

# Determinants Of Student Choice For Foreign Universities In India: Review Of Literature

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**Citation:** Dr. Laxmi Jaiswal (2021). Determinants Of Student Choice For Foreign Universities In India: Review Of Literature, *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 27(3), 1208 - 1213  
Doi: 10.53555/kuey.v27i3.9552

ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	Foreign qualification always pulls students for better prospects in the employment sector and due to rapid acceleration of economic globalization foreign university campuses are proliferated in India with range of quality framework. Recent data shows that number of foreign universities and enrolment figures are increasing in recent years. This article presents theoretical positioning by reviewing the existing literature to understand the motivating factors for the students to get enrolled in foreign university campuses established in India with various modes of collaboration. The characteristics of the middle class are also discussed to get a link between the characteristics of the students belonging to particular segment and characteristics of institutions where the students get enrolled. Various other factors that influence students' choice for selecting foreign universities to get enrolled is also discussed.
	<b>Keywords:</b> Student choice; foreign university, determinants, collaboration.

## Introduction

The developed economies are increasingly investing on the knowledge economy by establishing new knowledge, technologies and research. Highly skilled human capital is a key component of any economy relying on production of knowledge and new technologies. By adopting two ways, developed economy can meet the demand of skilled labour either producing in their own domestic higher education system or through training by providing accessibility to refine the talents of human capital in developing nations or by moving educational services across border (Varghese, 2009 cited in Jaiswal, 2021). National policies are aligning themselves towards economic competitiveness, decrease of state funding and enhancement of self-reliance for resource generation. This trend has reshaped and remodelled higher education institutions under economic and market driven ideology are becoming global in their competition to increase their students share, enhancing prestige and maximising profit (Ovens & Lane, 2014). Trade liberalisation along with globalisation has changed the notion of cooperative, aid-based education to competitive, trade-based education. Economic globalisation has contributed in the provisions such as program and provider mobility across nation in manifolds. The visible form of provider mobility can be seen in the form of foreign universities either in independent existence or in collaboration with some institution. India has witnessed increasing number of foreign universities in past years and after implementation of NEP 2020 it is welcomed by the state to open campuses in India having good places in world university ranking.

These provisions in higher education has not only enriches the international contents in academic domain but the assessment, mode of delivery, administration and various forms and experimentation in collaboration is evident in the academic processes also. This has led innovations in delivery of educational services at almost all the level particularly in higher education. Flexibility in the educational provisions, Taylor made, customised course structure, diversification and market friendly courses, employment oriented programme structures have introduced as innovation in higher education system after entry of foreign universities in India. Studies show that students studying in India have taken admission in there universities. There are various factors that determine the student choice for foreign universities in India.

The consumer of the product in the market is the prime factor for whom institutions produce and compete. In higher education market students as a consumer (De jager & Gbadamosi, 2013) make choice that is influenced by the environmental, external and internal factors. Although various studies have been conducted for the decision and choice pattern of international students and outbound mobility but there are

very few studies conducted that focuses on student's choice for collaborative programme offerings, their motivation and benefits.

Despite of the high cost of international qualification the perceived advantage to provide best in labour market by acquiring skills related to language competency, ability to work in varied and multi-cultural perspectives and soft skills etc can be a plausible advantage of cross border provisions (Kosmutzky & Putty, 2015). Skill requirements of the global firms shape up the individual demand of international qualification. It is perceived that international qualification yields high return to the individual and high wage differential in comparison to the domestic labour market. To the extent that the curricula and teaching methods of domestic higher education institutions do not impart these knowledge and skills, graduates of these institutions might be at a disadvantage in the skilled labour market, compared to graduates of foreign partnership programs and foreign universities campus which offer qualifications that are demanded in the labour market. This drives the private demand for foreign higher education credentials and for institutions with a "brand name" that allows access to the international market with much higher life-time earnings and 'improving quality of life' (Tilak, 2018). The possibility of temporary or permanent migration to the foreign higher education provider's country raises potential lifetime earnings by several times over what the student would earn in his or her own country.

Cross border higher education has not only made an impact on economy of the nation but the socio- cultural impact in the form of language can be observed. Demand of the English as a global language in the international labour market pushes providers to serve across border where colonial impressions in the mind-set of the society in the form of language imperialism (Altbach & Selvarathnam, 1989) and associated prestige with English language (Francois, 2016). This society and market-led demand propels suppliers of cross border education to serve through various programmes and providers movement and partnering with local providers. And ultimately influencing and commanding these societies through educating natives who will advocate the international culture (Owens & Lane, 2014).

### **High aspiration of middle class**

The rise of the middle-income paying capacity and aspiration for quality education coupled with expectation for good employment (Varghese, 2016) indicates inclination for the private individual spending on higher education and indicative of aspiration of the parents and their wards for upward mobility (Kacapyr, 2012). Middle class with high aspiration and educated households (Sarkar, 2017) prefer for quality and skill-based education for better employment that give stimulus to market oriented private sector to flourish and strategize for competitive advantage.

### **Opportunity for migration to foreign country**

Some studies report that the opportunity for permanent or temporary migration into the foreign country, getting further employment, exchange value of their degree in labour market encourages students to pursue education from foreign university thereby improvement in life (Krase, 2014; Brown & Woodfield, 2015). A study by Fang and Wang (2014) on Chinese students acquiring foreign degree at home found that the degree is a channel to enter into foreign education institution and for further migration for employment. Author further discussed that foreign degree is utilised by the majority of students to regain access to high-quality domestic higher education institutions and to gain access to overseas higher education.

### **Foreign exposure and better career prospects**

Foreign degree gives leadership position, career success, life opportunities and future migration prospects (Maringe & Carter, 2007; Padlee et al., 2010; Wu, 2014). Chapman and Pyvis (2007) conducted two case studies on the students studying in IBCs of Singapore and Malaysia and found that students perceive foreign qualification will enhance their employment opportunity, success and raising status in labour market particularly gaining entry into multinational corporations. Students see this as an investment for their personal and professional development as compared to domestic education. Students from East Asian countries perceive that foreign qualification is valued more due to scarcity of international academic credential (Waters, 2006). In a study conducted by Wu (2014) on Mainland Chinese students, found that career betterment, personal growth and development, linguistic and cultural enrichment motivated them for foreign qualification

### **Individual and Social factors**

A quantitative study on Japanese female students highlighted that the students hoped for professional, economic and social success as an accepted life path in Japan (Anzai & Paik, 2012). Aspiration of the students for recognition, satisfaction and esteem build the higher order needs and that determines the choice of the foreign qualification. Vrontis et al (2007) discussed about emergence of higher order need and their satisfaction necessary to increasing pay capacity and high aspiration for higher education. Bodycott (2009) discovered that parents perceive foreign qualification as opportunity for their wards for access to job opportunities and future migration prospects. Children with higher level of educational encouragement from their parents have bigger trust in the information provided by them, (Galotti et al., 2006). Sewell and Hauser

(1993) contended that parents' educational expectations also have significant effects on students' academic performances and choices. The research of Zhao and Hong (2012) also showed that parents who have more abundant social network capital can have better communication with teachers and other parents, which indirectly improves children's academic performance and choices. Cultural capital of the family of frequent foreign exposure, relatives, friends in the foreign act as determining factor for the choice of programme. Middle class students have natural familiarity with the norm and standards of elite institutions that align itself with high class status and give advantages and resources to opt for foreign exposure and programmes (Chieffo, 2000; Booker, 2001; Cater, 2005). Many studies have reported that parental education, income their socioeconomic status affects the students' educational achievement and choices (Wu 2009; Wu 2013a; Li 2016). Socio-economic status of the students influences the decision for the educational programme that include family income, educational status and employment of the parents. Students with high socio-economic status are more likely to pay higher fee for the academic programme (Waters, 1992).

The expectation for highly respectable foreign degree at home in low cost is most cited reason for opting cross border education, along with this cultural affinity and good employment prospects are also reported as reasons by many studies as motivating factor for students. One Empirical study conducted on prospective students in UAE found that although safety was cited as important to students, nevertheless ineligibility to enrol in state/public higher education "pushed" students to branch campuses (Wilkins, 2012).

### **Domestic higher education system**

Previous studies acknowledge the conditions of the domestic mode programme delivery of higher education institutions that pushes students to prefer foreign qualification. Limited accessibility to the quality higher education services, lack of desired subjects, insufficient quality, recognition by the employers and lack of employment opportunity were cited as factors that inhibit students for domestic education (Wilkins & Huisman, 2011; Oliveira & Soares, 2016). The excess demand of tertiary education and incapacity of domestic higher education to meet it arouse the demand for foreign degree in many developing countries (Larcen & Vincent-Lancrin, 2004; Fang & Wang 2014). It is not only the demand supply mismatch; the non-availability of desired subject in domestic education institutions also motivates students towards foreign education.

According to India skill report 2020 emphasizing on employment outcome of study reported that only 15% of fresh students are in demand after completion of their academic programme. In a survey, data collected by indeed website for job advertisement and salaries submitted by new graduate employees in 3 years duration reported that the average salary for a new Graduate (working for less than a year) is ₹ 16,269 per month in India. In contrast to it 51% of students who studied in UK claims that they earn above average salaries in their work life (UUKI, 2019). The ranking of institution denotes the quality of education imparting by institution to the students. A latest world university ranking released by Times Higher Education found that only six Indian universities come in top 500 position which indicate about less quality institutions and unattractive features of domestic education. The quality depends on qualified and experienced faculty. Article on 'structural flaw in Indian education' in The Hindu newspaper discussed about fifty per cent of faculty positions at government institutions are vacant. A Deloitte gathering of sixty three deans of top-tier institutions revealed that eighty percent reported that lack of quality faculty as their biggest challenge. Less number of faculty holding doctorate degree with relatively disproportionate increase of number of higher education institutions add up the lack of quality in domestic institutions offering Indian degrees (Bishnoi, 2019). There is a mismatch between labour market demand and the skills students acquire after graduating from the institutions. The factors may be contributed to the weak linkages and guidance from industry, focus on imparting technical skills than job-oriented skills, poor infrastructure and delivery platforms and limited/no options to take up more courses of choice in domestic programmes (FICCI, 2016).

### **Characteristics of foreign Institution as determining factor**

Respect and recognition attached with foreign degree, good employment opportunity, exposure for multicultural environment, perceived 'intra host country quality differences', prospects in regional job market and life style associated with programmes offered in IBCs were reported as motivating factors for the students (Wilkins, 2011, 2012, 2015). Study of the British Council (2015) analysed the fee structure of the collaborative programme offered by Indian institution and found that fee for Indian partner institutions were in range of 1,200 to 3,000 euro while the UK university fee was in addition of this and averaged 600 euro per annum for undergraduates and 1,000 euro per annum for post graduate. This indicates medium to low fee range in the market that is most reliant for the students. A study done on Thai students' choice for Australian offshore campus found that students looking for quality education assess the information on the university, campuses, academic courses, subjects, and services for international students as part of their decision making (Pimpa, 2005). The most common characteristics of the institutions for motivating students was found as reputation and ranking of the institution that is linked with the prestige at national as well as international level. Study conducted by Alves and Raposo (2010) found that the perception of current image and reputation of the institution weighed over the quality measures and formed belief to influences the choice. The students select collaborative program based on their perception of getting quality, reputation and best experience from foreign degree. The belief that an international qualification is superior, with access to

learning support services, better career prospect opportunities, a valuable life experience and educational exposure, a positive view of international institutions accumulate prior to enrolment (Pimpa, 2004). The reputation of elite world class institution may benefit its branch campus in another country to have a favourable organisational image (Wilkins & Huisman, 2015). Brand image as well as institution's years of academic experience were also suggested as determining factors (Wu, 2014; Migin et al., 2015). Ranking of institution is perceived as the quality of the institution as well as programme that is instrumental for employment opportunity and students relied while making choice for institutions and their programme offerings (Chia, 2011; Kusumawati, 2013). Cubillo et al. (2006) suggested reputation as part of institution's image that broadly consists of corporate image that acknowledge prestige, academic reputation, branding and ranking; faculty image that accounts for quality faculty and facilities. Studies carried out in different Asian countries reported personal reasons, university image attractiveness, reputation, prestige, program evaluation and city are significant motivational factors in the pursuit of student's choice for learning institutions (Pimpa, 2007, Sung & Yang, 2008, Li, 2019). Alves and Raposo (2010) studied on student's decision to study at international branch campus and found that students believed that the study at an international branch campus would make them stand out among the peers once they entered in the job market. They also perceived that the degree they will earn from branch campus might be highly valued, recognised and accepted in the labour market.

### Expectation for employment

Education is seen as an investment on individuals to enhance the productivity by instilling the body of knowledge and required skills that further enhance the adaptability and learning of new technology and specific skills that contributes in the productivity and ensures return on investment (Harris & Jerrett, 1990). It is considered that higher the educational attainment higher would be the chance of employment and high wages (Vincent-Lancrin, 2004). Presently global knowledge and skills are required to work conveniently in international culture with maximising productivity. In this context, studying abroad is considered to be increasingly important for professional careers (Parey & Waldinger, 2011). Cross border provision of education also meets the requirement of labour market in contemporary global world and produces labour force with global knowledge and skills. Studies propounded that students enrolled in double degree and joint degree programmes motivated for increase in the employment opportunities, develop global competences, confidence, mental flexibility, social skills, adaptable, resilience, language as well as life skills, higher capacity for working, increasing 'velocity of higher positions' and perception for value placed for such skills by potential employers (Russell et al., 2008; Culver et al., 2012; Krase, 2014). Many students are motivated to study at an international branch campus because they believe that local employers prefer them over other local institutions or because they believe that an international education and a foreign qualification will better prepare them for a career in the international labour market (Zimitat, 2008; Wilkins, 2011). The better probability of job, higher rate of return and developing new identity are few expectations of students enrolling in the program (Sidhu 2014; Wah, 2014).

### Conclusion

Foreign universities with their brand image for enhancing the probability of employment in labour market with higher returns give a place to get enrolled by the students that is perceived as a source to provide global exposure and skills with reasonable cost and according to the demand of the students. Highly aspired middle class to escalate social recognition and quality of life assume foreign universities as the institutions to fulfill their expectations, however, studies also indicate that incapacity of reputed Indian institutions to enroll large number of students with high selection criteria left those students who are capable to pay more but under achievers in academic domain. Foreign universities exist in tier from well reputed to average and low market reputation. Some of them allure gullible students to get foreign degree within the territory of India with high fee structure. NEP 2020 emphasize on establishment of quality and highly ranked foreign universities in India and recently UGC regulation 2023 on establishment of foreign universities in India may restrict the establishment and operation of low tier foreign universities in the name of 'foreign brand'.

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