Factors Influencing the Selection of Fee-Levying Higher Education Institutes by Computer Science Students in Sri Lanka

Gangani Chamarie Wickramasinghe[1], Lubna Ali Mohammed [2], Rathnayake Mudiyanselage Dhanapala[3]

[1&2]*Department of TESL, Faculty of Social Science, Arts and Humanities, Lincoln University College, Malaysia,*

[3]*Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of English Language Teaching, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka*

*Correspondence: gcwickramasinghe@lincoln.edu.my

Abstract

The demand for IT professionals in Sri Lanka has led to an increase in student enrolment in computer science (CS) degree programs, particularly in fee-levying Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). However, the competition among these institutes to attract students and the complexity of the decision-making process for students in selecting an HEI have raised the need for a better understanding of student expectations. This study aims to identify the factors influencing Sri Lankan students when choosing a fee-levying HEI for pursuing a CS-related degree program. Chapman's (1981) model of student college choice serves as the theoretical framework. The sample consists of 510 first and second-year undergraduates enrolled in CS-related degree programs across three state fee-levying and five private institutes. Thirty-five factors, categorized as student-related internal characteristics and external factors (HEI-related characteristics, influential individuals in the environment, and communication methods used by HEIs), were considered. The results reveal that student-related internal characteristics, HEI-related characteristics, and communication methods positively influence students' selection of fee-levying HEIs, while individuals in the external environment do not play a significant role in the selection process. These findings can help HEIs improve their recruitment strategies and better meet the expectations of computer science students in Sri Lanka