institutions even if their ability and achievements are high". Not surprisingly, Brewer, Eide and Ehrenberg (1999) found that students from high socioeconomic backgrounds and students who are academically talented are more likely to attend elite institutions. Students are more sensitive than their peers towards the costs of higher education, are more responsive to grants and scholarships (Johnson, Stewart and Eberly, 1999; Hoyt and Brown, 2003), and "African Americans are more sensitive than other students to changes in tuition and financial aid, even after controlling for socioeconomic status and academic ability" (Kim, 2004:45). Lopez (2009) found that students with different demographic background showed different perceptions and considerations on the characteristics and the environmental setting of the institution. Kealy and Rockel (1987:685) suggested three "universal perceptions of quality: academic, social life atmosphere, and location" influence students' choice. The degree of importance of these factors often depend on sociological features including parental education level, socioeconomic status, type of high school attended, and career aspirations (Niu and Tienda, 2008).

2.3.1.2 Socioeconomic status

Johanson (1999:23) describes how socioeconomic status affects college choice. Higher education enrollments are generally biased towards the upper class. Specifically, selectivity in public HEIs (higher education institutions) discriminates against poorer students. Because of low tuition most SUCs (state colleges and universities) have to ration admissions. The UP [University of the Philippines] rejects more than 95 percent of the applicants . . . and the USEP in Davao rejects 90 percent. The selection processes are based on entrance examinations developed by each institution. Equity criteria are typically not part of the admissions process. Quite naturally, students who have gone to the best secondary schools or who have additional years of preparation at the secondary level are favored in the entrance examinations. Students from high income families are those who most often attend the best secondary schools. Consequently, students from public high schools are at a disadvantage in gaining entry into public higher education. Although the justification for public subsidies to the SUCs is ostensibly that they cater to poorer families, in fact, this is often not the case. It is widely accepted those students at the UP – the best public institution in the country –come disproportionately from the upper classes… UP does offer "socialized tuition," in which students pay according to ability. But this does not compensate [for] the fact that poor students are not likely to be able to enter in the first place. Ironically, students of rich families attend public institutions at subsidized tuition while the poorest students have to pay much higher rates of tuition in private institutions. A number of research studies demonstrated the disparity between low- and middle-income students and high income students, with high income students being more likely to attend institutions which are more costly and more selective

(Brewer, et al., 1999; Hearn, 1987; Manski and Wise, 1983; Paulsen, 1990). Hossler and Stage (1992) suggested that socio economic status has an indirect impact on a student's predisposition to attend college, as there is a positive relationship between socio-economic status, students' academic success, and students' perceptions of the educational expectations that others have for them. High income students in the lowest standardized test quartile enroll in college more frequently than low-income students in the highest test quartile (Carnevale and Strohl, 2010).

2.3.1.3 Educational level of parents

The educational level of parents also influences the choice of higher education institution. Being raised by parents who lack awareness of the college experience may put students at a disadvantage when it comes to making decisions about where to go to college and how to be successful once enrolled. Further, students have been found to receive encouragement and support from their families when it comes to college choice and attendance (Arredondo, 1999). The students appear to have a higher likelihood of viewing college as realistic when their parents stress the importance of educational success (Ceja, 2004). Students with at least one college educated parent enroll in post-secondary education at nearly twice the rate of students whose parents do not possess a college degree (Aud et al., 2011).

2.3.2 Institutional Factors

The institutional factors can have either a positive or negative influence on a prospective student's decision to attend an institution. The relationship between students' preferences and institutional characteristics is a significant determinant of where students ultimately decide to attend a college (Weiler, 1994; Hossler 1998). Strayhorn, Blakewood

and Devita (2008) suggest that three sets of factors influence university choice decisions: academic, financial, and individual traits or experiences. The university attributes, among others, include lecturers‟ quality, availability of desired programs, international recognition, quality of college facilities (library services, computing facilities and recreational facilities), class size and subject difficulty and availability of financial support (Ismail, 2008, Canale, et al., 1996).

Characteristics of the universities, together with students' personal and social background, were considered to be crucial to students' decision to apply. According to Kim and Gasman (2011),Pampaloni (2010) with the exception of the study of Hoyt and Brown (2003), the perceived reputation and prestige of a university has significant impact on students' decision to apply, interestingly; this impact can be indirectly brought to students by their peers (Smith & Matthews, 1990).

Baharun (2004) identified five factors which included the value and reputation of education, program structure, conducive facilities and resources, choice influencers, and customer orientation. Although the study was conducted on Malaysia public universities, similar to students studying in Malaysian private universities, one of the key factors is the desire to have quality education. Sidin et al. (2003) identified factors affecting students' choice of a college include (1) personal, (2) academic quality and facilities, (3) campus, (4) socialization, and (5) financial aids. These findings are supported by Angulo, Pergalova and Rialp (2010:2) who identified factors which included institutional attributes such as "academic excellence, career opportunities, and quality of education, cost, tuition fees, and reputation". Dolinsky (2010) surveyed institution and found students placed the highest importance on factors regarding program of study, tuition

cost, financial aid, and job placement when selecting a college. Nurlida, Faridah, Nooraini and Norzaidi (2010) concede that the more the attributes meet the expectations of students based on information gathered, the higher the enrollment at the university. Students evaluate programs based on: selection of courses, availability of courses and entry requirements; quality and variety of education (Shanka, Quintal and Taylor, 2005); and quality and flexibility of degree/course combinations (Holdsworth and Nind, 2006). The most comprehensive and recent research study on the factors influencing students' choice to study at higher education institution comes from Noel-Levitz (2012:3) whereby over 36,000 students from public and private institutions participated in the study. The factors of influence measured included "cost, financial aid, academic reputation, size of the institution, recommendations from family and friends, geographic setting, campus appearance, and personalized attention prior to enrollment". This study revealed that "academic reputation is a strong factor, ranking as one of the top three enrollment factors across all institution types, with at least seventy percent of students indicating it is important or very important [in their enrollment decision]" (Noel-Levitz, 2012:4). Of students attending public institutions, cost was the number one factor, while academic reputation was the top factor for students attending private institutions. Academic reputation was the third most important factor for those attending public institutions, and cost was third for those attending private institutions. In addition, students attending public institutions were more concerned with geographical location, while campus appearance was more important to those attending private institutions.

2.3.2.1 Location/proximity to home

A concomitant factor with is distance from home to the selected institution. Choy and Ottinger (1998) found that location of an institution was provided as one of the top reasons for choosing an institution, with proximity to home as the main reason for the choice. Students are more likely to attend college outside of their local market area if they are male, belong to a higher socio-economic status, their parents have higher education levels, and when they have high academic abilities and educational aspirations (Hoyt and Brown, 2003; Paulsen, 1990). Disadvantaged students often viewed institutions closer to their home as the only viable options for higher education including staying at home instead of paying the expense for room and board. Conversely, Hoxby (1997) found that the increase in transportation opportunities has increased the chance for students to feel more comfortable attending an institution that is not in close proximity to their home. Non-academic factors of the institution such as social experience and location, appeared to be factors considered by students when making their decision to attend a particular college (Capraro et al., 2004). According to a study conducted by Chute (2006), 56% of students attend a higher education institution within one hundred miles of their hometown. Drewes (2006) indicates that students prefer universities closer to home as the additional costs of living away make further afield institutions less attractive.

Turley (2009) found proximity to the home a strong influence on students applying to more institutions closer to their home and ultimately attending closer institutions. Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) assert that students from the lower socio-economic backgrounds have a lower attendance rate of high-quality research institutions largely because these universities are usually farther from home which increases costs.

Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) claim that commuting or re-location costs are important choice factors with lower income students and may deter some students from attending university at all. Although the same study indicates that locale usually does not have a negative impact on participation, but rather where the students will attend, with the nearer institutions receiving the higher rate of attendance. Hourigan (2011) uncovered that the role of location in the college choice process is essential and concluded that location of an institution was an important attribute in student's decision-making process.

2.3.2.2 Cost and availability of financial aid

The financial realities of a college education are likely to influence a student's choice of where to attend college; and the subject has drawn a great deal of attention from researchers (Braunstein, McGrath and Pescatrice, 1999; DesJardins, Ahlburg and McCall, 2006; Morelon-Quainoo et al. 2009; Ehrenberg and Sherman, 1984; Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Hossler, et al., 1999; Kim, 2004; McPherson and Schapiro, 1991; Parker and Summers, 1993). Foskett, Maringe and Roberts (2006) found that flexibility of fee payment, availability of financial aid, and reasonable accommodation costs exert a significant influence on students' choice of a higher education institution. Much of the existing research supports the notion that, regarding students' interests in developing human capital, students consider the trade-offs between current costs and future expectations of financial and non-financial benefits of the education (Hill, 2008).

Steiner and Wrohlich (2008) found a small but significant positive effect of student financial aid on the enrollment decision. On the other hand, Soo and Elliot (2008) studied on the influence of financial cost of attending a university and showed a non-significant relationship between fees charged by an institution and the choice to enroll at

the institution. On the contrary, Saichaie (2011) reported that the fees of studying influence the choice of higher education.

Schoenherr (2009) indicated that financial aid was the most crucial factor in predicting whether student would attend a university. Financial concerns due to an economic recession are driving students to pursue postsecondary education in order to become more marketable, and many of these students require financial aid (Lindell, 2009). Some students in more expensive institutions, whose families are concerned about educational expenses, are transferring to less-costly universities or to community colleges in order to decrease the amount of debt they carry (Strauss, 2009). An increase in tuition fees results in a decrease in higher education participation and also, affect the choice of institution (Dwenger, Storck and Wrohlich, 2012; Dearden, Fitzsimons and Wyness, 2011). A study conducted by Yusof (2008) found that financial assistance offered by university was one of the four very important attributes expected from a particular higher education institution of choice. Thus, students who receive financial aid awards are more likely to enter college. Ismail (2009) studied on mediating effect of information on college choice indicated that students are satisfied with college choice based on their information satisfaction with respect to financial factors (external influences) which include financial aids and affordable fees. The findings of Ismail were reviewed by Joseph and Joseph (2000) that cost-related issues seem to have more importance as years go by.

2.3.2.3 Campus infrastructure

Absher and Crawford (1996) stated that educational facilities and infrastructures such as classrooms, laboratories and libraries are important in a student's selection of a

college or university. Therefore, construction on college campuses has become a common sight with many higher education institutions having several buildings on campus at a given time (Melwar and Akel, 2005). Adding new buildings and creating a campus which exudes a welcoming environment can be challenging, but research indicates that it is an important aspect of college choice. It is especially influential to attract visit from prospective students and especially their parents (Boyer, 1987).

The campus tour was indicated as the number one recruiting tool for having a strong influence on prospective students' choice of a college (Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee, 1998). A campus visit provides the institution an opportunity to showcase their campus‟ beauty, residential options, and "technological infrastructure" (Capraro, Patrick, and Wilson, 2004:94). The tour of campus by a current student provides the prospective student and family with information about the social life of the campus, but not as much about the academic opportunities (Boyer, 1987). Visiting a college campus can influence the final decision of students and parents to attend a particular institution because the student and parents gained insight into the campus infrastructure. Henley and Rogers (1997) concluded that the campus visit and admissions representatives visiting high school were important in connecting the student with a specific institution. However, Lopez (2009) found that campus facilities play a small role in students' satisfaction, but Amster (2011) emphasized that campus facilities can affect students' selection of higher education institutions.

2.3.2.4 Reputation and prestige

Institutional image and reputation have a tremendous effect on college choice. It has a significant influence on potential student and college reputation is extremely

persuasive in the college search and selection process. A institution's reputation is comprised of academic and non-academic factors that may or may not be considered important to a particular student. Academic quality and academic reputation are terms often used interchangeably in college choice research. However, the challenge is that academic quality, or academic reputation, is defined differently from person to person. Neither can be defined in specific terms because they encompass a variety of elements associated with the academic program that may or not be of importance to the individual. The most common elements associated with academic quality and reputation include program of study, faculty credentials, academic advising, facilities, career and graduate school placements, and classroom environment (Sevier, 2001). However, the importance placed on these elements cannot be determined in conclusive terms.

Johnson, et al. (1991) indicated that academic reputation and quality of programs were the most important factors affecting the decision to attend an institution. Students value the reputation of a college and it rates as an influential factor by students in the college choice process (Lay and Maguire, 1981; Murphy, 1981; Sevier, 1986; Keling, 2006). Academic quality is repeatedly cited as the most important factor for deciding whether to attend a particular institution and, therefore, should be considered a significant element of an institution's reputation (Bradshaw et al., 2001; Capraro, Patrick, and Wilson, 2004; Roszkowski and Spreat, 2010).

Broekemier and Seshadri's (2000) studied 380 prospective students and their parents and found that academic quality was more important to parents than students. The students ranked academic quality ninth in terms of important elements to consider when selecting a college. Dolinsky (2010) supported this finding with his research, as he

discovered that students failed to rank academic reputation as highly important when selecting a college. However, he identified academic elements, such as programs of study and job placement rates, as significant influences in the college choice decision. One of the top factors for college selection is academic quality and reputation (Bradshaw, Espinoza, and Hausman, 2001; Kinzie et al., 2004; Roszkowski and Spreat, 2010; Abrahamson, 2010; An, 2010; Noel Levitz, 2012). The reputation of a particular institution is valued both by students and parents in the college decision making process (Broekhemier and Seshadri, 2000). Students want some level of assurance that the product (institution) in terms of reputation is of a high quality. For some, this will mean the ability to get a good job or obtain admission into a quality school (McClung and Werner, 2008; Nurnberg et al., 2012), while others will compare the quality of an institution based on selectivity for admission, national rankings, and name recognition. Keling (2007) stated that the most influential factor that students will evaluate in selecting their choice of institution was reputation of the institution. Hazelkorn (2009:81) stated that "Institutional reputation is a key driver of student choice". Goenner and Snaith (2004) found that academic reputation was the most important factor in decision making for students to enroll for higher studies. Steele (2010), Weiler (1996), Hazelkorn (2009), and Nurnberg et al. (2012) found that students incorporate academic and non-academic elements into the institution's reputation. The college choice for high-achieving students is that academic reputation is consistently the primary factor in the college choice decision (Geiger, 2002). Ismail (2009) indicated that students are satisfied with college choice based on their information satisfaction with respect to academic recognition (external influence). Schoenherr (2009) found that costs and academic reputation were

significant predictors of student's choice for higher education institution. Ming (2010) concedes that the reputation of an institution is a powerful influence on potential students' choice. The quality of teaching staff was identified as a key factor influencing students' choice to study with private higher education institutions and lines up with an earlier quantitative study reporting the positive influence of teaching in private higher education (Shah and Brown, 2009). Brewer and Zhao (2010) found that quality of teaching in an institution is the key element to enhance the reputation of university as well as brand. Fehlen (2011) reported that good reputation was an important influencing factor for their choice of university as there are potential benefits in attending a well reputed university. Other factors of considerable value to the prospective student are the likelihood of job placement and graduate school admission. It is assumed that these two factors are influenced by the characteristics of academic quality and reputation of the institution. As such, these factors were referenced in several studies as having influence on the college selection process (Abrahamson, 2010; Bradshaw et al., 2001; Nurnberg et al., 2012). For some students, the value they placed on these two factors was driven by their career aspirations (Abrahamson, 2010; Flint, 1992). For those who intended to pursue an advanced degree, greater influence was placed on the academic reputation and selectivity of the undergraduate institution (An, 2010).

Focusing specifically on reputation of an institution, Drewes et al. (2006) indicate that applicants with lower grades make significantly different choices than those with exemplary grades as the students in the former group would not apply to prestigious universities where there is little chance of admission. Ciriaci and Muscio (2011) agree with this last factor as they argue that "good" universities may act as a magnet for good

brains. Kusumwati et al. (2010) suggests that the reputation of the institution was the most significant factor in a student's decision for further study.

2.3.2.5 Promotional materials

One of the main goals of promotional materials is to portray student life at the institution (Hite and Yearwood, 2001). Promotional materials include: brochures, view books, catalogs, letters from current students and administrators, and the campus website (Cantebury, 1989; Pampaloni, 2010). Typically, larger institutions communicate to students about more educational and social opportunities available on campus while smaller schools will portray a family environment on campus (Hite and Yearwood, 2001). Researchers have found that students have been critical of college publications with regard to their helpfulness and veracity (Boyer, 1987). Rosen and Greenlee (1995) concluded that unsolicited information was seen to clutter the already large amount of materials received from colleges and often created a negative impact on students. One study found that mailed brochures have been found to reaffirm a choice of institution and not have a direct effect on the choice itself (Hossler et al., 1999). While enrollment managers do utilize their institutional marketing departments, an outside vendor is often contracted to develop a brand and create the promotional materials (Maringe, 2006). Since the Internet boomed, higher education institutions have spent more of their budgets creating and refining their websites and social media forms of communication with prospective students (Adams and Eveland, 2007). Electronic and print mailings are seen as a mass marketing tool which often cannot be quantified in terms of success rate, while websites often track those who enter the site and can provide instant feedback for the institution on the number of views they are receiving. While internet and mailings from

an institution do have an influence in the college choice process, the visit to a college campus provides a deeper understanding of a campus' culture (Hegeman, Davies, and Banning, 2007). Data-driven decision making based on research on promotional materials is vital to an institution sending a positive message to influence students to attend the institution (Maringe, 2006).

2.3.2.6 Communicative effort from the university

Recently mentioned, university's effort to communicate with prospective students is proved to have significant influence on students' choice of university. As reported, students assessed information about the university form different channels. The Internet, especially the university websites were emphasized (Pampaloni, 2010; Kim & Gasman, 2011; Willich et al., 2011). Besides, publications such as printed brochures, mails were still an important source of information (Briggs, 2006). Information gained from visiting campus or receiving direct consultancy from the university counselor is also reported to be significant in students' choice of university Grosz (1987). Recently, however, studies about university's effort of communication have revealed different results about the role of printed documents in comparison with information from advisors (university staff or alumni) (Corley, 1991; Connor, Burton, Pearson, Poolard & Regan, 1999) This factor is, therefore, worth studying more thoroughly.

2.3.2.7 Availability of academic programs

Ford et al. (1999) found that program issues such as range of programs of study, flexibility of degree program, major change flexibility and range of degree options are the most important factors for students to choose higher education institutions. Yusof et al. (2008) in his study in Malaysia found that availability of the required program as the very

important attribute for first year university students to choose a particular higher education institution. Ismail (2009) indicated that students are found to be satisfied with college choice based on their information satisfaction with respect to availability of programs of their choice and their academic recognition. Hoyt and Brown (2003) reviewed twenty-two studies related to college choice in order to identify institutional factors that were most frequently cited as important to students. Among the institutional factors affecting college choice, nine factors were identified that took first place as far as level of importance to students. Those nine factors were (1) academic reputation, (2) location, (3) quality of instruction, (4) availability of programs, (5) quality of faculty, (6) costs, (7) reputable program, (8) financial aid, and (9) job outcomes. Other variables which were included in the studies include (10) variety of courses offered, (11) size of the institution, (12) surrounding community, (13) availability of graduate programs, (14) student employment opportunities, (15) quality of social life, (16) class size, (17) graduate school outcomes, (18) extracurricular programs, (19) friendly/personal service, (20) affiliation, (21) admission requirements, and (22) attractiveness of campus facilities.

2.3.3 Other influencing factors

For students considering a college career, guidance from trusted loved ones and respected role models is needed to think through all the considerations including choice of a college for their higher education. Among those which influence students' choice of college selection include parents, other relatives, family members, friends, teachers, and counselors. (Bradshaw et al., 2001; Cabrera, and La Nasa, 2000; Chapman, 1981; Dixon and Martin, 1991; Hossler and Stage, 1992; Kealy and Rockel, 1987; Kellaris and Kellaris, 1988; Moogan et al., 1999). These are what Hossler (1984) called "significant

others". Among these significant others, parents are frequently identified as the primary influencers of college choice, followed by friends, high school counselors and teachers, and college admission representatives (Armstrong, 1997; Zivic, 1989; Broekemier, 1999; Rosen, 1998). Winkle Wagner (2010) suggests social capital (networks, social obligations, and connections) may help one to locate places. Al Yousef (2009) reported that personal sources – such as friends, family, other relatives, career planning counselors, reference groups and public opinion leaders affect the choice of students. Wagner and Fard (2009) indicated that the other persons such as brother, sisters, friends, relatives, teachers, and the other people influence a student's choice.

2.3.3.1 Family members

Family members include parents and siblings who influence the college choice decision process. Johnston (2010) reported parents to be the most important personal sources of information for choices decision making on university and it was also supported by Sukhawatthanakum et. al. (2010) who indicated that students would also consult their parents about their university selection while they would make their decisions by themselves. Several scholars (Levine and Nidiffer, 1996; Cabrera and LaNasa, 2000; Tierney and Venegas, 2006) have found parental influence to be a significant predictor of student matriculation. Kinzie, et al., 2004 indicated that low-income and first-generation students are comparatively disadvantaged against their more affluent peers when it comes to the variety of colleges from which they are able to choose from. Cabrera and LaNasa (2000) found parental influence to have a direct and positive relationship with the formation and maintenance of college aspirations. According to a 2007 report by the National Postsecondary Education Cooperative (MacAllum, Glover,

Queen and Riggs, 2007: iii), “Regardless of socio-economic status or ethnic and racial category, parents play the strongest role in the college choice and decision-making processes for traditional-aged students”. Abrahamson (2010:1) suggested students “trust and rely on advice from their parents at every step in the process”. He cited findings from a survey of 1264 high achieving seniors across the nation conducted by Lipman-Hearne, in which “seventy-five percent of students reported their parents being involved in identifying colleges to consider…and students’ conversations with parents ranked number two out of thirty sources considered important in making their final decisions” (Abrahamson, 2010:2). Regardless of the decade, it appears that researchers have consistently found parents to have a significant influence on the search process (Abrahamson, 2010; An, 2010; Anctil, 2008; Broekemier and Seshardri, 2000; Chapman, 1981; Chapman and Jackson, 1987; Flint, 1992; Johnson and Stewart, 1991; Kealy and Rockel, 1987; Kinzie et al., 2004; MacAllum et al., 2007). However, the degree of influence varied based on parental education level and family income. Parents who held a college degree tended to advise their child based on the educational experience they had as a college student. They used their own college experiences as a frame of reference for gauging institutional quality and evaluating the associated costs and perceived benefits of attending a particular college. Siblings are influential in the college search process relative to the economic decision of the family. If the family plans to provide a college education to multiple children, there will be limited resources to devote toward college attendance (An, 2010). An (2010:317) also found “the number of siblings to have little predictive power in determining where students apply”.

2.3.3.2 Friends

Fogg and Harrington (2010) reported that high school students are more likely to attend college if their classmates intend to pursue a college degree. Additionally, high school students considered friends currently enrolled in college as a major influence in the search process (Broekemier and Seshadri, 2000). Hemsley-Brown and Oplatla (2006) found that 27% of the students turned to their friends and neighbors for their higher education choice. This is because formal sources of interpersonal information such as agents, experts, university staff and counselors are not easily accessible by friends, family, neighbors, and relatives. These findings were supported by Maringe (2006). Hayden (2000) reported that friends and former students weigh heavily on the minds of prospective applicants when selecting college for their higher studies. The argument is that the knowledge that the more a prospective student interacts with other students, the more likely they are to consider attending the college. Chapman (1986) discussed how students built a mental picture of what it would be like to attend a particular institution. Without a doubt, conversations with peers about particular elements of various institutions shaped the vision to which R. Chapman referred. D. Chapman (1981:495) also found that peers "shape expectations of what a particular college is like…and if it is a friend – where the friend [chooses to go to college] influences the choice". The sociological models of college choice addressed this element of peer influence and also applied to the expectations placed on students by their peer group because of the students' academic ability or personal characteristics.

2.3.3.3 School counselors and teachers

Despite the strong influence from parents and friends, many students consider high school counselors and teachers to be an important source of information (Bradshaw, et al., 2001; Gonzalez, et al., 2003). Rowe (2002:48) observed that "Research on the influence of school counselors on the college choice process is not extensive and its conclusions are not unanimous on the strength of this influence". Moreover, there is some evidence that points to the "declining influence of the high school counselor in the college choice process of seniors" (Rowe, 2002:50-51). Hossler and Foley (1995:25) noted that some evidence indicates that high school students depend heavily on "internal sources of information (parents and other family members) when they begin their college choice process (freshman and sophomore years), but then they turn increasingly to outside sources of information in their junior and senior years (teachers, and counselors)". The advice of high school counselors is more influential with students whose parents had little formal education and who came from lower socio-economic backgrounds (MacAllum, et al., 2007). Many college admission staff cultivate relationships with counselors as part of their recruitment efforts (Johnson and Stewart, 1991). However, Hutchinson and Bottorff (1986:84), as cited by Johnson and Stewart, 1991) found that, although "three quarters of high school students used their counselor as a source of information, only fifty-nine percent received the information they sought". In Litten's 1991 research, high school counselors and teachers ranked third on the list of influencers after parents and peers, yet Murphy (1981, as cited by Kealy and Rockel, 1987) and Hossler and Stage (1992) reported counselors and teachers had little influence in the process. This influence may vary based on the academic ability of the student.

Bradshaw et al. (2001:18) found that counselors and teachers tended to favor "prestigious, highly selective out of state public or Ivy league institutions" when counseling high achieving students. In addition, Kinzie et al. (2004) reported that counselors at private or affluent public high schools were significantly more influential with high ability students in seeking selective colleges. This suggests counselors play a role in the process, but the extent of their influence may be more significant for students with strong academic abilities and those who attend a particular type of high school. Summarizing the other factors influencing the students' choice of an institution, it can be concluded that when students make the decision concerning which college to attend, they tend to consult parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers, and counselors. These individuals have a certain degree of influence on the students' decision of a college (Stefanie, 2006).

Table 2-1 Summary of factors affecting students' intention to enroll at a HEI

Author, Year	**Independent Variables (factors)**
Gonca T.Y. (2006)	- Personal preference - Family influence - Promotional materials
Perna L.W. (2000)	- Parent involvement - Financial aid - Peer encouragement
Vrontis et al. (2007)	- Marketing communications - Attitude
Radzol et al. (2017)	- Brand equity - Involvement - Advertising
Kusumawati, A. (2013)	- Cost - Reputation - Parents
Pimpa N. (2005)	- Family - Finance

Haron, Hamid, Jamaludin & Azan (2017)	- Cost of Education/Financial Aid - Program Content and Structure - Facilities and Resources - Reputation - Promotion - Social Influences
Rudhumbu, Tirumalai & Kumari (2017)	**Institutional characteristics:** - Location - Academic programmes - College Reputation - Academic staff - Educational facilities **Marketing/Communication strategies:** - Advertising - University representatives vising schools
Đỗ, T.H.L., Nguyễn, T.N.H., Nguyễn, T.L.A. (2015)	- Personal characteristics - Characteristics of the university - Influence from surrounding people - Communicative effort from the university
Baliyan, S.P. (2016)	- Advice seeking - Employment prospects - Campus life - Physical characteristics of campus - Quality of teaching and learning resources - Influence of people - Campus accessibility and facilities - Person based institutional outreach - Electronic based institutional outreach - Characteristics of programs and courses offered - Cost of attending institution - Policies and procedures for admission - Alumni association
Sedahmed, Z.M. and Noureldien, N.A. (2019)	- Student and Society - Educational Institution - Admission - Employment

2.4 Proposed conceptual framework of the study

Many studies on college student decision-making use economic and sociologic theoretical frameworks to examine factors of college choice (Hearn, 1984; Jackson, 1978; Tierney, 1983; Somers, et al. 1999). This study will focus on the combined models because they include the most important indicators from economic and sociological

models thereby allowing a considerable amount of analytical power in the decision-making process (Fernandez, 2010). Most of the existing literature utilizes different versions of combined models in investigating the factors affecting student college choice. Some frameworks and models have examined students' choice of which college to attend (Chapman, 1981; Litten, 1982), others have explained the decision of whether to go to college (Kotler and Fox, 1985), and still others have described the entire college choice process (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987; Perna, 2006). Hossler et al. (1999) suggested that Jackson's model was geared more towards the student and that Chapman's model was catered to institutions. Hanson and Litten's (1982) model was observed to be a hybrid between the Chapman model and the Jachson model. Hanson and Litten's model seems to be the most complex and exhaustive of all the models considered to be landmark college choice models. Each economic model has strengths and weaknesses in understanding the complex process of choosing a college. Considering the strengths and weaknesses of these theoretical perspectives and incorporating knowledge form the literature on what is known, this study proposes a conceptual model that integrates constructs from both economic and sociological perspectives. This study adopted the combined model given by Haron, Hamid, Jamaludin & Azan (2017), Rudhumbu, Tirumalai & Kumari (2017), Đỗ, T.H.L., Nguyễn, T.N.H., Nguyễn, T.L.A. (2015), Baliyan, S.P. (2016), and Sedahmed, Z.M. & Noureldien, N.A. (2019) as the basis of theoretical framework. The combined model served as the theoretical framework for this study because this model contains layers that include many factors of influence similar to the current study. The proposed conceptual framework focuses on the final decision of a student when determining which college to attend when faced with multiple options. One

of the strengths of the proposed conceptual model is the explicit recognition of the influence on decisions of various levels of context, including aspects of schools and communities, higher education institutions, and the social, economic, and policy context. A key strength of an integrated conceptual model is the assumption that the pattern of educational attainment is not universal, but may vary across racial/ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups (Paulsen and St. John, 2002; St. John and Asker, 2001). A conceptual model that draws on both economic and sociological perspectives assumes that students' educational decisions are determined by their habitués, or the system of values and beliefs that shapes an individual's views and interpretations. Figure 2.6 presents the proposed conceptual framework of students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions. The framework shows how each of the clusters of influential factors will combine to create the choice.

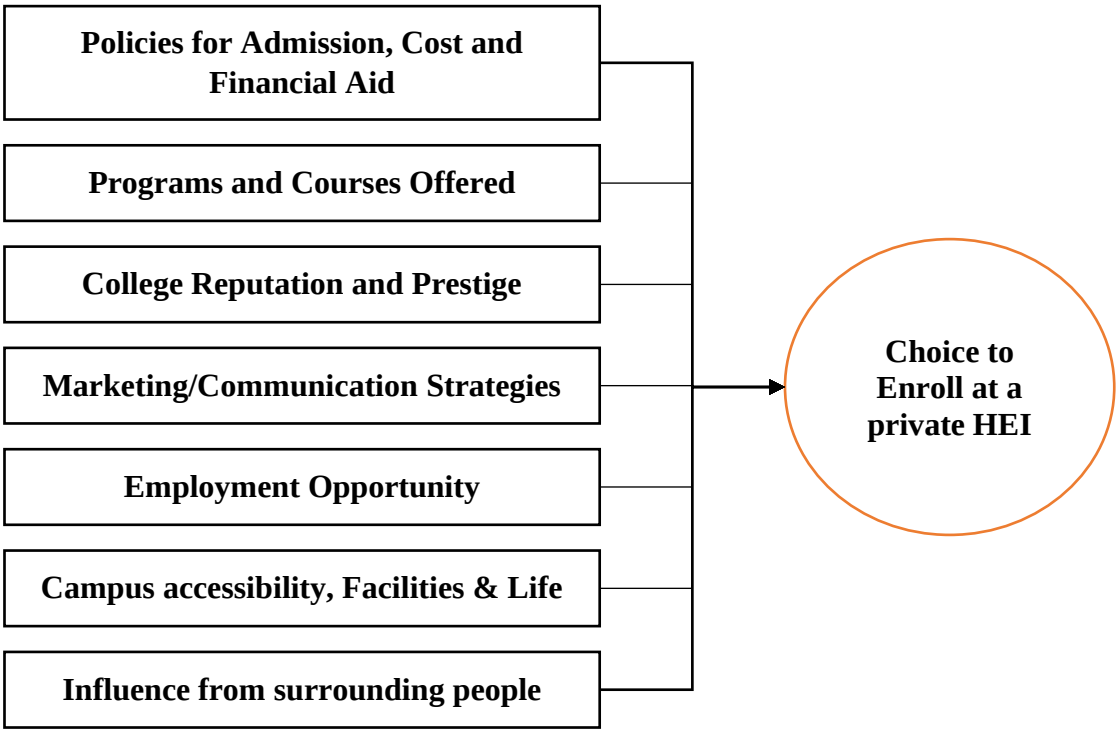


Figure 2-6 Conceptual framework of students' choice to enroll at Private Higher Education Institutions

This study will investigate the factors influencing the student's decision to enroll at a private higher education institution in Ho Chi Minh city, Vietnam. The prospective students are influenced by many factors which are covered in this choice model. This study views the familiar variables of college decision making, but it also views other variables and looks specifically at small and big private higher education institutions. The conclusions drawn from this study in college choice could provide valuable information to both professionals at the college admissions level and those at the secondary school college counseling level.

2.5 Summary of the chapter

This chapter provided literature of previous research on choice process, college choice models and factors influencing college choice of higher education institutions. The

underlying rationale of college choice theory and major college choice models are presented. A review of studies of university choice factors has shown that students do not make life changing decision such as selection of higher education institution in isolation and their decisions are affected by a number of factors. The literature indicates that there are common elements across nations including parental preference, influence of peers, location, cost, and characteristics of the institutions are significant, with the top factors being cost of education, facilities, and location in descending order (Baharun, et al., 2011). In the process of literature review, there has been a large body of research to explore how and why potential college students choose and attend a particular institution.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a basis for research about college choice and factors influencing college choice in private colleges. The research presented identified the impact of demographics, social, and institutional influences on a high school student's college choice. These factors provide a sound framework for the research and illustrate a gap in the literature. This study exploring the influential factors of high school seniors' decision to enroll at private college and universities fills the research gap. This literature review was compiled to create a basis for the study.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. This chapter provides a brief account of the methodology employed as well as the procedures involved in the study. It included the sections: research design, population and sample, data collection instrument, data collection procedures, and methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research design

According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are two major research methods, including qualitative and quantitative. The difference between these methods refer to the fact that quantitative research method relies on the numeric data collection and the application of logical calculation to get the target results, while qualitative research method takes into consideration of the uses of non-numeric data or on the other hand, it focuses on the collection of opinions and thinking of target respondents toward social phenomenon (Bryman and Bell, 2007; Canurran and Blackburn, 2001).

The study was designed to investigate and describe the factors that influence students' choice to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, thus making the study research design a non-experimental, exploratory, descriptive, and co-relational in its nature. The first and third objective of the study were: to identify the factors influencing students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions and to determine the differences in factors influencing students' choice among the private higher education institutions. These two objectives make the study as exploratory and descriptive as the students' choice factor were identified first and then, differences in the

identified factors among the institutions were determined and described. The second objective of the study was to predict the relationship between the factors influencing students' choice and their intention to enroll at private higher education institution, this objective made the study a relational as a relationship between the dependent variable (intention to enroll in private higher education institution) and the independent variable (factors affecting students' choice) was determined.

Thus, this study employed a non-experimental, quantitative survey research design. Specifically, both the descriptive and correlational research designs were used to obtain a complete and accurate description of a situation with direct cause and effect relationship. Survey research provides efficiency in collecting large amounts of data with minimal cost and in a non-intrusive manner (Baliyan, 2016). A quantitative survey research investigates "trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population", which in turn will be used to explore factors of influence on the population of interest (Creswell, 2016). The first-year students enrolled in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh city were the population of this study and their opinion were captured to identify the factors affecting their choice in selection of higher education institutions.

Descriptive research asks questions about the nature, incidence, or distribution of variables; it involves describing but not manipulating the variables (Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen, 2010). McMillan and Wergin (2010:14) defined descriptive research that analyses survey results in the following manner: "Descriptive non-experimental research uses frequencies, percentages, averages, and other simple statistics to provide a description of the data collected." When descriptive research is used, the "nature of the

sample and instrumentation are the key to understand the results. The descriptive investigations are particularly valuable when something is first researched. However, most non-experimental studies go beyond mere description to examine comparisons and relationships among variables. This study went beyond the identification and description of the choice factors as the identified choice factors were used to predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution. A specific type of correlational design used in this study was prediction correlational research. Prediction research design was used to identify variables that will predict an outcome or criterion (Creswell, 2016). This study examined whether a set of variables (the students' choice factors) could predict the intention of students to enroll at private higher education institutions.

3.2 Population and sample

A research population denotes all those who fall into the category of concern, or objects or events that conform to specific criteria and to which we intend to generalize the results of the research (Oppenheim 1996:38; McMillan and Schumacher 1997:164). The population for this study thus, consisted of first year students admitted into the private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City.

When making choices for their higher studies, students decide for their lives and profession and also make an immense impact on the university planning and direction (James et al, 1999) therefore, it is important for students to have a voice and be provided with the opportunity to express their personal ideas, opinions and values in relation to life choice such as selection of higher education institution for their further study. Many researchers have outlined the importance of seeking opinion and gathering data from respondents at high school age (Dave and Galloway, 1996; Fielding, 2004; Cook-Sather,

2006; Brooking et al, 2009; Smyth, 2012). The importance of the students' opinion and voice cannot be underestimated and, therefore students were used as respondents in this study. First year students were used in this study to capture their thoughts regarding their choice decision of an institution while they still remain fresh in their minds.

A sample is a representative subgroup of the population that is chosen for direct observation (Leedy, 1997:205-206). The research sample consists of individuals that are selected from a larger group of persons, known as the research population (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh and Sorensen, 2009:272). Meadows (2003:398-400) and Borland (2003:8) posit that quantitative descriptive research results are drawn from a sample and generalized to the population of interest. This study used sampling to reduce costs and the labor of doing the research (Keller, Warrack and Bartel, 1994:218; Lucey 2002:82). This study utilized quota-sampling techniques. Quota sampling is the nonprobability equivalent of stratified sampling. Like stratified sampling, the researcher first identifies the stratums and their proportions as they are represented in the population. Then convenience or judgment sampling is used to select the required number of subjects from each stratum. According to Cooper and Schindler (2006), the size of the strata samples was calculated with two pieces of information: (1) how large the total sample should be and (2) how the total sample should be allocated among strata. In deciding how to allocate a total sample among various strata, there are proportionate and disproportionate options. One of the formulas to calculate the sample size for research is Slovin's formula. The formula (sometimes written as Sloven's formula) was formulated by Slovin in 1960:

$$n = \frac{N}{(1 + Ne^2)}$$

Where:

- n: sample size
- N: population size
- e: specified margin of error

With the population of 30,000 students in private HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City and the specified margin error of 0.05, sample size resulted from Slovin's formula was 395. Therefore, in gathering data, the sample size was at least 399 participants and may have limited the research due to sample size (Trochim, 2001). In practice, 560 potential respondents are selected to be sent with an invitation to participate in the study.

The sample was based on the email addresses utilized by the institutions that have been classified as private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. Creswell (2008) stated that online survey instruments with email capabilities are inexpensive and easy to navigate. Participants were determined by indicating to the institution their intent on enrolling as a first-time full-time freshman in the fall 2019 semester. Each institution agreed to participate in the study with the understanding that only the researcher would know the name of the institutions in the study. The first institution that agreed to participate was coded as institution A with the other institutions following in order. Table 3.1 shows the total full-time enrollment of each participant institution with the number and percentage of those who completed the survey.

Table 3-1 Participant School Total Enrollment

Institution	Total University Enrollment	Complete Surveys	Percent of Completed Surveys by Enrollment
A	2,450	128	5.22%
B	3,560	148	4.16%
C	2,200	156	7.01%
D	2,520	128	5.08%
Total	**10,730**	**560**	**5.21%**

3.3 Instrument for data collection

The research instrument (questionnaire) used in this study was an adapted form of a survey created and utilized Baliyan's 2016 dissertation (Baliyan, 2006). Based on the literature review, a new research instrument was developed to incorporate most of the students' choice factors influencing enrollment and thus, making the instrument more valid and reliable. The instrument composed of three parts. The first part of the instrument was designed to obtain Students Demographic Information (SDI). The second part was on the Choice to Enroll in Private Higher Education Institution (CEPHEI) and contained various potential items/variables/factors influencing students' choice to enroll at private higher education institution. The third part was named as Intention to Enroll in Private Higher Education Institution (IEPHEI) and will contain items to measure the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution. The items in the second and third part were measured by Likert's scale. A 5-point Likert-type Scale requires participants to select one of five choices: (UI) unimportant, (SI) slightly important, (I) important, (VI) very important and (EI) extremely important to each item in the second and third part of the instrument. These five points were correlated with the following values namely 1 = unimportant, 2 = slightly important, 3 = important, 4 = very important and 5 = extremely important. The data collection instrument is presented in APPENDIX A.

3.4 Data collection procedures

The researcher and the participant institution gatekeepers discussed the potential benefits and disadvantages of the researcher emailing the instrument to the participants or the instrument being sent from the institutional gatekeeper. Both groups decided it was

more beneficial for the email to be sent from the institutional gatekeeper. The researcher and the institutional gatekeepers decided on this strategy because if the researcher were to send the instrument to the participants, confidential information contained in the files could be available to the researcher. Additionally, the researcher and the institutional gatekeepers decided to have the institutional gatekeeper send the email with the survey instrument to the participants because it was anticipated that the response would be greater if the email were sent from the institutional gatekeeper. Each institution's gatekeeper distributed the email containing the survey instrument to all new first-time full-time high school seniors who planned to enroll at their institution for the first 2019-2020 semester. The emails were sent out by the institutional gatekeeper to the participants during the time period of August to October in 2019. Each institutional gatekeeper reported receiving some emails which were returned because of incorrect information or technological issues with the student's email address. Those email addresses were deemed not acceptable and thus those students did not participate in the study.

The survey was emailed to each research site using the Google Form Survey (https://docs.google.com/forms). Throughout the survey collection process, the researcher maintained contact with the institutional gatekeeper via email and telephone correspondence. Each institutional gatekeeper sent the survey to all incoming full-time first-time freshmen who at the time of the email had indicated that they planned on attending the institution in the first semester of 2019-2020 academic year. A follow up email was sent from each institutional gatekeeper to students who were classified as full-time first-time freshmen at their institution including students who received the initial email.

After conducting the survey, the questionnaires collected were cleaned and encoded into the database. The questionnaires with incomplete or erroneous answers were removed to ensure that the data have enough reliability when put into analysis. The survey results were extracted from the online database into a single Microsoft Excel file, together with the inputted results from direct survey then transformed to an IBM Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) data file for subsequent analysis.

3.5 Data analysis

This study used both the descriptive and the co-relational research designs to answer the research questions of the study. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Ver. 25. The statistical analysis included descriptive statistics and multivariate analysis such as analysis of variance, multiple regression and factorial analysis (Kachigan, 1991; Bernhardt, 2004; Field, 2009). The study answered the three questions:

i) What are the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions?

ii) ii) To what extent do these factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions?

iii) iii) Are there significant differences in the factors influencing choice among the private higher education institutions?

The research questions were answered by testing the research hypothesis in null form.

Factor analysis was used to identify the factors underlying the students' choice to enroll at higher education institution. Factor analysis is "a data analytic technique for examining patterns of interrelationship, data reduction, classification and description of data, data transformation, hypothesis testing and mapping construct space" (Rummel, 1970). The factor analysis is used to reveal the latent attitudes behind students' opinions (Kim, 1975:469). Norusis (1988) indicated that factor analysis is used to identify a relatively small number of factors that can be used to represent relationships among sets of many interrelated variables. According to Hair et al., (1995) and Fabrudgar, Wegner, MacCallum, and Strahan (1999) factor analysis is a statistical approach that can be used to analyze interrelationships among large number of variables and, to explain these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions. Factor analysis is most often used to combine several items or variables to form a smaller number of composite variables or factors (Gliner, and Morgan, 2000). Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black (1998:3) suggested that:

> Factor analysis, including both principal component analysis and common factor analysis, is a statistical approach that can be used to analyze interrelationships among a large number of variables and to explain these variables in terms of their common underlying dimensions (factors). The objective is to find a way of condensing the information contained in a number of original variables into a smaller set of variants (factors) with a minimum loss of information. By providing an empirical estimate of the "structure" of the variables considered, factor analysis becomes an objective basis for creating summated scales.

The objective of factor analysis is, with a minimum loss of information, to condense the information contained in number of original variables into a smaller set of factors. This analysis will be appropriate for this study because the student's choice

factors will be numerous, and the researcher is interested in identifying if the individual items could be explained by a smaller number of underlying factors. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was employed as the specific analysis for this study as it is widely used and, provides specific factors (Costello and Osborne, 2005). A screen plot was also used for identification of the factors underlying the students' choice to enroll at higher education institution. Each of the identified factors was given a suitable name considering the components of the extracted factor.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's (KMO) overall measure of sampling adequacy (MSA) was employed and the score was recorded which is in the acceptable range based on a KMO overall MSA greater than .60 being considered acceptable (Tabachnic and Fidel, 2013). The reliability of each of the factor identified was calculated. Cronbach's alpha of .70 and above indicated that the variables in the factor are internally consistent or measuring the same thing (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

Two inferential analyses; Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression; were carried out to investigate the relationship between the extracted factors affecting choice (independent variables) and the intention to enroll (dependent variable) at private higher education institution. Pearson correlation was used to explore the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Davis (1971) measures of association are used to describe the correlation. Correlation coefficient (r) provides a direction and the strength of the linear relationship between two variables i.e. independent variable and the dependent variable (Pallant, 2007). Multiple linear regression analysis was performed to determine the predicting variables and their contribution to the dependent variable. In this study, the extracted factors were treated as

the independent variables and decision to enroll at private higher education institution were considered as the dependent variable.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was employed to determine if a significant difference exists between the institutions over the choice factors extracted by the factorial analysis. In order to compare each institution, Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) was used as the method of analysis to determine individual differences among the higher education institutions for all the extracted factors. LSD is selected as the method of analysis as it is the most powerful post-hoc-test (Carmer and Swanson, 1973). However, a descriptive analysis was conducted for providing background information of the sampled respondents used in the study. A basic descriptive analysis of the data was conducted calculating frequencies and percentages of the items included on background information.

3.6 Ethical considerations

Researchers should be aware of ethical responsibilities and legal constraints that accompany the gathering and reporting of information in such a way to protect the rights and welfare of the participants involved in the research (McMillan and Schumacher, 2006:136). Gay, Mills and Airasian (2006) have listed a number of ethical considerations that researchers need to meet when conducting a research. These ethical considerations include approval for conducting research, confidentiality, invasion of privacy, informed consent, and protection of harm to participants. The ethical issues inherent in this research are discussed next, together with the ways to address these issues.

3.6.1 Approval for conducting the research

For research conducted in an institution like a school system, approval for conducting the research should be obtained from the institution (McMillan and Schumacher 1997:195). For this study, the researcher wrote to the management of the sampled private higher education institutions requesting for permission to conduct the research in their institution (APPENDIX B). Data collection only commenced after the approval to do the research had been obtained.

3.6.2 Informed consent

Tuckman (1994:13-14) argues that subjects have the choice to participate, or not to participate in any research. Thus, if subjects are to participate in a study, the researcher must obtain their written informed consent (Robson 1995:471–473). Even though permission to carry out the study had already been granted by the management of the sampled institutions, it was imperative to reach out to the respondents and obtain their consent. “Getting management permission is one thing, but you need to have the support of the people who will be asked to give interviews or complete questionnaires” Bell (1999:58). A proper execution of the letter of informed consent form was completed whereby the respondents were promised that the information gathered will be kept confidential (APPENDIX C). The consent form was used to explain and clarify several items and questions that the students might have questions before they were willing to participate. The consent form provided the name of the researcher, the topics, and a brief summary of the study. The data collection procedures along with the risks and the benefits of the study were also explained on the form. The sampled students were given the informed consent form with the survey instrument during the data collection.

3.7 Summary of the chapter

This chapter describes the specific research methodology and procedures that was used in conducting this study. The chapter focused on a number of methodological aspects including the research design, research questions, study population, survey instrument, data collection and data analysis. The data were collected through survey using a validated and reliable questionnaire. The procedure of hypothesis testing was discussed in the chapter. The ethical issues considered in this study were also mentioned. The findings of the study are presented in chapter four.

CHAPTER 4. ANALYSIS OF DATA AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City for higher education enrollment managers to have a better understanding of why students are attending their institutions. The chapter on analysis of data and interpretation of results are presented in four sections. The first section of this chapter reports the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the study. The second, third and fourth section presented findings on the three research questions of the study, respectively. Thus, the purpose of this chapter is to achieve the objectives of the study by answering the following three questions of the study:

i) What are the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions?

ii) To what extent do these factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions?

iii) Are there significant differences in the factors influencing student's choice among the private higher education institutions?

The population for this study was the first-year students attending private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. First year students were used in this study in an effort to capture their thoughts regarding college selection while they still remain fresh in their minds. A total of 560 first year students (n=560) were randomly sampled from the four randomly selected private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City.

Data analysis involved descriptive statistics, factor analysis, regression analysis and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Prior to any statistical analysis, data was checked for the missing values. Missing values are a common problem in survey research which affects the findings of the study. According to He (2008), the seriousness depends on the pattern of missing information, how much is missing, and why it is missing (Graham, Cumsille, and Elek-Fisk, 2003:43). If less than 5% of data is missing in a random pattern from a large data set, the problems are less serious, and almost any procedure for handling missing values yields similar results. Out of 560 students from four private higher education institutions that participated in the survey, 539 surveys were entirely complete, while 21 surveys had 1-3 values missing at random. Thus, the missing values problem in this study was not serious. The missing values for dependent and independent variables were substituted with its mean. Mean substitution is a valid approach for dealing with missing values (Thompson, 2006:50). Graham, Cumsille, and Elek-Fisk (2003:90) explain, "With this procedure, whenever a value is missing for one case on a particular variable, the mean for that variable, based on all non-missing cases, is used in place of the missing value".

4.1 Demographic information of respondents

This section contains descriptive statistics for the demographic information of the participants who completed the 61 Likert items survey in the study. The demographic information includes frequency distributions and descriptive statistics of the twelve demographic variables. The demographic information collected from the students in the study included (a) institution, (b) gender, (c) age, (d) nationality, (e) type of high school, (f) percentage of marks in high school, (g) program currently enrolled in, (h) permanent

home in town of study, (i) distance from home to institution, (j) mother's level of education, (k) father's level of education and, (l) family income level. The information on demographics provides the reader with an overview of the type of students that were included in the sample and which were the source of information for the choice factors. Table 4-1 presented the frequency and percentage of the demographic variables.

Table 4-1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Male	183	32.7	32.7	32.7
	Female	377	67.3	67.3	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Age group	<19	3	.5	.5	.5
	19	43	7.7	7.7	8.2
	>19	514	91.8	91.8	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
School Type	State owned	459	82.0	82.0	82.0
	Private	101	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
School Location	Rural	298	53.2	53.2	53.2
	Urban	236	42.1	42.1	95.4
	Semi-Urban	26	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
GPA	Below 6.0	28	5.0	5.0	5.0
	6.0 - 8.0	418	74.6	74.6	79.6
	Above 8.0	114	20.4	20.4	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Same Location with the university	Yes	298	53.2	53.2	53.2
	No	262	46.8	46.8	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Distance from the university	< 50 km	205	36.6	36.6	36.6
	50 - 100 km	193	34.5	34.5	71.1
	101 - 200 km	118	21.1	21.1	92.1
	201 - 500 km	18	3.2	3.2	95.4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	> 500 km	26	4.6	4.6	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Mother's Education	High school or lower	439	78.4	78.4	78.4
	Associate, Diploma	63	11.3	11.3	89.6
	University	46	8.2	8.2	97.9
	Postgraduate	12	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Father's Education	High school or lower	382	68.2	68.2	68.2
	Associate, Diploma	61	10.9	10.9	79.1
	University	94	16.8	16.8	95.9
	Postgraduate	23	4.1	4.1	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	
Family Monthly Income	< 20 million VND	391	69.8	69.8	69.8
	20 - 50 million VND	139	24.8	24.8	94.6
	50 - 100 million VND	18	3.2	3.2	97.9
	> 100 million VND	12	2.1	2.1	100.0
	Total	560	100.0	100.0	

Note: 1 USD was equivalent with 23,461 VND (Vietnam Dong) at the time of this study.

Gender and age. The students' gender frequency indicates that the female students take most part among respondents (67.3%) and male students take only 32.7% under study. There were three groups of respondents' age. Most of the respondents (91.8%) were in the age group of over 19 years followed by 7.7% of 19 years.

Type and location of high school attended. The highest percentage of respondents (82.0%) studied in the government schools prior to enrolling in higher education whereas the remaining (18.0%) studied in private schools. The data presented in Table 4-1 indicated that 53.2% of the respondents studied in the schools located in rural followed by 42.1% urban schools.

Academic achievement of participants in high school. Performance of students in university was reflected by the percentage of marks in high school. The performance scale used in this study ranges from 0-10. Nearly three fourth (74.6%) of the respondents had a percentage of marks in high school between 6.0 and 8.0. Only 5.0% students obtained marks below 6.0 while 20.4% students obtained marks over 8.0.

Status of home in town of study and distance from home to institution. Majority of students (53.2%) have their permanent home in the town of their study. The highest number of students (56.1%) students enrolled in private higher education institutions used to travel a maximum of 50 kilometers to attend the classes.

Mothers' education level. The researcher provided four categories for participants to describe their mother's education level. Of the 560 participants, most of students (78.4%) indicated their mothers' level of education is High school or lower; 11.3% participants indicated their mother's education level as Associate, Diploma level; 8.2% participants indicated their mother's education level as university level while 2.1% of the respondents' mothers had post graduate level. The results indicated that the literacy rate among student's mothers in Vietnam was very high.

Fathers' education level. The researcher provided four categories for participants to describe their father's education level. Of the 560 participants, the highest number of students (68.2%) indicated their fathers' level of education is high school or lower. The students' fathers' education Associate, Diploma level was indicated at 10.9%; 16.8% participants indicated their father's education level as university level while 4.1% of fathers had post graduate degrees. The literacy rate among students' fathers in Vietnam

was very high. Comparing the parental educational level, the fathers were found to be more educated than the mothers.

Family income level. The researcher asked the participants to describe their household monthly incomes from a list of four categories. It is clear that more than two third of the respondents (69.8%) had a family income lower than 20 million VND (850 USD) per month which was above the median family income in 2020 in the country. Most participants, family income was toward the lower end of the scale. 24.8% of the respondents reported a monthly family income from 20 – 50 million VND (850 – 2,050 USD). Only 2.1% of the respondents reported a monthly family income above 100 million VND (4,100 USD). The students' family income levels indicated that most students belong to the mid-income level whereas the lowest of 5.3% students belong to the high socio-economic families.

4.2 Factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions

This section answers the research question one of the study: What are the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions?. The researcher used a proposal research model to process the scale verification through the coefficient of Cronbach's Alpha and the analysis of EFA.

4.2.1 Scales Validity Measurement

The scale validity and reliable is estimated with the internal consistent method through the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Using Cronbach's Alpha analysis before EFA analysis is to eliminate unsuitable variables forming false factors (Nguyễn Đình Thọ & Nguyễn Thị Mai Trang, 2011). The study to implement the measurement of the scales

depends on norms: Eliminating the observed variables with the Corrected Item-Total Correlation less than 0.3; and selecting the measure scale with the reliability of Alpha more than 0.6.

Generally, the coefficients of Cronbach's Alpha of the scales are quite high and vacillate from 0.785 to 0.960. The Corrected Item-Total Correlation of the scales over 0.3 meets the correlative norm (Nguyễn Đình Thọ, 2014). The outcome of the analysis of Cronbach's Alpha of the eight scales is presented in Table 4-2.

Table 4-2 Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients of Scales

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CRP	**Scale: College Reputation and Prestige, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.863**			
CRP1	25.59	14.005	.639	.843
CRP2	25.02	14.660	.620	.846
CRP3	25.08	14.785	.634	.844
CRP4	25.72	14.211	.513	.865
CRP5	25.07	14.026	.728	.831
CRP6	25.03	14.111	.758	.828
CRP7	25.40	14.528	.593	.849
PCO	**Scale: Programs and Courses Offered, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.791**			
PCO1	12.27	4.660	.630	.727
PCO2	12.52	4.343	.594	.743
PCO3	12.25	4.635	.628	.727
PCO4	12.56	4.444	.559	.762
ACF	**Scale: Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.785**			
ACF1	16.32	8.121	.462	.783
ACF2	16.15	7.953	.648	.718
ACF3	15.89	8.408	.579	.741
ACF4	16.01	7.824	.623	.725
ACF5	16.31	8.268	.523	.758
CAFL	**Scale: Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.945**			
CAFL1	47.49	76.316	.754	.940
CAFL2	47.54	76.158	.728	.941
CAFL3	47.90	75.734	.664	.943

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CAFL4	47.52	75.348	.794	.939
CAFL5	47.53	74.822	.806	.939
CAFL6	47.67	74.712	.770	.940
CAFL7	47.64	75.122	.773	.940
CAFL8	47.41	76.321	.790	.939
CAFL9	47.56	76.261	.769	.940
CAFL10	47.73	74.612	.684	.943
CAFL11	47.61	75.063	.763	.940
CAFL12	47.20	78.205	.660	.943
CAFL13	47.08	79.390	.603	.944
EO	**Scale: Employment Opportunity, Cronbach's Alpha = 0.876**			
EO1	20.44	12.858	.696	.854
EO2	20.44	12.761	.700	.853
EO3	20.32	13.051	.653	.860
EO4	20.95	12.252	.633	.865
EO5	20.77	12.033	.721	.848
EO6	20.85	11.926	.703	.852
ISP	**Scale: Influence from Surrounding People, Cronbach's Alpha = .940**			
ISP1	33.65	60.400	.731	.936
ISP2	34.41	57.175	.667	.941
ISP3	33.61	60.521	.728	.936
ISP4	33.76	58.550	.818	.932
ISP5	33.75	58.675	.804	.932
ISP6	33.86	58.134	.802	.932
ISP7	33.86	59.617	.747	.935
ISP8	34.02	57.610	.805	.932
ISP9	34.26	56.380	.766	.934
ISP10	34.07	57.899	.768	.934
MCS	**Scale: Marketing/Communication Strategies, Cronbach's Alpha = .935**			
MCS1	21.52	37.575	.494	.948
MCS2	22.15	31.103	.837	.921
MCS3	22.17	30.580	.878	.917
MCS4	22.16	31.214	.888	.916
MCS5	21.79	33.221	.810	.924
MCS6	21.89	32.377	.815	.923
MCS7	22.05	32.213	.805	.924
CTE	**Scale: Choice to Enroll at HEI, Cronbach's Alpha = .960**			
CTE1	30.97	62.623	.757	.959

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
CTE2	30.93	62.221	.850	.955
CTE3	30.70	62.987	.815	.956
CTE4	30.64	64.607	.785	.958
CTE5	30.73	63.258	.861	.955
CTE6	31.01	62.451	.804	.957
CTE7	31.08	62.262	.814	.957
CTE8	30.95	62.359	.853	.955
CTE9	30.81	62.698	.820	.956
CTE10	30.88	61.532	.885	.954

Through the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) in the next steps, we will concretely see if the scales above are confirmed or divided into new factors or eliminated. This will estimate the scales more accurately. Simultaneously, this will eliminate the measuring variables, which do not meet the requests to reach the identity of the scales.

4.2.2 Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis was conducted to determine what factors influence a high school senior's decision to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. The implementation of the separate analysis (EFA) is for the independent variables and the dependent variable with the "Principal Component Analysis" extraction method and "Varimax with Kaiser Normalization" rotation method. The outcome of the first EFA analysis of the two factors (52 observed variables/items) produces seven components with the KMO coefficient of 0.952 (Table 4-3, 4-4). The Cumulative Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings is 73.258 at the Initial Eigenvalues of 1.009. Therefore, the observed variables are suitable because it shows that the two deductive factors account for 73.258% of the data upheaval. Thus, the inference of the scales is acceptable. The Chi-square statistics of Bartlett's verification reaches the value of the meaning of 0.000.

Hence, on the overall scope, the observing variables are in correlation. For this reason, since the analysis of EFA meets the requests for the first time, the stop comes here. With the outcomes of the analysis, the research model of the factors influencing a high school senior's decision to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City maintains the seven factors together with the same observed variables of the proposed conceptual framework. Compared with the beginning, there are no changes of the factors, it is unnecessary to verify the scales in the conceptual framework and rebuild the research hypothesis.

Table 4-3 The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.952
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	28738.466
	df	1326
	Sig.	.000

Table 4-4 Rotated Component Matrix for Independent variables

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
EO1	.818						
EO2	.804						
EO3	.801						
EO6	.759						
EO4	.739						
EO5	.739						
MCS4		.898					
MCS3		.861					
MCS2		.854					
MCS7		.760					
MCS5		.756					
MCS6		.742					
MCS1		.550					
CAFL12			.754				
CAFL4			.710				

CAFL13	.685				
CAFL5	.653				
CAFL11	.637				
CAFL7	.599				
CAFL1	.584				
CAFL3	.567				
CAFL10	.555				
CAFL8	.553				
CAFL6	.530				
CAFL9	.528				
CAFL2	.472				
ISP1		.826			
ISP3		.812			
ISP9		.800			
ISP4		.787			
ISP2		.777			
ISP10		.769			
ISP6		.687			
ISP8		.680			
ISP5		.679			
ISP7		.515			
ACF3			.727		
ACF4			.718		
ACF1			.647		
ACF2			.519		
ACF5			.512		
PCO1				.681	
PCO3				.602	
PCO2				.590	
PCO4				.542	
CRP6					.742
CRP3					.732
CRP1					.715
CRP5					.701
CRP2					.594
CRP4					.592
CRP7					.536

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.

Concerning the factor analytic result for the dependent variable, according to the proposed conceptual framework, the scale of the Choice to Enroll at private HEIs as the unidimensional concept consists of ten observed items coded from CTE1 to CTE10. The

analytic result of the factor produces the unidimensional scale having the KMO coefficient of 0.934; the significant level of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity sig. close to 0.000; the Cumulative Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings 74.045%; the Initial Eigenvalues of 7.405; and the Factor Loadings of being over 0.5. Concretely, it is as follows:

Table 4-5 Rotated Component Matrix for Dependent variable

Component Matrix[a]

		Component
		1
CTE1	I would prefer to enroll at a private education institution rather than public education institution	.801
CTE2	I am interested in pursuing my study at private higher education institution	.879
CTE3	I will recommend the private higher education institution I chose to my friend	.855
CTE4	I will say favorable things about the private higher education institution I chose	.829
CTE5	I am willing to enroll at a private higher education institution	.891
CTE6	I am willing to pay a higher rate for the private higher education institution I chose	.841
CTE7	My parents want me to study at a private higher education institution	.850
CTE8	I am indented to continue my studies at private higher education institution	.884
CTE9	The likelihood of furthering my study at a private higher education institution is high	.858
CTE10	I like to learn in a private higher education institution	.912

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

a. 1 components extracted.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.934
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	5647.530
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

All the results of the EFA analysis above show us that the scales revealing the factors influencing the Choice to Enroll at private HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam attain the convergent values. In other words, the observed variables represent the

constructs which need to be measured. The conceptual framework remained intact after carrying out the EFA analysis. This framework is suitable for the research tendency on the factors influencing the Choice to Enroll at private HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

4.3 Prediction of students' intention to enroll

This section answers question two of the study: *To what extent do these factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions?*

The correlative analysis and the multiple regression analysis were performed to determine the predictor (s) of students' intention to enroll at a private higher education institution. In other words, it was to determine the predictor (s) of a single dependent continuous variable from a group of dependent variables. In this study, the seven extracted underlying choice factors were considered as a group of independent variables whereas the scores of intentions to enroll in a private higher education institution were used as a single continuous dependent variable.

4.3.1 Correlation analysis

There is the correlative verification of the variables in the model: between the dependent variables and the independent ones and between the independent ones and each other. Using the Pearson correlation coefficient is to quantify the close levels of the linear relationships between the two quantitative variables. If the absolute value of the Pearson coefficient is much closer to 1, the linear correlation of the two variables is much closer (Hoàng Trọng và Chu Nguyễn Mộng Ngọc, 2008). Table 4-6 summarizes the correlation of the Pearson statistics on the explication of the variables.

Table 4-6 Correlation between Variables

Correlations

		CRP	PCO	ACF	CAFL	EO	ISP	MCS	CTE
CRP	Pearson Correlation	1	.875**	.838**	.869**	.797**	.599**	.560**	.324**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
PCO	Pearson Correlation	.875**	1	.824**	.814**	.734**	.587**	.579**	.370**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
ACF	Pearson Correlation	.838**	.824**	1	.810**	.742**	.604**	.559**	.347**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
CAFL	Pearson Correlation	.869**	.814**	.810**	1	.790**	.668**	.695**	.407**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
EO	Pearson Correlation	.797**	.734**	.742**	.790**	1	.508**	.494**	.215**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
ISP	Pearson Correlation	.599**	.587**	.604**	.668**	.508**	1	.781**	.456**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
MCS	Pearson Correlation	.560**	.579**	.559**	.695**	.494**	.781**	1	.521**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	560	560	560	560	560	560	560	534
CTE	Pearson Correlation	.324**	.370**	.347**	.407**	.215**	.456**	.521**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	534	534	534	534	534	534	534	534

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Preliminarily, the correlative coefficient between components of dependent variable (*Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*) and the independent ones (*Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid; Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life; College Reputation and Prestige; Employment Opportunity; Influence from Surrounding People; Marketing/Communication Strategies;* and *Programs and Courses*

Offered) is higher than the level of the statistical meaning of $p<0.001$. Thus, the independent variables can be put into the model to explain the *Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*.

Moreover, the correlative matrix is used to verify the discriminant validity between the independent variables and each other and between the independent variables and the dependent ones. The result of the correlation coefficients under 0.85 shows the discriminant validity can exist between the two variables (John & Benet-Martinez, 2000). Most of the absolutely correlation coefficients between the two variables vacillate from 0.215 to 0.838 and do not exceed the conditional coefficient of 0.85. This indicates the attainment of the discriminant validity. In other words, the scales in the research have measured the different concepts of the research.

4.3.2 Hypotheses testing with Linear MultiRegression Analysis

Defining the relationships of the variables and defining the relationships between the independent variables (the influencing factors) and the dependent ones (*Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*) in the conceptual framework are implemented with the method of the linear multiregression analysis. The outcome is used to predict the value of the dependent variable through that of the independent one(s). The result of the multi-regression analysis with Stepwise method, in model 5, presents the R^2 value of 0.883; the adjusted R^2 value is 0.780; and shows that 78.0% of the variable *Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam* is explained by independent factors (CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF and ISP) of the fifth model (Table 4-7).

Table 4-7 Model Summary of MultiRegression Analysis with CTE

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.818[a]	.668	.668	.39297
2	.863[b]	.745	.744	.34478
3	.878[c]	.771	.769	.32748
4	.881[d]	.777	.775	.32328
5	.883[e]	.780	.778	.32134

a. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL

b. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS

c. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO

d. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF

e. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF, ISP

The phenomenon of Collinearity of predict variables is presented on the right of Table 4-9. In model 5, the VIF coefficient of the independent variables is mostly between 3.541 and 6.040; and the Tolerance value is from 0.166 to 0.282. That is, the independent level of the variables is quite high. All of the VIF values above are under 10. This shows that there is no phenomenon of Collinearity (Hoảng Trọng & Chu Nguyễn Mộng Ngọc, 2005).

Table 4-8 indicates that in ANOVA analysis, at model 5, the F value of 392.492 has a considerable statistical signification (Sig. $p<0.001$). Thus, the Null hypothesis of the non-linear relationship is rejected. This shows that multiregression model 5 is suitable for presenting relationships between the independent factors (CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF and ISP) and the *Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam* (CTE).

Table 4-8 Covariance analysis results

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	173.675	1	173.675	1124.649	.000[b]
	Residual	86.170	558	.154		
	Total	259.845	559			
2	Regression	193.632	2	96.816	814.447	.000[c]
	Residual	66.213	557	.119		
	Total	259.845	559			
3	Regression	200.219	3	66.740	622.340	.000[d]
	Residual	59.625	556	.107		
	Total	259.845	559			
4	Regression	201.840	4	50.460	482.810	.000[e]
	Residual	58.005	555	.105		
	Total	259.845	559			
5	Regression	202.640	5	40.528	392.492	.000[f]
	Residual	57.205	554	.103		
	Total	259.845	559			

a. Dependent Variable: CTE

b. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL

c. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS

d. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO

e. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF

f. Predictors: (Constant), CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF, ISP

Table 4-9 presents the results of linear multiregression analysis. The best model is the fifth one with five independent variables signed as CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF, and ISP and a dependent variable (*Choice to Enroll at HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*). The outcome indicates the value of the T statistics of the regression coefficients of the independent variables are meaningful with sig. <0.05. It means that the coefficients are statistically meaningful. The regression model shows that the higher the absolute value of the correlative coefficients is, the stronger the relationship of the linear is. The B (beta) coefficient is from the highest of 0.288 to the lowest of 0.091 with $p<0.05$.

Table 4-9 Regression Coefficients of the factors relating to CTE

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.441	.097		4.549	.000		
	CAFL	.832	.025	.818	33.536	.000	1.000	1.000
2	(Constant)	.491	.085		5.770	.000		
	CAFL	.488	.034	.480	14.236	.000	.403	2.484
	MCS	.353	.027	.437	12.957	.000	.403	2.484
3	(Constant)	.203	.089		2.288	.022		
	CAFL	.227	.047	.223	4.867	.000	.197	5.088
	MCS	.339	.026	.420	13.081	.000	.401	2.496
	PCO	.337	.043	.314	7.837	.000	.258	3.882
4	(Constant)	.140	.089		1.574	.116		
	CAFL	.150	.050	.147	2.989	.003	.166	6.014
	MCS	.340	.026	.421	13.285	.000	.401	2.496
	PCO	.242	.049	.225	4.956	.000	.195	5.135
	ACF	.188	.048	.176	3.938	.000	.200	4.992
5	(Constant)	.116	.089		1.307	.192		
	CAFL	.140	.050	.138	2.816	.005	.166	6.040
	MCS	.288	.032	.356	9.094	.000	.259	3.859
	PCO	.240	.048	.224	4.949	.000	.195	5.136
	ACF	.167	.048	.157	3.476	.001	.195	5.118
	ISP	.091	.033	.104	2.783	.006	.282	3.541

a. Dependent Variable: CTE

The coefficients indicate that the relative importance of the independent variables (CAFL, MCS, PCO, ACF, and ISP) are put into the model to explicate CTE. Two variables (EO - *Employment Opportunity* and CRP- *College Reputation and Prestige*) were taken out of the model to explain CTE because the significant level of p=>0.05. The B coefficients point out the strength of the relationship between the independent variables

and the dependent variable and are ranged in the following order: (1) MCS, (2) PCO, (3) ACF, (4) CAFL and (5) ISP.

Through the result of the test of the adjusted R^2 parameters, F – test, t- test, and VIF meet the requirement, the model choice factors affecting students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution with these seven factors are indicated as follows.

CTE = 0.116 + 0.288MCS + 0.240PCO + 0.167ACF + 0.140CAFL + 0.091ISP

Students' choice to enroll at private higher education institution = 0.116 + .288* Marketing/Communication Strategies + .240* Programs and Courses Offered +.167* Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid + .140* Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life + .091* Influence from Surrounding People.

4.4 Differences in factors influencing students' choice among institutions

This section answers question three of the study: *Is there significant difference in the factors influencing student's choice among the private higher education institutions?*

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed to discover if there was a significant difference in the factor scores for the extracted factors among the four institutions under the study. All the seven extracted factors *(a) ACF - Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid; (b) CAFL - Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life; (c) CRP - College Reputation and Prestige; (d) EO - Employment Opportunity; (e) ISP - Influence from Surrounding People; (f) MCS - Marketing/Communication Strategies;* and *(g) PCO - Programs and Courses Offered.*

A requirement for the ANOVA test is that the variances of each comparison group are equal. Field (2009) recommended using the Levene's test for homogeneity of

variance to conclude if the variance is significantly different from one group to another. The results in Table 4-10 shows that the significance values of the Levene statistics based on a comparison of medians for all leadership practices variables are above .05. This result means the requirement of homogeneity of variance has been met, and the ANOVA test can be considered to be robust.

Table 4-10 Homogeneity of Variances test using Levene Statistic

Test of Homogeneity of Variances

	Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
CRP - College Reputation and Prestige	.748	3	556	.524
PCO - Programs and Courses Offered	.570	3	556	.635
ACF - Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid	.809	3	556	.489
CAFL - Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life	1.333	3	556	.263
EO - Employment Opportunity	.693	3	556	.557
ISP - Influence from Surrounding People	1.826	3	556	.141
MCS - Marketing/Communication Strategies	1.442	3	556	.229

Table 4-11 shows that, all of seven factors have the F from .518 to 1.665 with the Sig. above 0.100>.05. Therefore, there are no significant differences among the four institutions in seven choice factors. In other words, students from all different higher educational institutions in Ho Chi Minh City do not have significant differences in their evaluation of predictor factors when choosing to enroll at private higher education institution based.

Table 4-11 Analysis of Variance of Institutional Comparison

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
CRP	Between Groups	.890	3	.297	.877	.453
	Within Groups	188.021	556	.338		
	Total	188.911	559			
PCO	Between Groups	1.016	3	.339	.839	.473
	Within Groups	224.559	556	.404		
	Total	225.575	559			
ACF	Between Groups	.932	3	.311	.761	.516
	Within Groups	226.899	556	.408		
	Total	227.831	559			
CAFL	Between Groups	1.332	3	.444	.990	.397
	Within Groups	249.517	556	.449		
	Total	250.850	559			
EO	Between Groups	.774	3	.258	.668	.572
	Within Groups	214.680	556	.386		
	Total	215.454	559			
ISP	Between Groups	3.030	3	1.010	1.655	.176
	Within Groups	339.331	556	.610		
	Total	342.360	559			
MCS	Between Groups	1.112	3	.371	.518	.670
	Within Groups	397.517	556	.715		
	Total	398.629	559			

4.5 Summary of the chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the research questions and present the results of the study. The research questions were answered through descriptive statistics, factor analysis, analysis of variance and regression analysis. The descriptive statistics provided demographic information on the study participants. The factor analysis was utilized to extract the meaningful and representative factors from the 52 students' choice variables included in the study. Regression analysis was performed to determine the

extent to which the extracted factors influence the student's intention to enroll at private higher education institutions. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine if the extracted factors were significantly different among all the four institutions in the study.

A randomly sampled 560 first year students were surveyed in the four randomly sampled private higher educational institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. To maintain the confidentiality of the institutions' identity, the institutions' names were substituted with letters A, B, C and D. More than one hundred and twenty (120) students from each of the four institutions had participated in the study. Some demographic statistics was analyzed in the beginning of the chapter.

The factor analysis of the fifty-two choice variables discovered seven factors that explained 78% to the total variance in the students' choice decision to enroll at private higher education institution. The seven factor clusters were named: *(a) Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid; (b) Campus Accessibility, (c) Facilities & Life; College Reputation and Prestige; (d) Employment Opportunity; (e) Influence from Surrounding People; (f) Marketing/Communication Strategies;* and *(g) Programs and Courses Offered*.

An analysis of variance was conducted to determine if factors extracted in the factor analysis were significantly different among the four institutions in the study. It was found that there was no significant different among the institutions in the study.

Regression analysis was employed to determine the extent to which the extracted factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions. Five factors that significantly predicted the student's intention to enroll at a private higher

education institution were determined. These factors included *Marketing/Communication Strategies; Programs and Courses Offered; Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid; Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life;* and *Influence from Surrounding People.*

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided the statistical data analysis and interpretation of results. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss those results. The discussions are intended to help the readers better comprehend students' decision factors which they consider in selection of a private higher education institution to enroll for their higher studies. This chapter consists of: (a) discussion of the findings, (b) conclusion (c) implications for policies and practices, (d) recommendations for future research, and (e) a summary of the chapter.

5.2 Discussion of the findings

The main purpose of this chapter is to discuss the findings of the objectives of the study by answering the following three questions of the study: i) What are the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions? ii) To what extent do these factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions? iii) Are there significant differences in the factors influencing student's choice among the private higher education institutions?

5.2.1 Factors influencing students' choice

The first research question in the study explored the factors that students considered when selecting a private higher education institution to enroll for their higher studies. In order to explore this question, factor analysis was employed. The factor analysis of the fifty-two choice variables discovered seven factors. The seven factors

were named as: *(a) Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid; (b) Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life; (c) College Reputation and Prestige; (d) Employment Opportunity; (e) Influence from Surrounding People; (f) Marketing/Communication Strategies;* and *(g) Programs and Courses Offered*. From these, the findings indicated that students determined *Marketing/Communication Strategies, Programs and Courses Offered,* and *Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid* as the three most important factors when making their choice decisions to attend private higher education institution. The identified seven choice factors are discussed in the subheadings as follows.

5.2.1.1 Marketing/Communication Strategies

The Marketing/Communication Strategies was identified as the strongest important factor influencing students' choice. This factor comprised of the variable of *International links and recognition, Influence of campus visit, Influence of institution fair, Influence of institution publications (brochures, flyers), Availability of college website, Visits by admission officers to your school, and Advertisement on Social networks, TV, radio etc.* The officials from the institutions should make all the efforts to reach the prospective students to advertise and attract students to the institutions. These findings are in line with the findings of Henley and Rogers (1997) who listed campus visits as essential factor in a student's decision to attend an institution, but this study found that an admissions representative going to the student's high school was a strong influence. Other studies have also highlighted the importance of the campus visit (Litten, 1982; Sevier, 1992; Smith, 2007). Also, for students, it was important to highlight faculty, administrators, students and even student organizations that could help the admitted students understand how they fit into the fabric of the institution (Engberg and Wolniak

2009; Smith, 2007). Therefore, private higher education institutions need to improve the efficacy of marketing communication strategies and efforts to enhance their enrollment. Person based outreach efforts include organizing institutional fairs, sending admissions officers to make orientation presentations on college and admissions information and inviting high school seniors and their parents and siblings to visit the institution, where they may see the campus infrastructure and facilities and talk to the officials and students currently enrolled in the institution. As the present study indicated that institutional fairs and campus visits are the most important for students when they make college choice decisions, therefore organizing institutional fairs and inviting students and their parents and siblings to see the campus is highly recommended.

The study determined advertisement on Social networks, TV and radio as the major influencing factors, because of the extensive and free availability of Ho Chi Minh City Television as well the radio across the country. This study also found evidence of the college's website as potential factors in the decision for the student to enroll at a particular institution. Adams and Eveland (2007) found that the internet is a strong influence for students in their search for a higher education institution. The website and the advertisement on TV or Radio needs to have up-to-date and accurate information about the institution which should include information on campus life, employment prospects, characteristics of institutions, criteria, procedures, and policies for admission. Adams and Eveland (2007) also reported that students' satisfaction with the institution's website was positively related to their decision to enroll at that institution. The website should, therefore, include the contact information for admissions representatives, especially those who are bilingual. The web site and the advertisement on TV and radio

are the effective communication means where the cost of communication and making the changes would be insignificant compared with the potential benefits that may be realized. The college choice process can greatly influence the marketing and recruitment efforts of an institution. The visit to the feeder schools and the marketing materials on the website all had an effect on the choice process for a student. These two variables were found to impact not only the number of institutions considered, but ultimately the perceived goodness of fit for the student at an institution. Even the feeder schools that had been established at many high schools formed a "goodness of fit" relationship with the institution that influenced the student's final choice. It was also determined that the person outreach such as visit to a feeder school and, electronic outreach such as internet was a key resource for prospective students to not only learn about an institution, but to also begin to determine whether they would fit into a college's overall environment.

5.2.1.2 Programs and Courses Offered

The programs and courses offered was identified as the second important factor influencing students' choice. This factor comprised of the variable of *diversity of programs and courses offered, Academic accreditation, First institution to offer a program,* and *Marketability of the programs and courses.* All these variables indicate the quality of education which must be translated into the marketability of the programs/courses offered by the institution. The institutions, therefore, should focus on developing and offering the programs/courses which are more jobs oriented and suited to the current socio-economic environment of the country. In other words, the institutions should develop and offer programs and courses based on the need of the market. Diversity of programs and courses offered was the top contributing variable to this factor.

The diversity of programs and courses can assist graduates for a wide range of market skills and therefore, the high marketability of the graduates. The findings of this study are supported by various researchers (Ford, et al. 1999; Yosof, et al. 2008; Ismail, 2009 who concluded that the availability of wide range of programs, flexibility of programs are important factors for students to choose higher education institutions. Accreditation of programs ensures the quality of the program. Generally, accredited programs are widely accepted by the employers and therefore, enhance the employability of the graduates. In this line, the private higher education institution should offer accredited and job-oriented programs/courses to the students. Students evaluate programs based on the availability and entry requirements, quality and variety of programs (Shanka et al, 2005) and, quality and flexibility of programs/courses offered (Holdswrths and Nind, 2006). The institutional facilities play a minor role in students' satisfaction (Lopez, 2009) but contradicting, Amster (2011) reported that campus facilities can influence selection of higher education institution. The institutional facilities include learning resources and facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, libraries are important in students' selection of institution. Addition to new buildings and facilities exude a welcoming environment which attracts the mind of a prospective student. Therefore, it is necessary for an institution to have all the necessary learning resources and facilities.

5.2.1.3 Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid

The policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid was identified as the third important factor influencing students' choice to attend a private higher education institution. This factor was composed of *Admission criteria, Procedure and policies for admission, Cost of attending institution, Availability of financial aid or scholarships,* and

Small size classes. No study has yet reported this factor as influencing students' choice of higher education institution. In the context of Ho Chi Minh City, this factor could be important for the simple reason of limited number of public higher education institutions which usually admit the students with a high overall grade in their schools. The limited number of places in public institutions forces other students to look for private higher education where low grades are accepted as the admission requirement. In order to attract such students who could not get admission in the public institution, the private education institution should develop attractive but effective policies and procedures for admission. By doing so, the institution could increase their enrollment.

The cost of attending an institution has been in the focus for the stakeholders in education field. While the institutions always aim to maximize their revenue by increasing the cost of the courses they offer, students prefer low-cost institutions, especially those who are self-sponsored. Cost and tuition fee have been reported as one of the major factors influencing students' choice for their higher education institution (Saichaie, 2011; Dolinsky, 2010; Angulo et al. 2010 and, Schoenheerr, 2009). However, these findings were contradicted by Soo and Elliot (2008) who reported a non-significant relationship between the fee charged by an institution and the students' choice to enroll at the institution. Financial factors (including cost of attending institution) play a significant role in the matriculation of a student. Unfortunately, the cost of higher education in the U.S. continues to rise without any sign of slowing down in the near future, which has a dramatic impact on the matriculation of prospective students. It is a similar scenario in Ho Chi Minh City whereby the private institutions increase their tuition fee for there are no government regulations. Students chose not to enroll in certain institutions, based on

several financially related factors. Studies revealed that price sensitivity, type of aid offered, amount of aid, expectation of aid, ability to apply for aid, and institutional funding, all affected the type of institution the student chose to attend (Freeman & Gail, 2002; O‟Connor, 2009; Roderick, Nagaoka, Coca & Moeller, 2008). In case of Ho Chi Minh City, government sponsorship as well as international sponsorship has already been supporting students for higher studies. It is time that private institutions play significant role in minimizing the cost of attending higher education institution, especially the tuition fee, if they are really interested in the development of human capital in the country. Thus, private institutions can sponsor students for their higher education in the country. In developing economy such as Ho Chi Minh City, public-private partnership is crucial for socio-economic development.

5.2.1.4 Campus Accessibility, Facilities and Life

Factor analysis found that the fourth strongest factor in this study was campus accessibility, facilities and life. It include variables of *Athletics facilities, Extracurricular activities, Social and religious activities, Conveniently accessible location, Attractiveness of campus, Cultural diversity, Sports activities, Size of institution, Provision of studies part-time, Campus housing facilities, Distance of campus from home, Campus safety and security, and Learning resources and facilities (Lab, library, internet etc)*. Students often like education institution closer to their home as it is convenient for them to access. Close proximity also reduces the cost of studying in terms of paying rent, food expenses and transportation (Gibbons and Vignoles, 2009; Hourigan, 2011). McDonough et al., (1997) found that African American students were more likely than other students to attend a college more than 500 miles away. Teranishi et al. (2004) found that the selectivity of the

college and its location had a direct impact on college choice. Students from the lowest income group were the most likely to choose a school that was close to home as well. Furthermore, the students who choose less selective institutions were also more likely to choose an institution that was close to home. Majority of students in this study were from low income group which justifies their preference for education institution closer to their home. Several reasons may be associated with why many students tend to not venture away from their home. Smith (2007) found the biggest reason the students select nearer institution was that they wanted to attend a college in a location that they were familiar with and, to remain close with friends and families. Bergeerson (2009) reported that many students choose an institution that was close to home not because of its fit, but rather because its location was a factor of unity for the student. A number of them were price-sensitive in selection of their institution and as a result of choosing a college close to home. Most of the private higher education institutions are located in big towns and do not have campuses in smaller places for various reasons. The mobile centers might be helpful to reach out to the prospective students who for some reasons cannot access private higher education institutions. Maring and Roberts (2009) found that availability of financial sources and accessibility to institution exerts significant influence on the students' choice to attend an institution. Perna and Titus (2004) reported that as students select their institutions, the state-based financial aid that could be applied to any institution type positively affected their decision to attend a private institution in comparison with all other institutional types. Those states that offered a need-based financial aid program with relatively large rewards were found to promote enrollment in private institutions in comparison with all other institutional types. Lindell (2009)

reported that economic recession worldwide is driving students to pursue higher education to become more marketable through skills enhancement. This scenario of recession and mind set of students for skill enhancement has been prevailing because of saturation in the job market. However, students cannot afford expensive institutional study packages, but need financial support to pursue their higher studies. According to Strauss (2009), failing to access and availability to financial support, they end up admitting to the less costly institution which sometimes compromises the quality of education which may have serious consequences on the delivery skills of the graduates.

Sidin et al, (2003) determined campus life as an important college choice factor. Armstrong and Lumsden (1999) found that a strong social life at an institution influenced a student's decision to attend an institution. This finding indicated that students do not only prefer the institutions which provide good employment prospects but also, consider life within the campus. The students wanted institutions to provide proper and sustainable platform for extra-curricular activities, athletics facilities, and sports activities. These activities are considered important in overall development of the students. Student welfare department should be established and, would do well to note the interest by students in various co-curricular activities and provide a range of sporting activities to meet the students' interests and their needs for physical, mental, and social growth.

The students prefer the large size of the town of the institution, attractiveness of the campus and its cultural diversity. Apart from the size of campus and attractiveness of campus, conveniently accessible location and the number of students was found to be an important factor in the university - location related factors. Armstrong (1997) reported that the convenient location of an institution was one of the three important factors

influencing students' decision to attend the institution. Clagnett (1999) also reported that a convenient location was among the four factors that were influencing students when choosing an institution. Sukhawatthanakun et al. (2010) found that students choose an institution located in a peaceful area and supportive learning environment. Marringe (2006) suggested that pull and push factors operate to attract students to particular universities, or consequently, repel them to study elsewhere. Hourigaw (2011) reported that the location of an institution was an important factor in students' decision-making process in the college choice process. A concomitant factor with finance is the distance from home to the selected institution referring to the accessibility of the institution. Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) assert that students from the lower socio-economic backgrounds have a lower attendance rate of high-quality research institutions largely because these universities are usually farther from home which increases costs. Drewes (2006) indicates that students prefer universities that are closer to home as the additional costs of living away make further afield institutions less attractive. Gibbons and Vignoles (2009) claim that commuting or re-location costs are important choice factors with lower income students and may deter some students from attending university at all. It is important to note that most of the students in this study belong to very low-income families and therefore, the accessibility of the institution is crucially important factor influencing their choice of a private institution.

5.2.1.5 Influence from Surrounding People

The influence from surrounding people was determined as the fifth factor that influences students' choice to choose a private higher education institution. This factor included the major variables of *Advice of father, Influence of boyfriend/girlfriend, Advice*

of mother, Advice of siblings, Advice of high school teachers and counselors, Advice of other family members, Influence of relatives, Advice of alumni, Influence of high school classmates and friends, and *Influence of friends who already attended the institution*. Fog and Harrington (2010) found similar results and reported that students are more likely to attend college if their classmates intend to attend the same college for their study. Broekemes and Seshadri (2000) also supported the findings of this study, they reported that high school students consider friends currently enrolled in a college as a major factor in choice making for a college to attend. Friends and former students (alumni) weigh heavily on the minds of prospective students when selecting an institution. Therefore, the influence of people is crucial in choice making because information sources such as friends, relatives and family members are more effective and reliable than the agents, university staff and councellors (Maringe, 2006, Wagner and Fard, 2009; Alyoucef, 2009). This factor interprets that institution should keep informed people influencing so that they can convince the prospective students to select a particular institution.

Family members including mother, siblings and fathers are the top three most important influencers in the student's choice making. Parents have been consistently listed as the most influential group among past research which is consistent with the results found here (Dixon and Martin, 1991). Parents have the greatest influence on students' university aspirations (Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999). The best predictors of students' educational aspirations are the support and encouragement that they receive from their parents (Hossler, Schmit, and Vesper, 1999). "Parents play a key role in providing emotional, information, and financial support to ensure that their children succeed in school" (Park and Kim, 2006: 440). Investment in a child in a collectivistic

family responsibility, means investment in a quality shared future once the child graduates (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010). However, the influence or advice of a mother has been determined as the most important variable of family influence which indicated that the mother has an important role in choice making decision for their children. Abrahamson (2010:1) suggested that students "trust and rely on advice from their parents at every step in the process". The researcher cited findings from a study conducted by Lipman-Hearne (2009:2), in which "seventy-five percent of students reported their parents being involved in identifying colleges to consider…and students' conversations with parents ranked number two out of thirty sources considered important in making their final decisions." A number of studies have consistently found parents to have a significant influence on the search process and the findings are supported by the various studies (An, 2010; Anctil, 2008; Broekemier and Seshardri, 2000; Chapman, 1981; Chapman and Jackson, 1987; Flint, 1992; Johnson and Stewart, 1991; Kealy and Rockel, 1987; Kinzie et al., 2004; MacAllum et al., 2007; Kusumawati, Yanamandram, andPerera, 2010). Chapmam (1981) found that students were strongly persuaded by the advice of their family members. He added that, among the persons influencing, parents and siblings were the greatest influencers on the student's choice in the selection of an institution. According to Jonstan (2010) parents were the most important personal source of the information for institution for students' choice making. While students make the final decision of selecting an institution, they would consult their parents (Sukhwattnanakum et al., 2010). It can be concluded that when students make the decision concerning which higher education institution to attend, they tend to consult parents, siblings, relatives, friends, teachers, and counselors. All these individuals have a

certain degree of influence on the students' decision of a college (Stefanie, 2006). While parents have been a critical influencing factor in students' choice making, it is very crucial to understand that the level of parental education had the greatest effect on the choice process (Magene and Lay, 1981, Litten, 1983, and Paulsen 1990). Therefore, it is suggested that the level of parental education should be elevated from the current level enabling the parents to advice their children with informed advice.

5.2.1.6 College Reputation and Prestige

The College Reputation and Prestige was not determined as one of the major factors that students consider important when they choose a private higher education institution to attend but it was in the proposed conceptual framework and had significant correlation with CTE. This factor included variables of *Size of the town where institution is located, Quality of teaching, Graduation rate, Alumni association, Qualification of teaching staff, Quality of teaching staff,* and *Reputation of the institution.* The quality of teaching staff was identified as a key factor influencing students' choice to study with private higher education institutions and lines up with an earlier quantitative study reporting the positive influence of teaching in private higher education (Shah and Brown, 2009). Brewer and Zhao (2010) reported that the quality of teaching and teaching staff in an institution is the key element which enhances the reputation of the institution. Fehleen (2011) reported that quality of teaching staff forms the basis for good reputation of an institution and, was an important factor influencing the choice of a university. Higher Education Research Institution (2007) found that the students rate college academic reputation as the main reason for the selection of college. Quality of teaching staff is essential for the survival of private institutions, especially when they are competing for

student enrollment. Students choose to attend a university for better academic achievement which is based on the quality of teaching and learning resources. A good quality of teaching and learning attracts the prospective student to attend an institution. Private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City have employed a large proportion of teaching staff who are either engaged on part time basis or for a short period of time as strategy for increasing their savings. Most of the private higher institutions hesitate to pay higher salaries to the academic staff which compromises the quality of teaching and learning. Private higher education institutions believe that the use of leading industry practitioners as teachers provide up-to-date knowledge on changing practices in various industries and more importantly it enables students to connect with employers and industry via the teachers. Therefore, private higher education institutions need to invest in qualified personnel and academics as well as to equip them with all the required teaching and learning facilities for the effective delivery of education. Some of the findings in this study align with the findings by Shah and Brown (2009) in a private college who suggest that the quality of teachers, quality of courses, and the reputation of the private college are seen as key factors influencing student choice. Moreover, if a university purports to provide international education, a vital characteristic in attracting students is to have faculty from a wide spectrum of national backgrounds. These institutions should be wary of having only a few nationalities represented in its faculty or a faculty dominated by only a handful of nationalities. It is deemed important for prospective students to have a broad range of nationalities represented in the teaching faculty when considering an international education.

5.2.1.7 Employment Opportunity

The Employment opportunity was not determined as one of the major factors that students consider important when they choose a private higher education institution to attend but it was also in the proposed conceptual framework and had significant correlation with CTE. Employment opportunity which included the variables of *job search and placement service, Job skill training (Internship), Graduates employment rate, Good job opportunity, High income,* and *Good position*. Angulo, Pergalova, and Rialp (2010) identified career opportunities as one of the factors affecting students' choice. In a research report on students' perceptions of choice criteria, job prospects were among the top five factors (Kusumawati, Yanamandram, and Perera, 2010). Dolinsky (2010) reported that students placed the highest importance among other factors such as job placement when selecting a college. Students are most concerned about whether employment opportunities would be available after they graduate from an institution or not. This is due to the fact that the job market in Ho Chi Minh City is saturated and students face a greater challenge of securing a job after graduation. A large number of graduates are looking for jobs and are still unemployed. The new graduates have been competing with the old graduates in the same job pool which led to high competition for potential jobs. Unemployment rate in Ho Chi Minh City averaged 18.42 percent from 1991 until 2013. Moreover, unemployment rate in the country increased to 20 percent in 2013 from 17.80 percent in 2010. However, the job opportunities have not increased correspondingly with the increase of college graduates every year. Thus, there has been an imbalance between demand and supply of graduates in the job market in the country.

Government has been providing sponsorships to potential students to study within in the country and abroad as well. Students, who graduate from prestigious universities especially in public universities in the country and abroad with a good major, are more competitive in job hunting than those from private universities. Students with an associate degree find it difficult to find a job. At present, most private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City are only authorized to grant associate degrees to students, so it is understandable that students admitted to these institutions are concerned about their future employment. This finding of this study has indicated that institutions should not only focus on the graduation rate and job skill training (internship), but also should provide an effective job search and placement services to the students. The reputation of an institution is also important for prospective students along with the indication that upon successful completion of their selected program there will be a high probability that jobs would be available for them. Institutions would be prudent to ensure an effective placement services and job skill training. All this can be achieved by establishing separate units mandated for this responsibility such as a directorate of students training and placement.

5.2.2 Prediction of students' intention to enroll

The second research question was to determine the extent to which choice factors predict the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution. In order to explore this question, the correlation analysis and multiple regression analysis were performed. The multiple regression analysis of the seven choice factors determined that only five choice factors were found to be significant predictors of the students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution. These five factors were (a)

Marketing/Communication Strategies, (b) Programs and Courses Offered, (c) Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid, (d) Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life, and (e) Influence from Surrounding People. The findings indicated that *Marketing/ Communication Strategies*, *Programs and Courses Offered*, and *Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid* were the three most important predictors of students' intentions to enroll at private higher education institution in Ho Chi Minh City. It is important to highlight that all the seven predictors of students' intention are the institutional factors. This finding reflects the importance of institutional factors in influencing students' intention to enroll at higher education institution. This indicated that the institutions should focus on the improvement of these factors, if the institutions want to inculcate a positive intention and therefore, attract prospective students to their institutions. Based on the prediction of students' intention to enroll at private higher education, a model of predicting students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution in Ho Chi Minh City was developed and presented in Figure 5-1.

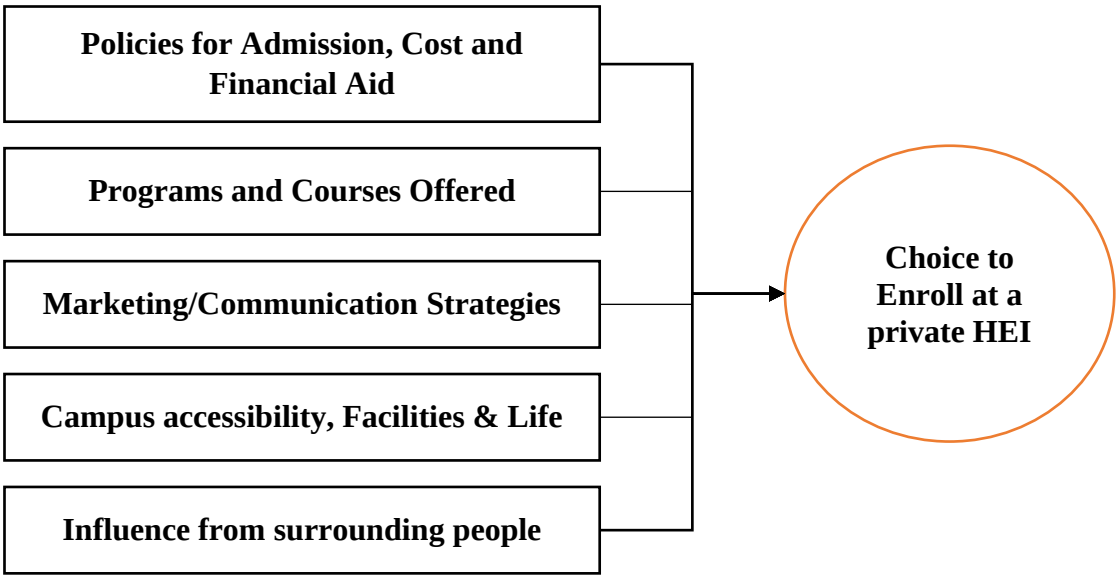


Figure 5-1 Developed model of predicting students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution in Ho Chi Minh City

5.2.3 Differences in factors influencing students' choice among institutions

All of seven defined factors showed no significant difference among students from the four institutions. In other words, students from all different higher educational institutions in Ho Chi Minh City do not show significant differences in their evaluation of predictor factors when choosing to enroll at private higher education institution based. This result can give a suggestion to all private HEIs in Ho Chi Minh City to inherit other schools' marketing strategy to attract potential students to enroll in their own universities.

5.3 Conclusion of the discussion

The findings of the study revealed seven factors that affect students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. *Marketing/ Communication Strategies*, *Programs and Courses Offered*, and *Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid* were determined the top three factors. Marketing/ Communication Strategies reflected the importance of choice elements such as communication, PR

campaigns from universities. The second highest choice factor determined related to the academic and accredited programs that the institutions offer. The third highest factor determined related to admission policy as well as cost of study in the school. These three factors have the strongest impact on students' choice of a private higher education institution and therefore, institutions that are interested in increasing their enrollment should put enough efforts in order to provide the special attention to these choice factors. Out of seven factors, only five factors were determined as the significant predictors of students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions. These five factors were *Marketing/Communication Strategies, Programs and Courses Offered, Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid, Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life,* and *Influence from Surrounding People*. If the educational policy makers in general and, management of private education institutions in particular, bound to attract more students in the institution, these factors need to be considered as they impact on the intention of the students to enroll in private higher education institution. Out of the seven choice factors, no factors are found to be significantly different among the four institutions in the study. Finally, this study has developed one important model pertaining to students' choice: model of predicting of students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions. Policy makers specially, enrollment managers can use the developed model to identify the influential factors of the prospective students and modify their programs and policies to enhance enrollment. This model can be used not only by the institutions and policy makers, but also by the researchers.

5.4 Implications and Recommendations of the study

What draws a student's mind to attend a certain private higher education institution? Most of the higher education institutions have programs for the recruitment and retention of students. The rapidly changing demographic profile in Ho Chi Minh City is beginning to be reflected in the student population, and their choice of higher education institution. Although substantial changes have taken place overtime to improve access to a quality higher education and, to consider the students' preference, efforts to enroll college students, a number of private higher education institutions are still facing a challenge to attract, and recruit higher numbers of students. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to comprehend students' enrollment decision in private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City.

5.4.1 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this study had several implications for policy and practice that could potentially aid private higher education institutions in their recruitment of potential students. This section highlights these implications and offers recommendations for policy and practice.

i. Enrollment managers should focus on recruiting students mostly from public schools, especially located within a 50 kilometers radius of the institution. As the demographic information of students in this study indicated that a significant number of students came from public schools that were within proximity of 50 km radius of the institutions. Students chose a school in close proximity to their home because there is already a level of comfort with the community (Carter, 1999; McDonough et al., 1997; Smith, 2007). Such potential students should be targeted for admission because they are

more likely to enroll at a higher education institution. Furthermore, the recruitment cost may be less for these students considering the costs of travel.

ii. Previous research indicated that many institutions utilized feeder schools to recruit their students (Engberg and Wolniak, 2009). Almost most of the students (82%) who decided to enroll at a private higher education institution in this study came from public high schools located in the rural or urban areas of the country. It is therefore recommended that higher education institutions develop relationships and engage more effectively with nearby public high schools to attract potential applicants.

iii. It is recommended that the institutions should focus on improvement pertaining to the choice factors of Marketing/ Communication Strategies, Programs and Courses Offered, and Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid as these choice factors were found to be significant predictors of students' intention to enroll at private higher education institutions.

iv. Programs and Courses Offered were determined as the second important choice factor. Therefore, it is suggested that institutions should be quality-oriented. The institutions need to develop and strengthen the programs that are related to job skills training and create more opportunities for students to have practical and hands–on-training such as training and internship. They need to constantly review their programs and courses offered and make necessary adjustment to satisfy the changing needs of the students and of the nation at large. All this enhances their job skills and employability as well. Moreover, students in Ho Chi Minh City do not have practical training opportunities as students in other countries which make them compete in the saturated

job market. Therefore, it is essential for the private higher education institutions to implement these hands-on practical training opportunities for their students.

v. The government should implement relevant policies to create a conducive environment for private college graduates to seek employment. As the job market for fresh graduates turns extremely competitive, students from private higher education institutions often find themselves in a disadvantaged and discriminatory position when they compete for jobs with other graduates from public colleges and universities. It is not easy to change the prevailing social environment against private institutions, but it is necessary for the government to take effective measures to improve the present situation. Since the government is determined to promote private education in the country, it should provide incentives to employers who hire graduates from private higher education institutions.

vi. Academic quality is an important student's choice that affects students' enrollment in an institution. Private education institutions need to increase the ratio not only of their full-time faculty, but also quality staff as a strategy to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Learning recourses and facilities such as library and computer labs should be improved and freely available to students. An improved academic quality is one of the important qualifications for the upgrading. More high school graduates will be attracted to attend a private university where quality teaching and learning resources are available.

vii. Since the findings have revealed that relationships enormously influence students' choice of a private higher education institution, therefore, it is worth to consult

parents and siblings and involve them more in exploring what parents and siblings perceive as factors that would influence their choice preference.

viii. According to the findings of this study, marketing/communication strategies greatly influence the choice making process to enroll. In the current information communication technology era, the highest rated recruitment strategy is the web sites. With the scattered population of potential students and widely available internet in the country, it is important for private higher education institutions to have an effective option available for their website. Similar to the importance of the institution's website, institutional fair and campus interaction (i.e., contact with faculty and students, and campus visits) was another factor that is related to the likelihood of a student enrolling at an institution. This finding suggests that subsequent to attending institutional fair and having paid a campus visit, students will be more likely to enroll at that institution. Therefore, institutions are required to organize institutional fair and campus visits for the students who are completing and intend to enroll for their higher education.

ix. In order to attract more students to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, it is recommended that all the stakeholders and policy makers, especially the management of the institutions consider positively the seven choice factors (Marketing/Communication Strategies, Programs and Courses Offered, Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid, Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life, and Influence from Surrounding People) which predict the intention of students to enroll at private higher education in the country.

5.4.2 Recommendations for future research

Since this study is the first empirical study on students' choice of private higher education in Ho Chi Minh City, it requires further research studies to be carried out to understand the nature and depth of the students of choice factors. Based on the study, the following future research is recommended.

i. The sample in this study was restricted to only four institutions. Given this limitation, future research should be based on the data from a larger sample of institutions to provide a more representative profile of students and, therefore their choice factors.

ii. This study can be extended to public higher education institution to compare the different criteria of making a choice between students who intend to attend private higher education institution and public higher education institutions. Therefore, there is a need to conduct similar studies of students who attend public higher education institutions in the country. This recommendation is based on the fact students' perceived value of public and private education institutions could be viewed differently (Krishman and Nurtjahja (2007).

iii. The present study focused on students who were enrolled in various programs including certificate, diploma and degree programs offered at private education institutions. It would be significant to research on students' choice factors who are enrolled in a specific program and determine if there are any differences between the choices of students in various programs. The findings of such study will provide program specific recommendation for a better focus on attracting students' enrollment in specific program.

iv. Employment prospects were determined as the second important choice factor, but the factor did not predict significantly the students' intention to attend a private higher education institution. It suggested that the students wish to enroll at a private higher education institution just to obtain a certificate. Having such certificates may have bearing on whether students in Ho Chi Minh City are unemployed or they are not employable. Therefore, it would be appropriate to unveil the reasons students wish to enroll in a private higher education institution without considering the employment issues. The findings may reveal crucial information on a timely and crucial debate whether students in Ho Chi Minh City are just unemployed or they are unemployable.

v. Since this study obtained the students' perception on their choice of private higher education institutions, but there are differences which could be attributed to the biased findings about a particular institution under study. Therefore, an investigation on the students' perception of individual institution would be a greater benefit which would assist in generating formation for effective enrollment strategies for a particular institution in the country.

vi. As the finding has established the advice seeking factor as the most important factor influencing the students' choice to attend a private higher education institution, it is recommended that future study explore each of the source of advice (variable) to determine where the majority of variance is attributed from to concentrate the recruiting strategies effectively.

5.5 Summary of the chapter

This concluding chapter summarized the entire study, drew conclusions based on the findings of the research, presented analyses and explanations of the findings,

generated some viable policy recommendations, and suggested directions for future research studies. Major factors influencing students' college choice have been identified. The college choice factors predicting students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution have been identified. Although the present study is the first study to research on students' choice of private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, it is hoped that this empirical study will shed some light on the decision making process of students who choose to enroll at a private university. The findings of the study have also developed an important model: models of predicting students' intention to enroll at private higher education institution. This model may provide conceptual framework to the researchers for similar studies in the future. Policy makers of higher education, especially private higher education may develop a better understanding of how students perceive their institutions. As a result, they can make necessary changes of their academic programs and admission policies to meet the demand of their prospective students. Facing the fierce competition in student enrollment among universities and colleges, especially admission officers, must adapt to the changing needs of the economic market and devise effective ways to improve the academic quality of the university.

Finally, several policy recommendations were made which are expected to serve as a guideline to all policy makers and private institutions managers who wish to improve the quality of their institutions by enhancing student enrollment. Moreover, further research recommendations made in the study should enhance the understanding of the students' choice factors to attend private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A. Request for Approval and Assistance in Data Collection

Title of research: **Factors Affecting Students' Choice to Enroll at Private Higher Education Institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, VIETNAM**

15 August, 2019

Dear Sir/Madam

I am doctoral candidate and doing research towards a degree for Doctor of Management at the European International University. The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. This study will provide private higher education institutions with a better understanding of the factors which the prospective students consider important while choosing the private institution for their higher studies. It will allow recruiters to target their plans in a way that aligns with what students seek in the selection of institution for their higher study. As a result of this study, private higher education institutions may realize why students choose one particular private institution over another and then make any possible changes deemed appropriate to enhance enrollment. Concisely, the results will guide the administrators of private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City in their future planning and policy making towards enhancing the enrollments.

Your institution has been selected for the purpose of this study because it is one of the reputed private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. This study will

utilize a descriptive survey to collect the relevant information from the selected first year students. As this study will involve collecting data directly from the first-year students therefore, I am writing to you to get permission to allow your first-year students to voluntarily participate in the data collection process. The data collection will be done from August 2019 to October 2019. I ensure that the following measures will be adopted to protect the identity of the institution as well as the participants in this study. Firstly, the data collected will be kept secured and will only be accessed by the researcher. Secondly, all the identifying details such as name of institution and students will not be revealed to any one as these will be removed from files prior to data analysis. The identifying details will never be revealed and will not appear in the final research report. I will be available at your convenience to present the findings of this study to your institution immediately after the study is finally accepted by the European International University.

Should you have any enquiry regarding this research, please feel free to contact me at my cell: 0903638647; email: tuananhngo71@gmail.com

Thank you very much for your kind consideration on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Appendix B. Informed Consent

Title of research: **Factors Affecting Students' Choice to Enroll at Private Higher Education Institutions in Ho Chi Minh city, VIETNAM**

Researcher: Ngo Tuan Anh, Doctoral Student at European International University, Paris, France

The Purpose of this research:

The purpose of the study is to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the factors influencing student's choice to enroll at private higher education institutions.
2. To predict the relationship between the factors influencing student's choice and their intention to enroll at private higher education institution.
3. To determine the differences in factors influencing student's choice among the private higher education institutions.

Procedures:

This study involves few tasks for you to complete in order to be a participant. First you will be asked to read and sign this form to acknowledge your participation in the study. Then you will complete the survey which will take about 20-25 minutes. Once you have completed this survey, you will be expected to return the completed survey and this informed consent form to the researcher.

Benefits of this project:

Participating in this study provides you with two benefits. First, your responses will provide information about college students' decisions regarding selection of higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. Your opinions about what factors most influence you to select a school for better improvement in your educational environment quality of education and enhancing school enrollments. Secondly, the findings will help the private higher education system in Ho Chi Minh City as the administrators will be aware of what the students expect of them and by doing this you will be assisting in achieving the governments' vision of better quality education for all.

Extent of anonymity:

If you decide to be a participant in this study, your confidentiality will be maintained at all times during this research. The researcher will be the only individual with access to the names of the respondents and the information provided. The results of this study will only be reported in aggregate form. Neither your name nor any other information that might identify you will not be reported in the results of the study. During the study, the data will be kept in a locked file cabinet at the home of the researcher and all data will be destroyed one year after the completion of this study.

Freedom to withdraw:

As a voluntary participant, you are free to withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty. Your participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason. You are free to not respond to any questions that you choose not to answer without penalty.

Subject's responsibilities:

I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I have the following responsibilities: (please agree by signing your initials in the space provided on the left)

…… I agree to complete the informed consent form.

…… I agree to complete the College Choice Survey Questionnaire.

…… I agree to return the completed informed consent form and survey questionnaire to the researcher for further analysis and completion of the research project.

Subject's permission:

I have read and understand the Informed Consent and conditions of this research project. I have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent for participation in this project. If I participate, I may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Name: ……

Signature: …….. Date: ……

Should you have any further questions about this research, you may contact me at my cell: 0903638647; email: tuananhngo71@gmail.com

Appendix C. Instrument - Questionnaire

Dear respondent

Chào các bạn

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that influence students' choice to enroll at private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. This questionnaire is meant to collect the relevant data for the study and consists of three parts: Part A, Part B and Part C. In the first part I ask you kindly to provide some general information about yourself, your family, and some other related questions. In the second part, there are some factors which influence your decision in selection of a higher education for your study. Part three consists of statements reflecting your intention to enroll at a private higher education institution. There is no right or wrong answer; therefore, please express your opinion freely and honestly. I highly appreciate and respect your opinions, and all the information you provide will only be used for scientific research and will be kept confidential. Thanks for your co-operation.

Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là khảo sát các yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến sự lựa chọn của sinh viên để ghi danh vào các trường đại học tư thục tại thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Bảng hỏi này nhằm thu thập dữ liệu liên quan cho nghiên cứu và bao gồm ba phần: Phần A, Phần B và Phần C. Trong phần đầu tiên, mong bạn vui lòng cung cấp một số thông tin chung về bản thân, gia đình và một số thông tin liên quan khác. Trong phần thứ hai, có một số yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến quyết định của bạn trong việc lựa chọn theo học một trường đại học. Phần ba bao gồm các phát biểu phản ánh ý định của bạn để ghi danh vào một cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư. Không có câu trả lời đúng hay sai; do đó, xin vui lòng bày tỏ ý

kiến của bạn một cách tự do và trung thực. Tôi đánh giá cao và tôn trọng ý kiến của bạn, và tất cả thông tin bạn cung cấp sẽ chỉ được sử dụng cho nghiên cứu khoa học và sẽ được giữ bí mật. Cảm ơn sự hợp tác của bạn.

PART A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF RESPONDENT

PHẦN A: THÔNG TIN NHÂN KHẨU HỌC CỦA ĐÁP VIÊN

Please read each statement and express your opinion by putting a tick mark (√) on the category that reflects your opinion best – *Vui lòng đọc từng phát biểu và bày tỏ ý kiến của bạn bằng cách đánh dấu (√) vào mục phù hợp*.

1. What is your Gender – *Giới tính của bạn*?

   ☐ Male – *Nam* ☐ Female – *Nữ*

2. What is your Age – *Tuổi của bạn*?

   ☐ Under 19 – *Dưới 19* ☐ 19 ☐ Over 19 – *Trên 19*

3. Type of high school you studied in – Bạn đã học loại trường THPT:

   ☐ State owned – *Công lập* ☐ Private – *Tư thục*

4. Location of high school you studied in – *Nơi bạn học THPT*:

   ☐ Rural – *Nông thôn* ☐ Urban – *Thành thị*

   ☐ Semi-Urban – *Ngoại thành*

5. Your overall percentage of marks in high school – Điểm TBC toàn khoá ở trường THPT của bạn:

   ☐ Below 6.0 – *Dưới 6,0* ☐ 6.0 – 8.0

   ☐ Above 8.0 – *Trên 8,0*

6. Do you have a permanent home in the town where the institution is located in which you are currently enrolled - *Bạn có nhà ở cố định trong cùng địa bàn trường bạn đang theo học không*?

   ☐ Yes - *Có* ☐ No - *Không*

7. Distance from your hometown to the institution you are enrolled in - *Khoảng cách từ quê nhà của bạn đến trường bạn đăng ký theo học*?

   ☐ Less than (*dưới*) 50 km ☐ 50 - 100 km ☐ 101 - 200 km

   ☐ 201 - 500 km ☐ More than (*hơn*) 500 km

8. What is your mother's level of education – *Trình độ học vấn của mẹ bạn*?

   ☐ High school or lower – *THPT hoặc thấp hơn*

   ☐ Associate, Diploma – *Trung cấp, Cao đẳng*

   ☐ University – *Đại học* ☐ Postgraduate – *Sau đại học*

9. What is your father's level of education - *Trình độ học vấn của cha bạn*?

   ☐ High school or lower – *THPT hoặc thấp hơn*

   ☐ Associate, Diploma – *Trung cấp, Cao đẳng*

   ☐ University – *Đại học* ☐ Postgraduate – *Sau đại học*

10. What is the income of your family/parents per month (in million VND) – *Thu nhập bình quân tháng của gia đình bạn (triệu đồng)?*

    ☐ less than (*dưới*) 20 ☐ 20 - 50

    ☐ 50 - 100 ☐ more than (*trên*) 100

11. Rank by name the four private higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City you prefer the most - *Xếp hạng bốn cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục tại Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh mà bạn thích nhất.*

1) ……..……...

2) ……

3) ……..……...

4) ……

PART B: COLLEGE CHOICE FACTORS

PHẦN B: CÁC YẾU TỐ LỰA CHỌN TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC

Considering the selection of the private higher education institution you are now attending, how important was each of the following factors in determining your choice of a private institution. The importance of choice factors ranges from **1 = unimportant, 2 = slightly important, 3 = important, 4 = very important** and **5 = extremely important**. - *Xem xét việc lựa chọn cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư mà bạn hiện đang theo học, mỗi yếu tố sau đây quan trọng như thế nào trong việc bạn xác định lựa chọn vào một trường tư. Tầm quan trọng của các yếu tố lựa chọn nằm trong khoảng từ* ***1 = không quan trọng, 2 = hơi quan trọng, 3 = quan trọng, 4 = rất quan trọng*** *và* ***5 = cực kỳ quan trọng****.*

Please tick (√) the number in each college choice factor that best describes your decision to enroll at private higher education institution - *Vui lòng đánh dấu (√) vào số nào mô tả đúng nhất đối với mỗi phát biểu về quyết định của bạn khi ghi danh vào cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư.*

CODE ID	College Choice factors Các yếu tố lựa chọn trường đại học	The importance Tầm quan trọng				
ACF	**Policies for Admission, Cost & Financial Aid**					
ACF1	Admission criteria – *Tiêu chí tuyển sinh*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ACF2	Procedure and policies for admission - *Thủ tục và chính sách nhập học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ACF3	Cost of attending institution - *Chi phí theo học tại trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤

CODE ID	College Choice factors Các yếu tố lựa chọn trường đại học	The importance Tầm quan trọng				
ACF4	Availability of financial aid or scholarships - *Sẵn có hỗ trợ tài chính hoặc học bổng*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ACF5	Small size classes - *Lớp học quy mô nhỏ*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL	**Campus Accessibility, Facilities & Life**					
CAFL1	Athletics facilities - *Cơ sở vật chất thể dục thể thao*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL2	Extracurricular activities - *Hoạt động ngoại khóa*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL3	Social and religious activities - *Hoạt động xã hội và tôn giáo*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL4	Conveniently accessible location - *Vị trí thuận tiện*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL5	Attractiveness of campus - *Sức hấp dẫn của khuôn viên trường.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL6	Cultural diversity - *Đa dạng văn hóa*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL7	Sports activities - *Hoạt động thể thao*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL8	Size of institution - *Quy mô trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL9	Provision of studies part-time - *Cung cấp các nghiên cứu bán thời gian*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL10	Campus housing facilities - *Cơ sở ký túc xá ở trong khuôn viên trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL11	Distance of campus from home - *Khoảng cách của trường từ nhà/chỗ ở*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL12	Campus safety and security - *An toàn và an ninh trong khuôn viên trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CAFL13	Learning resources and facilities (Lab, library, internet etc.) - *Tài nguyên học tập và phương tiện (Phòng thí nghiệm, thư viện, internet, v.v.)*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP	**College Reputation and Prestige**					
CRP1	Size of the town where institution is located - *Quy mô của thị trấn/thành phố nơi đặt trường đại học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP2	Quality of teaching – *Chất lượng giảng dạy*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP3	Graduation rate - *Tỷ lệ tốt nghiệp*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP4	Alumni association - *Hội cựu sinh viên*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP5	Qualification of teaching staff - *Trình độ của đội ngũ giảng viên*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP6	Quality of teaching staff - *Chất lượng đội ngũ giảng viên*	①	②	③	④	⑤
CRP7	Reputation of the institution - *Danh tiếng của trường đại học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
EO	**Employment Opportunity**					
EO1	Job skill training (Internship) - *Đào tạo kỹ năng nghề nghiệp (Thực tập)*	①	②	③	④	⑤
EO2	Job search and placement services - *Dịch vụ tìm kiếm cơ hội việc làm*	①	②	③	④	⑤

CODE ID	College Choice factors Các yếu tố lựa chọn trường đại học	The importance Tầm quan trọng				
EO3	Graduates employment rate - *Tỷ lệ tốt nghiệp có việc làm*	①	②	③	④	⑤
EO4	Good job opportunity – Cơ hội có việc làm tốt	①	②	③	④	⑤
EO5	High income – Việc làm có thu nhập cao	①	②	③	④	⑤
EO6	Good position – Vị trí việc làm tốt	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP	**Influence from Surrounding People**					
ISP1	Advice of father - *Lời khuyên của cha*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP2	Influence of boyfriend/girlfriend - *Ảnh hưởng của bạn trai / bạn gái*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP3	Advice of mother - *Lời khuyên của mẹ*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP4	Advice of siblings - *Lời khuyên của anh chị em*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP5	Advice of high school teachers and counselors - *Lời khuyên của giáo viên và cố vấn ở trường trung học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP6	Advice of other family members - *Lời khuyên của các thành viên khác trong gia đình*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP7	Influence of relatives - *Ảnh hưởng của người thân*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP8	Advice of alumni - *Lời khuyên của cựu sinh viên*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP9	Influence of high school classmates and friends - *Ảnh hưởng của bạn học cấp ba và bạn bè*	①	②	③	④	⑤
ISP10	Influence of friends who already attended the institution - *Ảnh hưởng của những người bạn đã tham gia học ở trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS	**Marketing/Communication Strategies**					
MCS1	International links and recognition - *Liên kết và công nhận quốc tế*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS2	Influence of campus visit - *Ảnh hưởng của chuyến thăm trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS3	Influence of institution fair - *Ảnh hưởng của hội chợ (tư vấn tuyển sinh) của trường*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS4	Influence of institution publications (brochures, flyers) - *Ảnh hưởng của các ấn phẩm của trường (brochure, tờ rơi)*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS5	Availability of college website - *Có sẵn trang web của trường đại học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS6	Visits by admission officers to your school – *Hoạt động tư vấn tuyển sinh của trường tới trường THPT của bạn*	①	②	③	④	⑤
MCS7	Advertisement on TV, radio etc. - *Quảng cáo trên TV, đài, v.v.*	①	②	③	④	⑤
PCO	**Programs and Courses Offered**					
PCO1	Academic accreditation - *Kiểm định chất lượng đào tạo*	①	②	③	④	⑤

CODE ID	College Choice factors Các yếu tố lựa chọn trường đại học	The importance Tầm quan trọng				
PCO2	First institution to offer a program I want to study - *Tổ chức đầu tiên cung cấp chương trình đào tạo tôi muốn học*	①	②	③	④	⑤
PCO3	Diversity of programs and courses offered - *Đa dạng các chương trình và khóa học được cung cấp*	①	②	③	④	⑤
PCO4	Marketability of the programs and courses - *Khả năng marketing của các chương trình và khóa học*	①	②	③	④	⑤

PART C: CHOIDE TO ENROLL AT PRIVATE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

PHẦN C: LỰA CHỌN GHI DANH VÀO CƠ SỞ GIÁO DỤC ĐẠI HỌC TƯ

This part consists of statements reflecting the intention to enroll at private higher education institution. The importance of choice factors ranges from **1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree** and **5 = Strongly Agree**.

Phần này bao gồm các phát biểu phản ánh ý định ghi danh vào cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục. Tầm quan trọng của các yếu tố lựa chọn nằm trong khoảng từ **1 = Rất không đồng ý, 2 = Không đồng ý, 3 = Trung lập, 4 = Đồng ý** và **5 = Rất đồng ý**.

Please read each statement and mark your response by ticking (√) one of the numbers in each statement which describes your view the best - *Vui lòng đọc từng phát biểu và đánh dấu phản hồi của bạn bằng dấu (√) vào từng phát biểu với con số mô tả quan điểm bạn cho là phù hợp nhất.*

Statements – Phát biểu	The level of choice Mức độ lựa chọn				
1) I would prefer to enroll at a private education institution rather than public education institution - *Tôi muốn ghi danh vào một cơ sở giáo dục tư nhân hơn là cơ sở giáo dục công lập*	①	②	③	④	⑤
2) I am interested in pursuing my study at private higher education institution - *Tôi thích theo đuổi việc học tại cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục*	①	②	③	④	⑤

Statements – Phát biểu	The level of choice Mức độ lựa chọn				
3) I will recommend the private higher education institution I chose to my friend - *Tôi sẽ giới thiệu cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục mà tôi đã chọn cho bạn mình*	①	②	③	④	⑤
4) I will say favorable things about the private higher education institution I chose - *Tôi sẽ nói những điều thuận lợi về cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục mà tôi đã chọn*	①	②	③	④	⑤
5) I am willing to enroll at a private higher education institution - *Tôi sẵn sàng ghi danh tại một cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục*	①	②	③	④	⑤
6) I am willing to pay a higher rate for the private higher education institution I chose - *Tôi sẵn sàng trả mức cao hơn cho cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục mà tôi đã chọn*	①	②	③	④	⑤
7) My parents want me to study at a private higher education institution - *Bố mẹ tôi muốn tôi học tại một cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục*	①	②	③	④	⑤
8) I am indented to continue my studies at private higher education institution - *Tôi được định hướng để tiếp tục học tại cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục*	①	②	③	④	⑤
9) The likelihood of furthering my study at a private higher education institution is high - *Khả năng tiếp tục học tập của tôi tại một cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục là rất cao*	①	②	③	④	⑤
10) I like to learn in a private higher education institution - *Tôi thích học ở một cơ sở giáo dục đại học tư thục*	①	②	③	④	⑤

Thank you very much for your valuable time and your opinion to complete this survey. Your participation is greatly appreciated.

Cảm ơn bạn rất nhiều vì thời gian quý báu và ý kiến của bạn để hoàn thành khảo sát này. Sự tham gia của bạn là rất được mong đợi.