
**An investigation into the factors that influence students'
choice of a selected Private Higher Education Institution in
South Africa**

By

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Master of Technology: Business Administration

I confirm that:

- This dissertation is my own work;
- The contribution of my supervisor to the research was consistent with the normal supervisory policy;
- This work has not been previously accepted and is not concurrently submitted for any degree.

Signed_____ Date_____

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ABSTRACT

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world|” (Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001)

Education is not a luxury, education is compulsory.....

The world’s population is ever growing: children are entering school and completing school in their masses year in and year out. Unemployment is a crisis for countries and individuals. Living in poverty is as good as inviting death. With so much emphasis on education, it is intriguing to find solutions and use success to overcome the desire for revenge.

However, in South Africa the challenge is the number of individuals entering Higher Education. The particular challenge is the limited number of government subsidised institutions in South Africa. The country has over 500 000 students completing Grade 12 each year and the Department of Education is constantly striving to improve annual pass rates. However, the challenge remains that the number of seats available at government-subsidised institutions are extremely limited and cannot gratify the number of students completing the NSC examinations annually. They have a right to education. However, the university options offered to these individuals are extremely limited.

Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEIs) are endeavouring to bridge the gap in education and provide alternatives to higher education for individuals who have been rejected for seats at universities. Yet, another challenge is the plethora of PHEIs available in South Africa, making it a difficult choice for students. Whilst PHEIs in South Africa should not be regarded as a business option but rather a necessity,

they are not subsidised by government. Most are privately owned. These institutions compete for survival and unfortunately, revenue margins determine the future existence of these institutions.

The current study focuses on the alternative option for students at private higher education institutions. The researcher sets out to identify the factors that influence individuals to select a PHEI when exposed to the alternative of a university. It is clearly understood that there are criteria involved, which individuals will take into consideration before making a decision. The process of this decision is a lengthy one. However, this option only arises at a latter stage for the individual student as they receive rejection letters from universities. As a last ditch attempt, they are placed in a situation of taking hasty critical decisions. The researcher was interested in how these students reach a final decision on their selected PHEI and which factors play a role in the decision?

The overall aim of the study was to identify the factors that influence students' decision to choose a selected PHEI to further their studies after Grade 12. A quantitative research method was undertaken to achieve the objectives of the study. One hundred and seventy five students in a program were targeted to complete the survey.

The outcomes of this research will be used to improve the quality at PHEIs and ultimately the PHEIs will adopt strategies that will enable them to plug the gap that government-subsidised institutions cannot fill. The research will assist PHEIs in increasing the number of enrolments by adopting a more precise marketing strategy and using marketing budgets more appropriately; decreasing costs and increasing

the profit margins. This will ensure stronger establishments for PHEIs and contribute to the security of their existence.

In this study it was found that several factors impact on the choices made by students- these include factors driven by social forces, economics, school and community and habitus.

The main choice factors to influence the student's decision considered during this study were accessibility, branding, quality and cost. In concluding the research the outcomes and variables is discussed in detail in Chapter Five.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

“I believe that influence is one of the top needs if we’re going to be successful. You can’t avoid it. You must be able to move people to action if you’re going to get what you want. You can’t accomplish your goals without people. And if you’re dealing with people, you need to be able to influence them” (Jeffrey Charles, 2016).

Gratitude is Abundance

In my fresher years, I had an ambition to be educated and successful. I had dreams whereby I believed that one day I would be able to change the lives of people; add value to people, business and our country, as well as to lead by example. I was determined to surpass any challenge that lay ahead. I knew that every experience had a purpose. However, my choice of furthering my education was a challenging one. Being a female growing up in an orthodox Indian family was one which made higher education for me almost impossible back then. However “giving up” was never in my vocabulary. As I persevered, I endured in stages as I engaged towards my ambitions. Years later, I experienced yet another challenge, I had to raise a little girl on my own and that became my game changer. It was not an easy road indeed. However, I engaged whole-heartedly. Today, my Master’s Degree is dedicated to my daughter, Sinha Singh, whom I trust will use our life’s challenges to motivate her and sing our praises by her educational successes that will exceed mine and at an earlier age than I did.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CHE	Council on Higher Education
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
FET	Further Education and Training
HBI	Historically Black Institution
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HEQF	Higher Education Quality Framework
KMO	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure
KSA	Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes
L&D	Learning and Development
NDP	National Development Plan
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
PHEI	Private Higher Education Institution
PIHE	Private Institute of Higher Education
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

“Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it” (Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001).

1.1 Introduction

This study investigates the factors that influence students’ choice of a particular Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI), as opposed to choosing any other PHEI.

The study intends to identify those factors that have an influence on students’ concluding decision to attend a selected PHEI. The rationale for the research is based on the current situation in South Africa, whereby a large number of learners complete the National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations annually and the seats available for further study at government-subsidised higher education institutions are extremely limited and controlled.

An online article by the SABC, dated 6th January 2014, stated: “The University of South Africa’s (Unisa) first day of registration has once again been marked by long queues at the Durban campus. Thousands of students have been queuing outside the campus, others even slept outside the varsity premises to be the first in the line. Out of about 5 000 students, only 2 000 students were assisted with registration on Monday” (SABC, 2014:1).

Another online article by News 24, dated 10 January 2012 and titled “UJ Stampede avoidable”, indicated that a woman had lost her life and seventeen others were hurt in a retreat outside the University of Johannesburg as thousands of traumatised

potential students, as well as their parents, witnessed the situation unfold. In the article, TimesLive reported that in the previous year, there were only 11 000 places available for first-year students, whilst the university administered 85 000 applications. The article declared that the situation is no different at other universities. In Johannesburg, the University of the Witwatersrand, which has a maximum of 5 500 first-year spaces, was in receipt of 30 000 applications. In Durban, the University of KwaZulu Natal (UKZN), which can only admit 9 000 first-year students, received 61 500 first-year/ new student applications. The situation is similar at the University of the Free State (UFS), which admits only 4 000 new applicants but has received 13 000 applications (TimesLive, 2012:1).

Government-subsidised institutions cannot accommodate the vast number of students completing the NSC examinations. A plethora of private higher education institutions exist across South Africa, which present an alternative option for learners who have completed the NSC examinations and have not been accepted by government-subsidised institutions to pursue further studies. Traditional state subsidised institutions are insufficient to accommodate the large numbers of students who qualify for and wish to pursue post-school studies. This has created an opportunity for entrepreneurs to establish PHEIs.

Students are faced with a multitude of institutions at which they could pursue their post-school studies. According to Gupta (2008), most for-profit PHEIs function in the non-elite segment of higher education. This is a trend that South Africa is currently experiencing, where the numbers of profit-seeking PHEIs are growing significantly. This research therefore sets out to identify and investigate those factors that influence students' choice of a particular PHEI.

Taking the preceding information into consideration, the topic in question will influence the lives and careers of particular individuals, institutions and professionals in the higher education industry. Hence, one has to be absolutely precise in the information disseminated. With quantitative research, “the truth is out there” (Belnaves and Caputi, 2010:3). Data collection from respondents was administered through a questionnaire. Responses are depicted through numerical and statistical information, from an unbiased point of view. The results are guaranteed to be legitimate and are open for discussion and publication. For the purposes of this study, the quantitative research methodology had been utilised.

This study aims to elucidate the reasons why students choose a specific Private Higher Education Institution (PHEI) to study at, as opposed to choosing any other PHEI. The findings will be used to improve the quality at PHEIs and ultimately, PHEIs will adopt enabling strategies that will plug the gap that Government-subsidised institutions cannot fulfil. The research will assist PHEIs in increasing the number of enrolments by adopting a more precise marketing strategy and using marketing budgets more appropriately; thereby decreasing costs and increasing profit margins.

The process of choosing a private college can be challenging and stressful. Once a student has completed the application process and has been accepted to multiple institutions, the student’s process of determining which institution to attend is influenced by many factors (Pampaloni, 2010a).

Having knowledge of the factors that impact on student’s judgment to enrol at specific institutions provides these institutions with a greater understanding on how to motivate/attract prospective students to enrol at their institution. Admission offices

require knowledge of potential influential factors in the process of decision-making of admitted applicants.

Enrolment managers view first-time students as having a stronger impact financially as compared to transfer students since first-year students have the potential of being paying customers for four years. Therefore, there is a limitation of this study to first-time students. In order to grow enrolments while responding to decreasing budgets, higher education admissions officers can better meet the needs of their institutions by understanding and utilizing information on influential factors in the decision process of students as they move from accepted applicants to enrolled students.

1.2 Background to the Study

The vision statement of the South African Department of Basic Education states that the Department's intention is "to provide people with access to lifelong learning as well as education and training, which will in turn contribute towards improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa for all South Africans and people who live in South Africa" (Mission and Vision statement of the Department of Basic Education, South Africa, 2015). Training and education is therefore the cornerstone for the achievement of this vision, since it is the most important contributor to students securing professional employment and securing a successful future, thereby allowing them to contribute to the economy of the country and diminishing the South African unemployment rate.

Teaching and learning within South Africa's Higher Education environment has become an extremely competitive environment. Students encounter the challenging

decision of choosing an appropriate tertiary higher education institution (HEI) at which to further their post-school studies. The disparity between the large numbers of students that qualify for entry into tertiary institutions and the limited number of seats available means that not all students who qualify for tertiary study can be accepted into state-subsidised tertiary institutions. Those students who are unable to secure a place to further their studies at state-subsidised institutions are faced with the option of choosing a PHEI (Department of Education, 2014). This scenario has created an opportunity for entrepreneurs to establish PHEIs. However, many students that complete a qualification through a PHEI report that they are unemployed and they question the quality of the institution at which they studied or the qualification that they attained (Bezuidenhout, 2013). It has been observed that the quality of education at PHEIs can often be compromised in terms of price and in terms of quality. Students who are insufficiently conversant or unfamiliar with Higher Education Training (HET) and career pathing may choose a particular PHEI based on advertising/branding; accessibility; pricing; and other factors, while being oblivious to the positive or negative consequences of their choices.

The number of students registered at PHEIs nationally continues to fluctuate and is linked to the number of students completing the National Senior Certificate Examinations (NSC) who qualify to enter higher education institutions. Statistics, according to NSC Examination Technical Report issued by the Department of Basic Education (2014), reflect that the number of candidates enrolled for the National Senior Certificate assessment from 2010 to 2014 is averaging at over 500 000 annually. This number is high in relation to the number of seats available for first-year students at state-subsidised institutions.

According to the School Macro Indicator trend: Summary Reports 2011 from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) (2011), pass rates in the NSC examination since 1994 has been inconsistent over several years. For example, in 1994, 287 343 students passed with a senior certificate. In 2010, the number amplified to 364 513. The number of Bachelor endorsements escalated from 88 497 in 1994 to 126 371 in 2010 (Soobrayan, 2011:12). This represents a 43% increase, according to the Macro Indicator Trends in Schooling: Summary Report of the DBE (2011). The 2014 goal of the DBE was that fifty percent of learners attain their National Senior Certificate (DBE, 2010). “The Department’s action plan was to increase the number of learners who become eligible for a Bachelors programme at a University to 175 000 by 2014” (DBE 2010:44).

The aforementioned discussion indicates a challenge with respect to current seats at state/public post-high school institutions. The adverse current situation is exacerbated by the Department’s success in improving pass rates in the NSC examinations (DOE, 2009; DBE, 2010; DBE, 2011). This situation implies that a larger number of high school leavers will be faced with challenges in gaining entrance into government-subsidised higher education institutions. The successful growth in pass rates in the NSC examinations indicates that more students will qualify to enter post-high school education institutions. Overcrowding is currently indicated as a huge challenge in high schools, which is guaranteed to be carried over to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

In responding to the problem, this study proposes to investigate the factors which contribute to students choosing which PHEI to study at. The influence of factors such as branding of the institution; the quality of the product/course offered by the institution; the cost of studying at an institution; access to the institution; and

incentives offered by the institution was also investigated. The influence of the marketing mix of PHEIs was also explored.

The outcomes of the research will be used to explain the factors that drive students' choices in selecting a PHEI. Despite the perception that PHEIs are inferior to state-subsidised institutions and the fact that many graduates of PHEIs are unemployed (Bezuidenhout, 2012), the number of students enrolling at PHEIs continues to grow. The reason for this growth in student numbers needs to be investigated and explained. This research will provide an explanation of this phenomenon from a student perspective and could therefore serve to enhance the status and reputation of PHEIs by continuously increasing the total number of students registering at PHEIs; the profitability of PHEIs; the number of personnel employed at PHEIs; the quality of education offered; the employability of graduates completing their studies at a private higher education institute; and ultimately to contribute to the growth of the economy and the improved literacy level of South Africans. The current study will contribute to "improving the quality of life and building a peaceful, prosperous and democratic South Africa" (DOE, 2010), in keeping with the vision statement of the Department of Education to preserve high academic standards and quality.

Researchers have concluded that some of the expected tangible benefits of a college education include higher potential earnings and lifelong learning (Hossler and Braxton, 2010). As this research illustrates, there are benefits to attending college. The determination of which benefits facilitate the college choice selection process is the crux of this investigation. Even though the benefits of a college education are not tangible, factors that are important in the college decision process are viewed in college choice modelling. Choice modelling is an approach to determining factors that influence students' college choice. Conceptual framing will

be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two together with other college choice models such as: Econometric Models, Status-attainment Models, Information-processing Models as well as combined Models.

Luce (1959) developed a 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 modelling 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 of the reasoning behind decision making. Hossler & Associates (2010), as well as Braxton (2010), developed a college choice model, expanding on the works of Luce, Thurstone, McFadden and others. This model provided information around the college selection process of students in high school. Past models have provided an understanding of the process of college enrolment 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 affecting students have been studied in order to determine their importance in the college choice process. These categories include: (a) demographic influences; (b) social influences; and (c) institutional influences (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). 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 and Beasley, 2009).

Men have been shown to value athletics and social aspects of campus, while women are more concerned with the safety and diversity of an institution (Hayes, 2014). Race has been cited as a demographic factor in which significant differences occur amongst 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 and La Nasa, 2008). The socio-economic status of a student's family can strongly influence a student's college choice, with tuition increases occurring in many institutions (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008).

Social differences amongst students have been found to play a significant role in the college-choice procedures (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). Four sources have been highlighted as having the most influential social power on students. These social influences' include (a) parents; (b) secondary level (guidance counsellor, teachers, peers and friends); (c) collegiate athletics; and (d) reputation of the institution (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). Parental influence has been regarded as the single most powerful factor for students in their college choice process (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). Student influences including peers, friends, guidance counsellors and teachers play a significant role in high school seniors' decisions to apply and ultimately enrol at particular colleges. Helwig (2004) 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 students' decisions on where to enrol (Broekhemier and Seshadri, 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, 2010), namely promotional materials; proximity; and campus infrastructure

(Pampaloni, 2010). Promotional materials are often sent to high school students after national test sessions and continue to be delivered until a student enrolls at 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, 2009).

Reviewing materials sent by an institution is an imperative step of the decision process. However, campus visits are also a remarkable opportunity for an institution to sway a student in a positive or negative manner (Rosen, Curren and Greenlee, 2007). The organizational image exuded by a campus impacts the application and enrolment choice of a high school senior (Pampaloni, 2010).

1.3 Research Problem and Objectives

Students are faced with a large number of PHEIs that offer a wide selection of academic and vocational courses. The limited number of state-funded Higher Educational Institutions is disproportionate to the vast number of students who qualify for and who wish to pursue their post-school studies, which creates a bottleneck. Consequently, many students are either forced to, or choose to, pursue their post-school studies at PHEIs. Consequently, fertile ground exists to establish PHEIs which are financially lucrative to entrepreneurs. The benefits derived by entrepreneurs do not necessarily cascade to the student cohort, as many students who qualify at PHEIs are unemployed and may even be considered unemployable because of the nature of the qualification obtained from the selected PHEI (Bezuidenhout, 2013). Over 500 000 full-time students register to write the National Senior Certificate exams each year (National Senior Certificate Examination

Technical Report, 2014). Government-subsidised institutions in South Africa cannot cater for this number of students. Hence, The PHE sector continues to grow. Whether or not this growth is based on informed decisions taken by students is debatable.

1.3.1 Aim

The intention of the research is to ascertain the various elements that impact students' final decision and selection of a PHEI at which to further their studies.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

This study has the following objectives:

- To determine the degree of influence that advertising/branding plays in students' choice of a selected PHEI;
- To explore the role that accessibility plays in students' choice of a selected PHEI;
- To determine the level of impact that cost plays in students' choice of a selected PHEI; and
- To identify if quality is a factor of influence in potential students' choice of a PHEI.

1.3.3 Key Research Questions

- What role does advertising/branding play in determining students' choice of a selected PHEI?
- Does ease of accessibility determine students' choice of a selected PHEI?

- What role does cost play in determining students' choice of a selected PHEI?
- Does quality play a role in determining students' choice of PHEI?

1.3.4 Hypothesis

The statistical hypothesis is:

Ho: "There is no single factor that significantly affects students' choice of a private higher education institution". Multiple factors such as advertising, accessibility, cost and quality significantly affect students' choice of a private higher education institution.

1.3.5 Significance of the study

No significant work has been carried out on the determining factors influencing students' choice of South African PHEIs. Therefore, the researcher undertook a multi-provincial study of factors that affect students' choice of a private institute as perceived by students of the selected PHEI in Gauteng, KZN and the Western Cape. The study is important as it has exposed the determinant influences of students' selection of a private college in South Africa.

To this end, the study will contribute to higher education institutions in that the findings of this research will provide invaluable information to entrepreneurs in the private higher education sector that will enable them to attract and persuade students in the selection of a PHEI.

For the General body of knowledge: The researcher aspires for this study to provide additional knowledge to the existing body of knowledge on the general subject of elements that impact a student's decision of which PHEI to further their studies at.

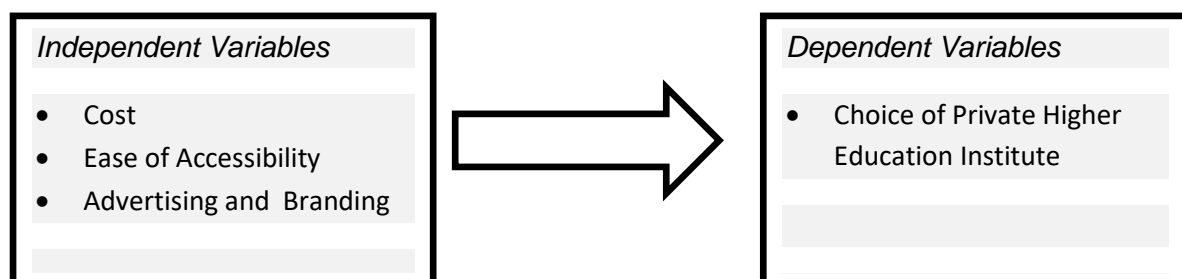
To The Researcher: the study findings will enable the researcher to undertake her duties with greater knowledge, efficiency and effectiveness.

1.4 Research Methodology

The research design used in this project is an exploratory quantitative design. This design is the most appropriate as it helped the researcher to ascertain how respondents rate the factors that sway the selection decision to attend a non-governmental tertiary level institute.

Conceptual Framework: Causal Relationship of Independent and Dependent Variables

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework



Source: (Osman, 2016:216)

1.4.1 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique employed by this study was Simple Random Sampling, which gives each subject an identical opportunity of being nominated. In-order to obtain the respondents for the questionnaire, simple random sampling was used for the research.

1.4.2 Data collection procedure

The researcher commenced by writing a letter requesting the managers'/co-ordinators' of the organisation permission to carry out the study. Once permission was granted, the research instrument (questionnaires) was distributed to participants for completion.

Secondary data was collected from websites, books and journals. All other relevant information or literature is taken as secondary source data. The data thus collected was arranged in a recognized format.

1.4.3 Data analysis Procedure

Collected data was examined using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22, in both the pilot study as well as the actual study.

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

This study was conducted in the Gauteng, KZN and Western Cape provinces of South Africa. The study included at least one campus from each of the provinces.

1.6 Limitations of the study

As with all research, there are limitations that need to be acknowledged and addressed in relation to the current study, namely time. A lack of sufficient time limited the full realisation of what this study wanted to achieve. More time was needed to visit the targeted branches of the organisation and their customers. Sometimes, re-visits were necessary. The time factor had a negative impact on the research. Budgeting constraints were an additional factor that had a negative impact on the study.

1.7 Outline of Research Chapters

The study is organised into five chapters, namely:

- **Chapter One: Introduction**

Chapter One describes what the investigation entails and offers a brief summary in relation to the topic. The chapter starts with an introduction and it proceeds to consider the problem statement that encouraged the researcher to conduct this

research; research objectives; justification of the research; clarification of concepts; and research methodology.

▪ **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

The theoretical/speculative framework is discussed in this chapter, which comprises national and international experiences pertaining to customer satisfaction and factors that affect it. It examines how various theoretical paradigms define the concept of customer satisfaction. Factors affecting customer satisfaction are also discussed within Chapter Two. The literature reviewed in this chapter was relevant to the problem statement and investigation. Collected works from previous studies/research were reviewed and are used in forthcoming chapters to justify and provide recommendations to PHEIs in future.

▪ **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

Chapter Three concentrates on the methodology engaged in this study. It ends with a framework that shows the exact roadmap of the study. The chapter forms a guide for the research project.

▪ **Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Data Analysis**

Chapter Four presents the data collected through the quantitative survey. Data is presented according to the research questions and the variables identified in the

frame of reference. Data was analysed according to the research questions with the use of SPSS version 22. The data is analysed and turned into information for future readers and researchers to understand and implement.

▪ **Chapter Five: Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations**

Chapter Five concludes the research by drawing together arguments made in relation to the objectives of the study and the questions. The conclusions are drawn from the findings of the data produced in the previous chapter and justified with further reference to the literature reviewed in Chapter two.

With the objective that this research will be used for future reference and will impact on the education industry and potential higher education students, recommendations drawn from the conclusion are discussed for future researchers and the higher education industry. This includes PHEIs as well as potential higher education students.

1.8 Summary

Chapter One delivered insight into the reasoning behind the investigation, with an insight into the background of the study, inclusive of an outline of the problem researched; the methodology used in the research to collect and analyse the data; as well as related limitations and delimitations experienced by the researcher during the research/study.

Chapter Two examines literature related to Private Higher Education providers, as well as Government-subsidised education providers; management of institutions; the factors influencing education; theoretical frameworks; and models associated with student choices of education institutions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

“Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself” (Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001)

2.1 Introduction

Within chapter two, previous case studies pertaining to students' choice of Private Higher Education Institutes are reviewed. College Choice Models and factors of influence are proposed and addressed. For the purpose of this study, it is useful to note the observation of Liu (2005), along with others who relate that, “Most of the studies in college choice were conducted in the United States and other Western countries, like Australia and some European countries”.

2.2 PHEIs in South Africa

Research conducted by Naidoo (2011) from Tshwane University of Technology indicated that in South Africa there are eighty-seven registered and twenty-eight provisionally registered PHEIs. This list encompassed those PHEIs which offered full qualifications and were registered on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 5-10 [Department of Higher Education (DHET), 2011: 9].

Lamb (2010) posits that marketing directly contributes to the realisation of business objectives. Kotler and Keller (2009) concur with Lamb that in the modern view of

marketing, all marketing activities should be driven through identifying the customers' needs and satisfaction.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE) clearly states that all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have been created by apartheid planners in the apartheid era and hence are declared products of apartheid as well as segregation. Badat (2007) concurs with the CHE that all HEIs were profoundly shaped by the pre-1994 era, which was the apartheid era. According to Mabizela (2007), people have witnessed the transformation of PHEIs to becoming profit-driven, as compared to the traditional PHEIs created by churches, etc. which were non-profit driven.

2.3 Role of PHEIs in Higher Education

PHEIs play a vital role as Government unfolds the crisis of inadequate HEIs in South Africa. Government is trying determinedly to formalise and incorporate private provision into Higher Education. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) suggested an integration of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) with the DHET datasets of registered PHEIs (Green Paper for Post School Education and Training, 2012). DHET also suggested a stronger association between governmental and non-governmental education providers. The Green Paper also advocates improved understanding and support; student mobility, as well as articulation and progression routes (DHET 2012: 49).

2.4 Changes in Higher Education

Governments are experiencing pressure with a snowballing demand for Higher Education, particularly in countries that are still developing where demand is greater than supply (Levy *et al.* 2009). This scenario is also observed in South Africa where admission problems are experienced due to recent Grade 12 examination results which created an increase in demand for Higher Education (Chuenyane *et al.* 2011).

In terms of Global privatisation and the 'marketisation' of the Higher Education Industry (HEI), Tait and De Jager (2009: 1026) indicate that the learning/education sector "has not only become competitive, but also more commercialised". Students are indicating strong commercial behaviour to HEIs by choosing a Higher Education Institution based on factors such as cost-benefit analysis i.e. seeking higher quality and lower costs (Maringe, 2006).

2.5 Challenges of South African Tertiary systems

According to Mouton, Louw and Strydom (2013: 12, 285), the higher education White Paper 3 is intended to transform the tertiary education system by changing the size and shape of institutions: the autonomy; nature; character of students; demographics; management and governance of institutions; impact of student politics at colleges; etcetera. When the article was published, the South African Higher Education system was confronted with challenges that were multi-dimensional and required urgent interventions. The article states that in South Africa, benchmarking still requires establishment with regard to the National Senior Certificate (NSC). Consequently, students that attend first-year higher education

experience challenges in adapting to the post-school environment. Furthermore, due to the under-performance of the management of institutions, in 2011-2012 many universities were placed under administration which contributed to the existing doubt that lingers in minds regarding the quality of South African higher education. This addresses 'quality', which is a current factor being investigated in public versus private sector higher education.

Accordingly, the SA system in Higher Education underwent considerable pressure to offer admittance to students, as well as excellence in education (Vandeyar, 2010). The tertiary system continues to be dominated by considerations of transformation relating to the merger and restructuring of HEIs, despite the shift from apartheid to democracy (Mouton, Louw and Strydom, 2012). Elliot (2005) posits that transformation relating to restructuring and merger drew attention to excellence and elevated the spectre of academic levelling. The amalgamation of HEIs created confrontations towards transformation and hence created trust issues (Eloff, 2009).

Additional challenges faced at Government institutions were:

- The levels of preparedness of students in first year at HEIs;
- The role of HEIs in offering quality education;
- The management structure of tertiary institutions;
- Attrition rates;
- Instability in the roles of academics and the admission of foreign students at HEIs within South Africa;
- Government-subsidies of HEIs are notorious. For example, through NSFAS (National Student Funding Aid Scheme); and

- Justification for the establishment of more tertiary institution in South Africa to cope with the high demand for tertiary education (Mouton, Louw and Strydom, 2013:286).

2.6 Management of Tertiary institutions

As previously mentioned, between 2011 and 2012, South African government-subsidised institutions were placed under administration. Consequently, the management and governance of institutions needed serious intervention (Macupe, 2012). The situation was investigated by independent assessors and the outcomes according to the reports produced, were devastating. The findings indicated poor governance, management and financial maladministration (Macupe, 2012). Macupe (2012) further reveals that the assessors' reports indicated that the council members at the five universities did not understand their responsibilities and functionalities, often acted unsuitably and were cohesively destructive. Policies and Procedures for government were incorporated by Prof. Asmal, who was the Minister of Education, in order to employ administrators at these institutions (Macupe, 2012).

2.7 Changing Roles of Academics in Public Universities

The academic profession continuously undergoes transformation. Enrolments of students have increased noticeably over a period of time and will continue to do so. Academics are expected to endure additional responsibilities over and above their current job functions (CHE, 2010; Ntshoe and De Villiers, 2008). Eight universities were incorporated into a study by Ntshoe and De Villiers (2008) who reported that:

- In an attempt to cut costs, higher education institutions expected maximum input from the academic staff.
- Academic employees of government-funded HEIs operate within a competitive environment. Hence, re-deploying funding allocated to academics may have a ripple effect on the operations of teaching and learning, or even other applications of academic knowledge.

The Council on Higher Education (CHE, 2010) indicated that two main factors concerning academic staff were the replacement of aging academic and research staff; and secondly, increasing the proportion of black staff as insufficient black academic staff meant black students had insufficient black role models.

In respect of the aforementioned evidence and reports, academic responsibilities at universities clearly became challenging and expansive. In addition to academic job functions, they were required to produce journal articles for additional subsidy and to qualify for promotions. Further expectations were to satisfy duties in administration, management and support without additional incentives. Consequently, staff became demotivated and universities and students ultimately faced a challenge (Ntshoe and De Villiers, 2008).

2.8 Establishing more universities in South Africa

Government encouraged an additional investigation to ensure continuous growth in the number of students that pass with endorsements. The advantages of distance learning have also not yet fully emerged. Therefore, two new universities within South Africa were officially approved by government, allocated to the provinces of

the Northern Cape and Mpumalanga. This is being viewed by the ANC Youth League as a success initiative to conquer unemployment, marginalisation of dispossessed/homeless people (Evans, 2012). The universities that were recently developed were proposed to function as regional learning centres with the objective of delivering academic programmes on a level of excellence which would inspire students to pursue courses with a longer duration (Staff Reporter, 2006). The quality of education in South Africa is in a state of decline (Van Damme, 2000); there is unemployment of graduates (Badat, 2010); there is negligence of management at particular institutions (Macupe, 2012; Van Coller, 2012); and pitiable research performance (Price, 2012). Hence investigators agree strongly with Van Coller (2012) in that more tertiary institutions in South Africa are not required.

According to an article by Mabelebele (2015: 6) "HE in South Africa has emerging challenges and implications for universities". Mabelebele (2015) indicated some of the challenges experienced are the Massification of Higher Education; State funding and return on investments which has declined; instability of government-higher education relationships; lack of development and progression plans for academics; onset of ICTs and implications for universities; internationalisation; and revolution. The assumption made in the publication was that HE is facing common challenges with common drivers globally re-shaping the purpose of higher education; Governance; and accountability frameworks being re-negotiated. Many systems are in a state of paralysis due to the fact that HE is not adapting to the transforming environment of academic policies and product choices.

Mabelebele (2015) elaborated that Trend 1 is Massification and that African Public Universities have student enrolments that exceed their capacity especially in Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa. Student enrolment in South Africa is expected to

escalate from one million students to 1.6 million students by 2030 (NDP). India needs to create 1500 universities and 35 colleges by 2020 (National Knowledge Commission, India). The number of private institutions in China has soared to more than 630 in 2010, up from 20 in 2007. A proliferation of PHEIs in Africa (for-profit, faith-based) established universities in South Africa that have satellite campuses in Africa offering franchised qualifications. Available literature shows that countries such as the United Kingdom (Smith, 2007) focused on community colleges (Galowich, 2002), as well as young adult students (Roszkowski and Reilly, 2005). Reviewed studies within this chapter relate mainly to four-year colleges conducted in the United States and focuses on traditional-age students.

Chapter Two is divided into five major sections:

- section one covers models of college choice;
- Section Two describes factors influencing college choice;
- Section Three discusses Higher Education in Philippine and college selection research;
- Section Four explains the logic behind college choice research in the United States in relation to the Philippine state of affairs; and
- Section Five provides a synopsis of Choice Models relevant to college selection. College choice/selection is referred to as “a complex, multi-stage process during which an individual develops aspirations to continue formal education beyond high school, followed by a decision to attend a specific college, university or institution of advanced vocational training” (Hossler and Braxton,2010).

Since the 1970s, much research has been done with the intention of creating better marketing strategies since there has been increased competition at university and college level due to the decrease in the number of traditional-age students (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Interest of students in college choice at the state and federal level was fuelled by government public policy related issues such as student financial aid and access of a student to higher education (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Hossler and Braxton (2010) proposed that College Choice Models be categorised into the following groups, namely:

- Econometric models;
- Status-attainment models;
- Information-processing models; and
- Combined models

The Jacksons combined model (1982), Litten's (1982), as well as the Hossler and Gallagher (2015) models were used extensively (Hossler, 2015). These will be briefly reviewed in this study.

There is a scarcity of research on college selection decisions of students around the globe. Therefore, scholarly research investigations are obligatory especially for administrators in education. According to the Econometric model of choice, the elementary belief underlying the model is that students maximise the efficacy of the cost-benefit factor. For example 'high quality low cost' (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

These models assume that as students consider colleges, they engage in a variety of activities, namely:

- They detail the beneficial and non-beneficial factors of each;
- Correlate the usefulness or a monetary significance with each of the characteristics;
- Derive at assumptions and evaluate the outcomes of one decision versus another; and
- Thereafter deduce rational decisions in order to cost effectively (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

According to Fuller (2009), “the first assumption gives equations explaining enrolments as a function of characteristics of potential students and the history of the schools attended” (Fuller, 2009). The preceding assumption explains “the enrolment decision of an individual student as his revealed preference among the available schooling and work alternatives” (Fuller, 2009).

The second branch emphasises that each student as opposed to HEI and the Econometric model could be further sub-divided into two types. The first centres on the choice of students between academic (college) and non-academic (e.g. military service or the workforce) alternatives (Fuller, 2009) while the second concentrates on the choice of students of a selected college as opposed to the various alternative HEIs (Liu, 2005). Hossler (2009) posits that a key flaw of the Econometric model is the assumption that students possess all the required information to make coherent choices to maximize utilities, which in reality is not always correct.

Furthermore, Espinoza (2007) contends that Econometric models do not consider how institutions influence the college selection process. Choice Models of Status-

Attainment (sociological) accentuate “how socialization processes, family conditions, interactions with peers and school environments help shape students’ college choices” (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). Sewell and Shah (2008) interrogated the relations of socio-economic status, academic performance and parental influence on the aspirations of students into higher education.

Sewell and Shah (2008) emphasised the socio-psychological and socio-structural history of teaching and learning, as well as the work-integrated learning achievement. The Econometric models accept the rationality that decisions taken by students are always ascertained and or maintained; while the models of Status Attainment have greater communication between factors that assess and evaluate the individualities of students and comprehensive social constructs (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

The distinct benefit of using the Combined Models proposes 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 perspective of economics” (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

According to Hossler (2009) during the search stage the college selection process can be examined through an alternative perspective called Information-Processing. The Information-Processing Model posits that obtaining and evaluating the knowledge of the institution in a social situation is a fundamental aspect of decision-making. This standpoint indicates that aspects of the theory must be considered in choice selection and sociology, in particular social investments as well as socialization (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Combined Models of College Choice incorporate facets of the economic and sociological models and may deliver a more descriptive influence than any single perspective (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Jackson's Three-Phase Model (2009) consists of three phases, namely preference; exclusion; and evaluation. It is in the preferential phase that Jackson (2010) advocates, that this is when the student develops desires with sociological discoveries, with the strongest associates' aspirations being (in descending order of level of influence): academic accomplishment and context as well as family experience. Jackson (2010) applies economic theory and upholds that the decision-making process of college choice is fundamentally a process of eliminating institutions (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Jackson (2010) affirms that the "students' choice sets depend on their exclusion criteria, which in turn depends on their anticipated financial resources and their academic experience" (Jackson, 2010). However, Jackson (2010) deviates from Econometric models in maintaining that students do not have the ability to make rational decisions nor do they obtain perfect information. With the limited evidence available, it is implied that institutions' material is not readily available for students who naturally evaluate and eliminate from their list of choice-set institutions (Jackson, 2010). During the phase of evaluation, the remaining options in the student's choice-set is tacitly evaluated "translating his or her preferences into a rating scheme, rating each option in the choice set, and selecting according to these ratings" (Jackson, 2010).

The final phase, Jackson (2010) notes, is institutional costs whereby job opportunities and location of the institution have the strongest influence. Together

with these variables, interaction of family background and academic experience follow closely. Jackson (2010) posits that family history; student academic involvement; geographic location of the institution; and institutional costs have relatively strong inspiration for students' set-choices. Moderate influences are factors such as information obtained; college characteristics; and employment attributes, whereas social experience has a weaker influence. A limitation was identified in that the models of Jackson (2010) and Chapman (2014) fails to address the actual process of college selection but emphasises the factors which influence ultimate decision of the student (Merranko, 2013).

Merranko (2013) contends that although college administrators' developing an enrolment plan is well supported in Jackson's model, it is extremely limited in that the model is limited in considering alternative variables discussed in models by other researchers.

Litten's Five-Phase Model (2014) recommended a procedure comprising following phases:

- Aspirations to attend higher education;
- Decision to start process by engaging with institutions;
- Obtaining information regarding the institution and course material;
- Applications to institutions/ universities; and
- Enrolment or admission into final choice institution.

Litten's model acknowledged a multiplicity of variables influencing the college selection process, including:

- Background of student (race, income, socio-economic status, parents' qualification, family beliefs, parents' qualities, ethnicity, gender);
- Personal attributes (academic performance, self-esteem, personal morals and values, benefits/characteristics, personality/lifestyle);
- High school experience (social history and quality of the high school attended);
- Student's academic performance (pass rate and academic attainment/knowledge);
- Environment (financial, cultural and traditional background);
- Marketing and advertising influences/media used (parents/guardians, guidance counsellors/ programme advisors, peers, promotional material, staff of the college, other media/advertising);
- Institution's characteristics (cost, size of the institution, programs/courses offered, atmosphere at the institution, management style);
- Institution's policy and procedures; and
- public policy in the form of financial funding available (e.g. NSFAS, bursaries etc.) (Litten, 2014).

Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) Three-Phase Model draws from earlier studies conducted by Jackson (2010). The model involves predisposition, search and choice (see Figure 2.1). Individual and institutional factors network and result in a variety of outcomes. During each stage, Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) student characteristic and behaviour is not taken into consideration in the Three-Phase model. However, quality and description of the secondary school attended by the student is taken into consideration.

Figure 2.1: The Three-Phase Model of College Choice (2013)

Model Dimensions	Influential Factors		Student
	Individual Factors	Organizational Factors	Outcomes
PREDISPOSITION (Phase 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Student Characteristics ◆ Significant Others ◆ Educational Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School Characteristics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. College Options b. Other Options
SEARCH (Phase 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Student Preliminary College Values ◆ Student search activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ College & University Search Activities (search for students) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Choice Set b. Other Options
CHOICE (Phase 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Choice Set 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ College & University Courtship Activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Choice

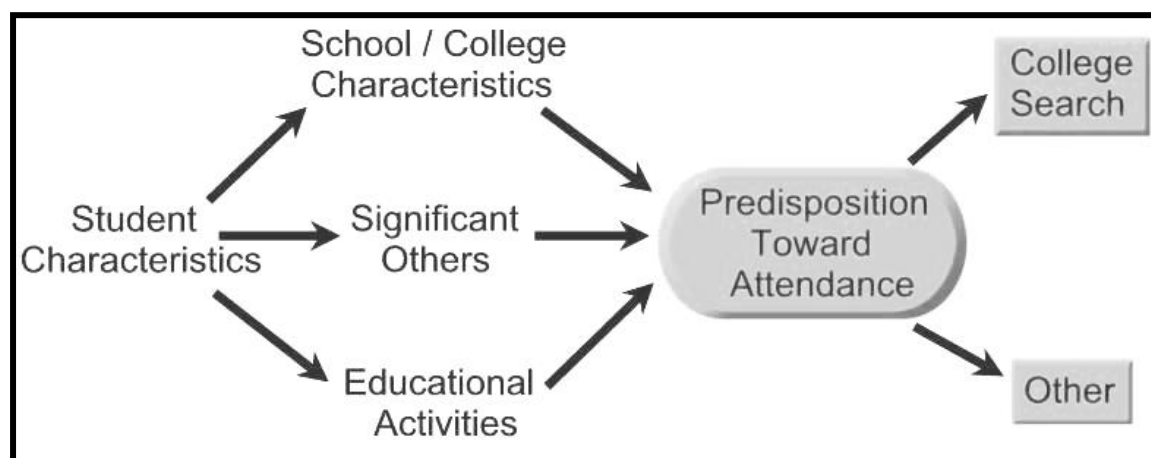
Source: Hossler and Gallagher (2013)

Previous studies on college choice investigated how students' history, academic achievements and aspirations to attend higher education are interlinked with institutional expectations. Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) model incorporated institution/ university factors such as student admission and space availability at higher education institutions (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). However, the model fails to address how the institution and individual student characteristics impact in a diverse student population environment (Merranko, 2013).

Southerland (2006) highlighted an additional shortcoming of the Model of Hossler and Gallagher (2015) which stated “almost all of the research upon which they build their model is based upon studies of traditional college-bound high school students”. Contemporary students are “increasingly older, returning to school because of work-related issues and attending on a part-time basis” (Broekemier, 2002).

As Hossler and Gallagher, (2015) postulated, the model is largely sociological. The model refers to background individualities which are associated with the Pre-disposition stage. The pre-disposition stage is the point when students decide to attend HE. Historical background and individualities of students are, according to Hossler and Gallagher (2015), collective in terms of their effect in that the way in which they influence a decision will vary at different stages in the process. The Origination phase (see Figure 2.2), labelled ‘Predisposition’ are “developmental phases in which students determine whether or not they would like to continue their education beyond high school” (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). The authors caution that Predisposition and Aspiration are two different stages in the process and should not be associated or categorised in the same context. Aspiration stresses the intention to want to study at HEIs, whereas the decision taken to go to college is Predisposition (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Figure 2.2- Predisposition (Phase 1)



Source: Hossler and Gallagher (2015). Adapted

Historically, the Predisposition phase has been the least researched of the three stages (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). Hossler and Gallagher (2015) identified some background characteristics together with attendance and the associated impact on the students' choice is becoming stronger, namely socio-economic positioning; academic ability of the student; as well as the characteristics of peers (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

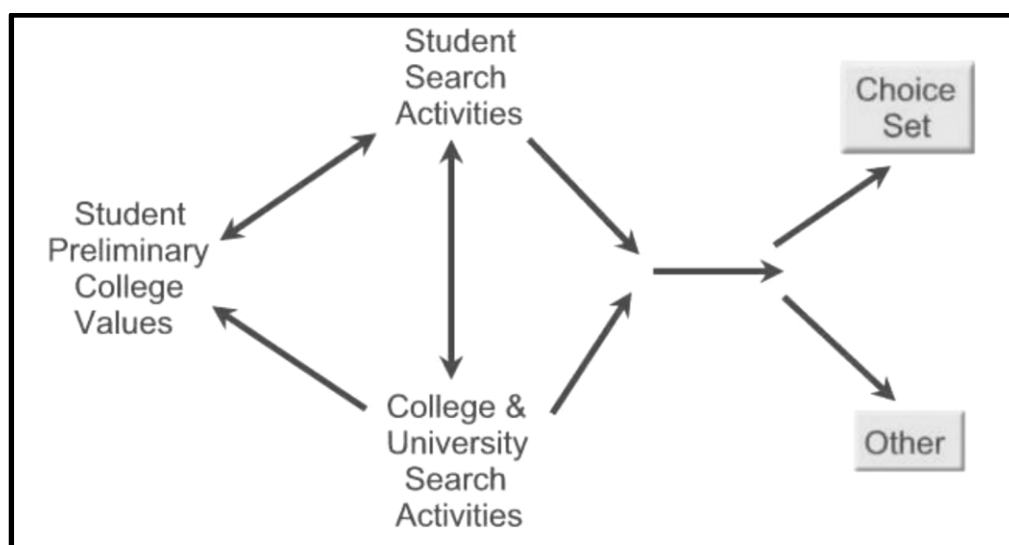
Furthermore, the authors described college factors which network with student factors to impact on a final college decision (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015), namely high school attended and the experiences as well as the characteristics of the HEI (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). However, these HEI factors do not share strong interconnections with attendance at college, as well as the background or historical characteristics mentioned above (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). Even though the factors moulding the final decision or predisposition are not clearly understood, it is

safe and consistent to state that high school students commence with obtaining information in the earlier stages of secondary school (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Hossler and Gallagher (2015) posit that research has indicated that students would have stereotypically decided by the 9th or 10th grade that they intend to pursue HE. According to Figure 2.3 below, the second phase is called Search. At this stage a student who intends pursuing higher education obtains information relevant to the institutions (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). The student's "choice set," which is a shortlist of institutions to which the student will essentially send out applications (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

There is increased interaction between institutions and students as during the search stage, students research institutions and at that point in time institutions are looking for students (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015:213). Hossler and Gallagher (2015) suggest that students' social aspects, namely ability, socio-economic position and parental qualification, are aspects that influence the search quality.

Figure 2.3. Search (Phase 2)



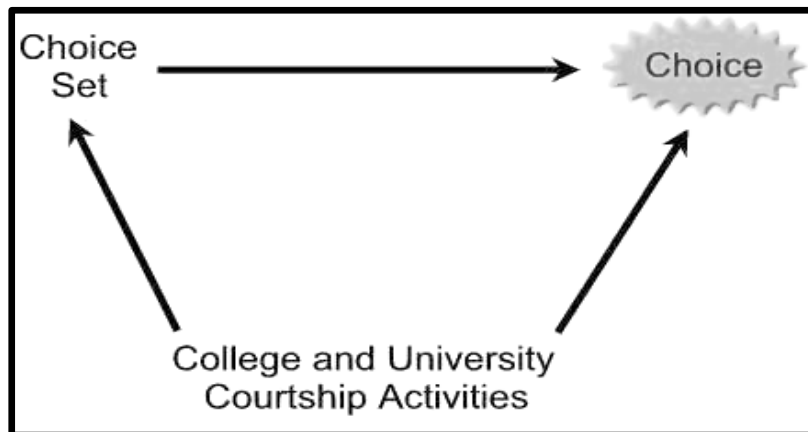
Source: Hossler and Gallagher (2015). Adapted

Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) research, contrary to Econometric models, does not assume that students have the correct information to make rationalised decisions. They acknowledge that students do not rationalise the usage of information in the correct manner and posit that lacking accurate knowledge with regard to the actual cost of attending the institution and the financial obligations may exacerbate this problem (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Cabrera and La Nasa (2008) postulate that the premature stage usually commence in the early stage at tenth grade. The third phase, depicted in Figure 2.4 below is the designated Choice of a HEI. After evaluation of the institutions in their choice set, students have decided where they will attend (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). A challenging researching phase is one where there is a lack of information with regard

to the actual number of applications each student submits (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Figure 2.4. Choice (Phase 3)



Source: Hossler and Gallagher, (2015). Adapted

From the diagrammatic representation, one can see that the students' fondness; quality; characteristics of the HEI; financial assistance and institution's "courtship activities" (e.g. merit awards received; non-financial based activities; on-campus banquet; letters of acknowledgement and community work; etc.) may decide the outcomes (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). However, researchers indicate concern that the relationship between choice, quality and price is delicate to a number of varying factors and may sometimes not augur for easy generalities. These outcomes specify that financial subsidies and actual costs affect the student completing high school. However, the effect could vary amongst different institutions, as well as students Hossler and Gallagher's (2015). Model of Research Organizing Framework indicates that models have advantages and disadvantages in understanding the

composite process of selecting an institution. However, McDonough (2004) iterates that the Model of Hossler and Gallagher (2015) is predominantly regarded as the “prevailing” model. McDonough (2004) notes that the model is useful when considering the sequence of those factors which impacts on the selection process for the learners; guardians and parents; guidance counsellors; and other outside resources.

This study utilised Hossler and Gallagher’s model (2015) with the three phases, namely predisposition; search of information; and choice-selection as the model delivered the institutional structure for the findings discussed within this chapter (Braxton, 2012). Relevant investigations to varying elements that impacted on the choice-selection process were inspected to identify the approximate choice phase predisposition, search or choice in which the findings are applied (Espinoza, 2014).

2.9 Factors Influencing College Choice

2.9.1 Disproportion between supply and demand in Higher Education

An alarmingly high number of students completing the NSC exams is faced with challenges in being placed at a University as state-subsidised institutions cannot accommodate such large numbers of students. Students who intend to pursue further studies therefore have no other option but to seek placement/registration at a PHEI. “The marked proliferation of private higher education institutions (PHEI), capitalising on government’s inability to provide for the ever-increasing demand for HET, has probably contributed to the above-mentioned trend. Whether or not morally

justified, most PHEIs are essentially businesses that, in their search for profit, exploit opportunities in the HET industry” (Levy, 2008).

2.9.2 Price, Product, Place and Promotion at PHEIs

“To ensure long term sustainability, the concept of marketing philosophy propagates the creation, communication and delivery of meaningful superior customer value” (Kotler and Keller, 2012). PHEIs therefore embark on active advertising campaigns and promotions intending to highlight values of the product that they deliver. The effectiveness of these advertising campaigns in influencing students to choose a particular PHEI therefore needs to be investigated.

According to Altbach (2009) and Levy (2010), PHEIs have become more profit-bearing and commercialised in their functioning, dependent on the revenue generated for survival. Intensifying the pressures of demand, the following elements encourage PHEIs to become entrepreneurial:

- reduced funding;
- the significant growth in the number of PHEIs; and
- globalisation (Mabizela,2007).

Mabizela (2007) remarks that marketisation is being subscribed to in that the private sector is replacing the role of the government progressively with the aim of maximising profits rather than social development. Additionally, Maringe (2006) states that the HEI situation has become progressively modest in that student are becoming eagle-eyed selectors in the HE industry. Consequently, HEIs must therefore acclimate.

2.9.3 Marketing Mix for Education

Hayes (2009) describes the Marketing Mix as the combination of strategic and convenient characteristics of marketing used by businesses to create the products required by their constituents (Hayes, 2009). Variables include such elements as product/service offered; cost/price of the service/product; geographical location; advertising campaigns; consumers and suppliers/people; and processes. Kotler and Fox (1995) expanded on Hayes' (2009) work to develop an educational version of the marketing mix whereby 'product' included 'programme' instead, which is then a similar representation of the initial marketing mix designed by Kotler and Fox (1995).

Other investigators including Frumkin (2007); Cubillo (2006); Hesketh and Knight (1999); Yusof (2008); and Gibbs and Knap (2002) have added to research on the influence of academic programmes on students' decisions.

Price is the second element of the marketing mix, Hayes (2009) defined price from an education viewpoint as the complete financial implications or cost that the student will incur to obtain a qualification. Price would include tuition, grants, loans or scholarships as well as non-financial costs such as commitment of time, inconvenience and closeness between the university and residence. Scholars including Domino *et al.* (2006); Wagner and Fard (2009); and Beneke and Huan (2010) have explored the impact/influence of the cost implication on students' selection of an HEI.

In the higher education context, price is commonly associated with the basic revenue of universities, which is the cost of tuition. The current economic crises have caused the cost of education to be a major criterion in the selection process due to the decrease in consumers' purchasing power (Pugsley, 2004). It is therefore crucial that

the price of the offering be moderated against the target market/profile and to ensure that the pricing does not impact on the brand image as consumers perceive that expensive products have more value. However, students may find that financial funding; bursaries and sponsorships may also be extremely attractive (Pugsley, 2004).

Educational pricing strategy is also concerned with attracting sponsorship and financial aid from the private sector.

Brassington (2006) states that in the marketing mix, the place element is defined as the structure of delivery and channels of distribution of the service offered. According to Kotler and Fox (1995), it deals with marketing, accessibility with regard to time and the physio-geographical/location of courses and the institution. 'Place' furthermore transmits the suitability and accessibility of the actual location of an institution. In addition to the description of 'place', Ivey and Naude (2004) and Maringe (2006) postulate that 'place' is the built-up setting and housing facilities of the campus.

Kotler and Fox (1995) states that technological advancement aided HEIs to improve their service delivery and access through the e-platform. Many international universities have introduced e-learning programmes to increase their share of the market and attract learners who experience challenges with regard to time constraints and geographical location, which precludes them in actually appearing for tuition at the institution.

Promotion communication is known as 'Promotion' in the marketing mix (Kotler and Keller, 2009). Hayes (2009) defines promotion as the events that convey the advantages of an institution which are envisioned to notify, recap or encourage a

significant target population regarding the benefits of obtaining a qualification from the institution. Various media are used by institutions to target the different sectors of their market share. Media varieties, for example community and national newspapers, internet and social media; a variety of television channels; local radio stations; and outdoor advertisements are used to connect with prospective learners and peers. Some HEIs depend on admission counsellors or representatives to visit high schools and deliver presentations to students with the intent of promoting the institution's benefits and gaining the competitive edge with regards to brand exposure.

In the marketing mix, 'people' represents the individuals or groups of employees of the institution that are involved in the actual service delivery of the academic and non-academic functioning of the campus, staff and other customers who repeatedly enhance the substantial value of the total service offering. Consumer perception of the service is influenced by the physical appearance of employees, as well as personal characteristics relating to the warmth and reception offered to their students and peers (Hinson, 2006).

Gibbs and Knapp (2002) contend that the physical factors that impact in the promotion of education and the institution will increase the perceptibility of its offering. Physical factors take account of structures; internal and external features/designs and adornments; layout of buildings; and colour co-ordination. Hayes (2009) indicated that physical proof has an instant impact which depicts the quality of the institution and provides assurance to peers and students.

Despite PHEIs educating a vast number of students, perceptions disputing the quality of qualifications offered by PHEIs still prevail in the HE landscape within

South Africa (Setswe, 2013). PHEIs are termed entrepreneurial companies' that depend on revenue and are profit bearing that are providers of teaching and learning of a "questionable quality; operate only in areas of great demand; and they contribute little to research" (Setswe, 2013).

Bezuidenhout (2012) states that PHEIs cannot contain the word "university" in their college or institution name. This commodity regulation against PHEIs fuels the perception that they are inferior to traditional universities.

Private higher educational institutions usually operated as profit-seeking companies and, like other organisations, are associated and influenced by exchange rates which are affected by public and political changes (Baine, 2010; Wang, 2010; Vidovich and Currie, 2011).

According to Virgiyanti (2011:578), "globally, HEIs are realising the value of marketing and are applying marketing theories and concepts to gain competitive advantages". Tait and De Jager (2009:1026) concur with Virgiyanti's observation by stating that the HE environment "has not only become competitive, but also more commercialised".

Internationally, PHEI admission is progressing fastest in the Higher Education (HE) sector (Altbach and Levy, 2005:1). Gürüz (2009:67) indicates that globally, 30% of higher education students are registered at PHEIs. Altbach (2009:67), as well as Levy (2008:7), contend that the large increase in private provision of higher education is due to excessive demand created by the "massification" of higher education (Bezuidenhout and De Jager, 2014:55).

Altbach (2009:67), as well as Levy (2008:7), conclude that most PHEIs function in this non-elite sector. Gupta (2008) also observed this tendency of PHEIs growing significantly in South Africa.

In March 2013, South Africa had 87 and 31 fully registered and provisionally accredited non-government HEIs respectively [South Africa, DHET (2013:9)]. Higher Education is a key player in preparing the nation to become what is said to be “globally and economically competitive in a fast-developing, knowledge-based world” (King, 2006; Department of Education and Skills, 2011; Nachev, 2014).

However, students enrolled at PHEIs are admitted on their own affordability as government does not support PHEIs with funding, unlike government institutions that have access to government bursaries, sponsorships and other funding, for example NSFAS (Ellis and Steyn, 2014). The question of quality of facilities, staff and available resources at PHEIs is often a topic of discussion in the Government and the public sector. It is always a question of whether it is money well spent with private HEIs (MacGregor, 2008).

The transformation in the industry of higher education resulted in tensions between equity and efficacy within the system, which in turn resulted, *inter alia*, in the development of legislation for higher education (Gravett and Geyser 2004; Cloete, 2014). Recent policies and legislation increased the power of the Minister of Education, which is an indication of the continuation of strong top-down regulation that is centrally-driven and strongly interventionist (King, 2006).

King (2006) believes that the implementation of initiatives such as regional co-operation concerning languages; new funding policy; and the restructuring of Higher Education landscapes has led to capacity problems which have been compounded

by continuous governing and policy initiatives that are often not adequately linked to the government's countrywide strategy for Higher Education (King, 2006).

According to the CHE (2003), only if an institution proves registration with the Department of Education can it offer services. Consequently, qualifications must be registered on the NQF by SAQA and it must fulfil its obligatory HEQC function by accreditation of the institution and qualifications (Council on Higher Education 2003; Department of Education 2004; 2008).

The Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) conducted an evaluative study of institutional audits (2006), the findings of which supports the view that higher education private providers in their own capacity intervene to gain acknowledgment: "... they believe participation would provide them with possible new insights which would strengthen the institution"(Council on Higher Education, 2007).

The 21st century has seen higher education becoming increasingly diverse and competitive. American students have a variety of HEIs, both government and non-government options (Anctil, 2008; Kinzie *et al.*, 2004). However, they are under pressure with competition from PHEIs in other countries (Hemsley-Brown and Oplatka, 2006). Furthermore, public colleges and universities have experienced cuts in government funding and rely on tuition fees and revenue (Smith and Draut, 2014).

According to a report by Smith and Draut (2014), American public universities and colleges used tuition revenue to cover 44% of their operating expenses in 2012, in comparison with only 20% in 1987 (which was just 25 years ago).

According to a similar study in Ghana by FrimpongFosu and Poku (year), courses offered at those institutions had lecturers of high calibre; well-resourced libraries and

ICT facilities; bendable timetables; and employers' acknowledgement of qualification. These factors impacted on the choice-selection of HEIs. The study similarly exposed student satisfaction with the deliverables. However, students showed dissatisfaction with regard to the policies of the university; the quantity of 'modules per semester' offered; and the insensitivity to the responsiveness of universities. The study suggested that the university implement highly marketable qualifications; strive to recruit lecturers that exceed minimum standards; enhance library facilities; and issue degrees to deserving students only.

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2010), the marketing concept states that an institution must identify the demands of specific students and ensure better standards of delivery than competitors in order to be successful.

Nair, Shah and Bennet's (2013) article clearly indicated the international growth of PHEIs experienced globally (Gupta, 2008). The private higher education sector caters for more than 70% of students from Asian countries (Gupta, 2008) and 9,3% from New Zealand (Xiaoying and Abbot, 2008). In the Chinese scenario, students prefer PHEIs for acquiring 'vocational learning' or a 'specific career orientation' (Wei, 2006). PHEIs are also growing in the Middle East, where according to Al Atiqi and Alharbi (2009), Kuwait's expected increment is 45 000 enrolments by 2025. UNESCO (2009) predicts that African PHEIs will increase in Gabon by 47%; and Mozambique and Ethiopia by 32% and 24% respectively.

According to UNESCO (2009), traditional universities around the world are dropping the ball, as a greater number of PHEIs are being established. PHEIs are perceived to adjust easier as the needs of the market are continuously changing. Furthermore, they cater for a wider variety of job-related skills for employers and students. A study

undertaken by Oketch (2009) suggests that PHEIs in three African countries have enhanced admission to university and this will play a strategic function role in broadening participation in future. Conferring with Jalowiecki (2001), in the country of Poland, PHEIs are more receptive to the pressures of the economy and enrolments are almost one-third of tertiary students. Galbraith (2003) also affirmed that private institutions adapt better to the needs of society.

2.9.4 Student Satisfaction

According to Kotler and Keller (2009), satisfaction is defined as: “a person’s feeling of pleasure or disappointment resulting from comparing a product’s perceived performance or outcome in relation to his or her expectations”. Similarly, student fulfilment is the degree to which institutions deliver based on student expectations.

Wiese, Heerden and Jordaan (2010) conducted research on the influence of demographics in the choice of institutions. The research established that regardless of gender role or linguistics, the factor that is most significant in choice-selection for learners was the quality of Higher Education. Wiese *et al.* (2010) indicate that factors impact differently on males and females. Hence, it is advised that varying recruitment strategies be used to target the genders appropriately. Students speaking the African languages have, amongst others, indicated that multi-culturalism within an institution is a crucial selection factor for them.

2.9.5 Gender

Widespread access to an HEI for American women began early in the 20th century (Perun, 2011). As more women enrolled in colleges and universities, institutions created more academic programs geared towards the needs of women students (Drew and Work, 2008). King (2010) argued that increasing the specific enrolment of a particular gender has provided the necessity for additional exploration on the college choice-selection process, particularly comparing gender differences amongst high school students. The significance of institutional characteristics such as location and choice of academic majors is impacted by gender in the college decision-making process (Shank and Beasley, 2009). Literature in this area has also provided conflicting information on male and female college choice. Walker and Trebbi (2010) stated that women rated safety, diversity and a multitude of academic offerings as higher factors in influencing college choice than men. Women value academic reputation more than males in their college enrolment decision process (Broekemier and Seshadri, 2010). Researchers also discovered that men valued varsity and intramural athletics and social life attributes more than women (Broekemier and Seshadri, 2010).

2.9.6 Race

In the United States, higher education contains a disproportionate number of enrolled White students compared to minority enrolments (Radford, 2009). While access to higher education has increased for minorities (Kim, 2004), the college decision-making process for minority students compared to that of their white peers is quite different (Trent and Owens-Nicholson, 2011). These differences are

compounded when the differences amongst minorities are considered. Each minority group has cultural differences that can change their college choice decision process from that of peers, including:

- proximity to home;
- willingness to accept loans; and
- Other group specific attributes (St. John, 1999).

Financial need and availability is one of the most important factors for all students who are planning to attend college but is even more common for minority students in their decision-making process and can often determine which school they ultimately decide to attend (Kim, 2004).

2.9.7 Financial Needs

Beyond choice itself, the availability of choices can be affected because of socio-economic status circumstances (Hurtado, 2011). Many high school students' first exposure to the realm of higher education occurs with the looming threat of how to pay for college (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). High school seniors often come across this issue when narrowing school choices and determining which schools to apply to (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). Once students are awarded a financial aid package, they can estimate how much it will cost to attend any specific institution. Subsequent to this stage in the process, the amount of money needed for studies at the college becomes one of the more influential factors in the decision-making process of the prospective student (Kim, 2004).

2.9.8 Social Influence

Socio-economic status (SES) is often a defining factor in access to college and the ability to have multiple options for picking an institution (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). DeJardins and McCall (2006) found that the student's expectation of aid was a strong influence on the decision to enrol. Radford (2009) illustrates the impact of SES in college choice when he reported that nearly 60 percent of students in private four-year higher education institutions are students from high to high-middle level income families. Demographic factors of high school seniors are important determinants in the choice process, but it is often difficult for an institution to have a strong influence on the factors (Kim, 2004). Specific changes can be made, but they will often impact directly on the final choice of the student (Kim, 2004). The factors of gender, race and socio-economic status are important for institutions to understand who their students are, but are often some of the most difficult factors for an institution to influence (Horvat, 2010). An understanding of how institutional decisions affect different demographic groups provides enrolment managers with important information when creating enrolment strategies.

High school seniors' college choice process is affected by many factors, one of the most prominent being social influences (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). While making the college choice decision, students are inundated with a variety of messages coming from persuasive sources (McDonough, 2004). The main sources of this social influence include family; high school effects; collegiate athletics; and reputation. Unlike demographic factors which an institution cannot influence, the institution, under certain circumstances, can impact these social influences.

2.9.9 Family

One of the stronger social groups who influence high school seniors' college choice is parents. Both students and parents identify parental influence as one of the top influences on the college decision-making process. Chapman (2014) reported on a study of influence in which 43% of students' listed parental influence as "the most helpful social influence" in the college choice-selection procedure. Females indicated that guardians or parents were more of a source of information about college attendance when compared with their male counterparts (Shanks and Beasley, 2009).

Parental influence does contain a variety of facets that go beyond guidance and information. These facets include: encouragement; expectation setting; preparation for living away from home; and preparation and assistance with financial matters (Cabrera and La Nasa, 2008). Another important influence on the college decision process of college seniors includes the parents' education and income (Stage, 2009). Parents who have attained an advanced degree view academic reputation as a strong influence on a student's college decision process (Choy and Ottinger, 2008). Families with limited higher education experience can have difficulties understanding post-secondary opportunities and limit their help in the college search process (Perez and McDonough, 2008).

According to Rosa and Hamrick (2002), students of Hispanic descent are influenced strongly by their family members, including extended family members, in their college choice process. Conversely, Ceja (2006) found that parents and family members did not have a large influence in the college decision process of students.

Their lack of knowledge about the college choice-selection procedure played a large role in the lack of influence (Ceja, 2006).

2.9.10 Secondary School

While parental influence has proven to have the largest effect on students, influential friends, peers, counsellors and teachers at the secondary school level also have a major influence in institutional choice selection. For students, Hossler and Gallagher (2015) found that a friend's decision to attend a particular institution played an influential role in the college selection/decision-making procedure. Broekemier and Seshadri (2010) also found that high school friends played a vital role in the college choice-selection process, even though parents often do not realize its importance. While some social influential groups influence high school students throughout the process, teachers' and guidance counsellors' influence occurs later in the procedure of decision-making, through the latter half of a high school student's senior year (Helwig, 2004). Rosen, Curren and Greenlee (2011) found that guidance counsellors played a larger role in the earlier part of the student's decision-making process, and parents played a later role. Guidance counsellors also played a significant function in the process of decision-making through their inherent role in the college application process. However, that role became more influential when focusing more on the career aspect of the students' higher education planning (Helwig, 2004). Venezia and Kirst (2005) posited that high school students want high school administrators to go through the application process step-by-step. Financial inequality amongst school districts was also viewed as a cause of the difference in the quality of the dissemination of information about higher education.

2.9.11 Reputation

The reputation of an institution is esteemed by learners as well as peers during the institution selection process (Broekhemier and Seshadri, 2010). The most influential vehicle providing knowledge of institutional prestige and comparison of institutions is the *U.S. News and World Report* (Monks and Ehrenberg, 2004). Each fall, rankings of all institutions occur and publicity is associated with the rankings both by the U.S. News and World Report as schools that are ranked high create a public awareness of the event (Monks and Ehrenberg, 2004). The U.S. News and World Report has become more common as a tool for institutions to boast about their accomplishment of ranking (Brown, 2006). In summary, social influences have played a strong role in a high school senior's college decision-making process. Creating a favourable image is daunting for an institution, given the plethora of messages each student receives (Armstrong, 2009). As cited by Cabrera and La Nasa (2008), the impact of strong influential people in the lives of high school seniors is the most important factor in the decision-making process. Institutions have devoted significant financial and human capital to enhance their opportunities to win inter-collegiate national championships and to rise to the top echelon of academic institutions in publications such as the U.S. News and World Report (McEvoy, 2005). Each of these influences continues to affect the process of decision-making of secondary school seniors.

2.9.12 Institutional Influences

Higher education institutions have a direct influence over specific factors of high school seniors' college decisions. These factors can influence a prospective

student's decision to attend the college either negatively or positively. These factors include: promotional materials, proximity and campus infrastructure.

2.9.13 Promotional Materials

Promotional materials including brochures; prospectus; catalogues; reviews from students currently attending; officers; and the campus website often arrive at the homes of high school students once they register or begin to take college entrance exams (Armstrong, 2009). The majority of mailings are received by the student during the high school years and are often sent unsolicited to students or their parents (Pampaloni, 2010). The mailings students receive are dependent on the size and focus of the institution.

Typically, the focus of communication from institutions that are larger are more on the educational and social advantages available at the institution, whilst schools that are maybe smaller depict and communicate a campus of family life (Hite and Yearwood, 2001). According to Hite and Yearwood (2001), the main goals of promotional materials are to reveal student life at the institution. In this regard, researchers have identified that scholars are critical of publications released by institutions in relation to their helpfulness and validity.

Rosen and Greenlee (2010) concluded that unsolicited information negatively impacted on students as they were bombarded with information relating to institutions, which was perceived as clutter. Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) study showed that mailed brochures have reaffirmed the selection of an institution and do not necessarily have a direct impact on the choice itself.

Budgeting for promotional materials comprises a large amount of an enrolment management office's entire budget (Armstrong, 2009). Maringe (2006) postulates that while admission managers do utilise their institutions' public relations and advertising department, a contracted outside agents is often engaged to brand expand and create promotional materials.

Another important but costly part of the process is mailing promotional materials to students, high schools and other constituencies. Maringe (2006) posits that Data-driven campaigns impact on the delivery of promotional material and details of potential students to increase the number of enrolments.

According to Adams and Eveland (2007), the Internet boom in the higher education industry is prompting PHEIs to spend a larger budget on internet media platforms to enhance networking with potential learners. Hegeman, Davies and Banning (2007) state that the success rates of e-mailings are seen as a bulk promotion instrument and hence cannot be measured. While websites have a tracking system, however feedback is not instantaneous on the total quantity of views received. Electronic advertising media from an institution do impact on students. However, an appointment at a campus delivers more profound information of the campus' culture.

2.9.14 Proximity

Another factor that impacts a high school senior's college choice is proximity to the student's hometown.

Chute's (2009) study revealed that 56% of students attend a higher education institution and travel within a hundred miles from home. Choy and Ottinger (2008)

found that the location was one of the most influential factors as students perceived transport as a challenge and hence chose institutions with closer proximity to their homes.

Chute (2009) also found proximity had a strong impact as more student applications were received from students residing closer to the HEI. Underprivileged students often perceived that the only viable option were institutions closer to home, including that staying at home and travelling to college will eliminate boarding and lodging costs (Chute, 2009).

Contrarily, Chute (2009) established that enhanced transportation prospects will increase the opportunity for students attending an institution that is not in close proximity to their home in comfort. While one study found that increased transportation removes some of the issues with proximity to a student's hometown, proximity is an influential factor in many high school seniors' college choice.

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), traditional distribution denoted the physical locality of a university and its campus. However, high-tech IT developments have assisted higher education to intensify service convenience via the utilisation of electronic platforms. Consequently, E-learning programs have been implemented by various institutions in-order to target potential students that have challenges of time and convenience, as well as proximity.

2.9.15 Campus Infrastructure

Exuding a welcoming environment at campus can be challenging. However, studies depict that it is an aspect that should not be ignored and is mainly significant in the initial visit process, especially for students from high school and their peers (Boyer, 1987).

A survey of higher education administrators indicated that over half selected the campus tour as having the strongest influence on prospective learners (Rosen, Curran, and Greenlee, 2011).

Rosen *et al.* (2011) posit that a campus visit is an opportunity to showcase the institution's beauty, residence options and "high-tech infrastructure".

An Institution's campus visits can be influential in the final decision of a student to attend a particular institution since knowledge and insight is gained on the campus infrastructure. Chute (1989) found that the friendliness of current students, admissions staff and faculty was an influential factor in the student deciding to attend the institution.

Therefore, Adams and Eveland (2007) emphasise the importance in connecting the student with a specific institution by arranging campus visits and for admissions representatives to visit high schools.

2.10 Changing Landscape in Education

The current South African scenario is that approximately one-fifth of school leavers who successfully complete Grade 12 pursue Higher Education, with more than

700 000 students learning at 23 various HEIs in the country (Higher Education South Africa, 2008). In the context of a changing landscape, as HEIs compete for students and funding they need to ensure that they are market-orientated. This increased competition can be attributed to several factors within the HEI market, namely:

- HEIs inviting all races to apply, provided the minimum entrance requirements are met by applicants (Akoojee and Nkomo, 2007);
- Secondly, HEIs are pressurised with the transformation requirements of their student profiles to ensure representation of the larger population (Ministry of Education, 2002);
- The third factor is the inadequate preparedness of African Grade 12 learners who meet the minimum entry requirements of HEIs; and
- The final factor is changes in funding policies that emphasise extensively on throughput (Wangenge-Ouma and Cloete, 2008), this impacts greatly on institutions to recruit high-achievers that will possess greater chances of passing in the required minimum timeframe (Smit and Schinefield, 2000).

These marketing challenges being experienced have stimulated attention in HEIs' student admission processes. Therefore, having knowledge on the HEI selection processes of students will benefit institutions in directing campaigns more efficiently and effectively. Consequently, student admission has become increasingly significant. Hence, abundant studies have inspected the processes in an effort to recognise factors of influence regarding college selection (Punnarach, 2004).

An institution can enhance the student-fit of the institution once it has information regarding the factors that impact on the students' application and admission decisions. Furthermore, knowledgeable information will benefit the institution in

developing marketing strategies that are intended to attract large number of students who meet the minimum desired academic and non-academic attributes such as gender and ethnicity (Wiese, Van Heerden and Jordaan, 2010:151).

2.11 The Decision-making process in Higher Education Selection

Coney (2004) cites that the Engel, Blackwell and Miniard model which outlines consumer behaviour as a process consisting of two parts, namely: the process, which consists of five steps; and the internal and external factors which influence the process. The decision-making process followed by students when selecting a PHEI is generally a lengthy one because individuals usually progress through all of the following steps:

- problem/need recognition;
- information search;
- evaluation of alternatives;
- selection; and
- Identification of areas that impact on students' behaviour.

STEP ONE: The problem/need recognition: Occurs when prospective students recognise a need to further their education.

STEP TWO: The provision of information: The sources of information that students consult, the type of information they need and the amount of searching students engage in are important information for institutions to obtain as it will enable them to use media effectively to communicate with students.

STEP THREE: The evaluation of alternatives: By institutions ensuring knowledge and reasoning of factors used by students to assess and select an institution, the brand image, brand positioning and marketing strategies can be assured.

STEP FOUR: The selection of the institution and paying the registration fees and enrolling at the institution.

STEP FIVE: The delivery of after-sales service and evaluation of the product or qualification.

STEP SIX: The decision-making procedure: The student is now using the product or programme.

According to a study conducted by Eidimtas and Juceviciene (2013), the process of Decision Making and Social Learning Theory stipulate that deciding on further studies is defined as a complex and multi-phase process (Kusumawati, 2010) .

Authors like Kusumawati (2010) present the school-leavers choice of studies based on Schiffman and Kanuks' (2007) and Kotler and Keller's (2009) classic models of consumer decision-making. This paper is based on Hossler and Gallagher's (2015) Choice of Studies model which includes four stages, namely: need identification; information search; evaluation of alternatives; and choice. Therefore, the factors affecting school-leavers' decisions will be researched in the context of these four stages.

The institution-selection process refers to the influential factors that potential students use to decide on which higher education institutions to apply to. The process also considers factors that influence decisions on which institution of their admitted list they desire to attend. In order to improve understanding, it is essential

for this study to scrutinise the stages that HEI applicants experience during the choice-selection process. Researchers Martin and Dixon (2005) and Paulsen (2015) developed various models through their studies on the college selection process. Predisposition, Search and Choice are the three main stages of these models.

Paulsen (2015) referred to the **first stage** known as Predisposition, as the college aspiration formation stage whereby students determine whether they would like to attend college or not. Martin and Dixon (2010) postulate that during this stage, factors such as socio-economic status; ethnicity; gender; academic ability; history of achievement; characteristics; and educational background of parents and peers are known as background characteristics that influence students (Paulsen, 2015).

A student's socio-economic status has been identified as a strong indicator of college attendance (Paulsen, 2015). The socio-economic status of a student can either open doors of access to certain students or limit their ability to even consider attending college. Students with high socio-economic status are more likely to go to college than students with low socio-economic status (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Paulsen (2015) stated that student aspiration to attend college is often influenced by others such as parents and peers, called interpersonal influence (Paulsen, 2015). According to Paulsen (2015), students who are encouraged earlier in their schooling career to consider college are more likely to attend HE. Studies indicate parental inspiration as a direct influence on HE attendance. Furthermore, students are more likely to study towards a degree if they have friends with similar intentions (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015 and Paulsen, 2015).

According to Hossler and Gallagher (2015), the high school involvement of student also impacts their decision. Participation in college preparatory courses during high

school prepares the student for work expectations of HE. This process proposes a positive challenge for scholars and hence provides an indication of their academic preparedness for HE (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

The **second stage** follows once the student has decided to pursue a post-school study, which is acknowledged as the search stage. During this stage, students seek information about colleges and universities that they might be interested in attending (Martin and Dixon, 2005; Paulsen, 2015) and create a list of these colleges and universities, which researchers refer to as a 'choice set'. Hossler and Gallagher (2015) state that 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. Researchers like Hossler and Gallagher (2015) have found that variety of HEIs are chosen to create an applicant's choice set.

Chute (1989) administered a survey with 181 first-year students from various ethnic backgrounds, genders and institutions. He established that a meaningful resource in the search procedure for students is visits to HEIs, college promotional material, as well as aspirations from parents and peers.

Litten (2011) focused on studies involving the resources used by students during the search procedure. African students in America try to gain knowledge of HEIs and programmes by asking for information, visiting colleges and speaking with college representatives. Litten (2011) identified that written communication to HEIs and meeting with guidance counsellors as well as parents in order to obtain information was mostly done by white applicants.

Littens' (2011) study also noted that African-American college applicants respond differently compared to applications by White-American students in that African

students' procedure for searching for information is rather delayed compared to White applicants. African-American applicants consider involving more institutions in the process as compared to White applicants (Litten, 2011). The second stage is concluded once the students have taken a decision on which institutions to apply to and proceed to process applications to the institutions.

The **final stage** is the choice stage during which students are notified of their admittance by the institution. According to Paulsen (2015), they decide to attend one HEI based on characteristics that the student finds most important. Students will have differing approaches to their ultimate decision (Paulsen, 2015).

Social Psychological Studies: The *first approach* in the selection process inspects pertinent factors, namely the academic program chosen; the social atmosphere experienced during studies; financial implications and proximity of the HEI; and the impact of friends.

The *second factor* is the student's perception of institutional-fit. This is how the student will perceive their experience at the institution based on the characteristics of the HEI and the personality traits of the individual student.

McDonough (2004) refers to the *third factor* as the cognitive stages of college choice.

Economic Studies: Examines college choice, which is viewed as an investment decision for the student. McDonough (2004) reveals that economic studies make three specific deductions:

- The first hypothesis is that students exploit their perceived decision of cost-benefits;

- The student possesses the pertinent knowledge to ensure a comprehensive decision; and
- Finally, the student makes a rationalised decision based on the knowledge and material obtained in the search-stage.

Sociological status attainment studies: Differ from the previous two approaches in that it is not composed of multiple factors, nor does it make any assumptions. Rather, McDonough (2004) states that sociological status attainment researches the social status of the applicant against the development of aspirations towards educational achievement. Like-studies scrutinise and evaluate dissimilarities in college success (McDonough, 2004).

In terms of the approaches, students select an institution based upon their ethnicity; socio-economic status; peers and parents; size of the institution; location of the institution; academic program reputation; esteem; selectivity and alumni; and financial funding (McDonough, 2004). Together with other supplementary personal factors, these eventually fit-in with the institutional characteristics to sway the student in attending a particular college (Paulsen, 2004). For optimal fit, the characteristics that students consider when deciding between colleges must be inspected.

2.12 Evaluation criteria of the decision-making process

According to Paulsen (2015), the importance assigned to the evaluative criteria can differ amongst students. Consequently, this knowledge of variances can benefit HEIs in developing and managing their marketing mix to ensure successful student recruitment (Paulsen, 2015).

A review of previous international studies revealed a variety of potential choice factors considered by students when selecting a HEI. The main factors identified by McDonough (2004) were advertising channels; institutional proximity/location; academic and other programmes. Additionally, Espinoza (2002) identified a few main factors considered by students in the selection process, namely etiquette of staff; research undertakings; community engagements; financial considerations; and the magnitude of the HEI. Espinoza (2002) also identified campus safety and flexibility in course offering times as additional factors to those identified in the literature. Furthermore, Espinoza (2002) acknowledged academic rating; athletic rating and news coverage as contributing elements of the process. Punnarach (2004) added reputation status of the HEI, communication and steadiness as supplementary choice-selection factors.

Martin and Dixon (2005) in a Canadian study, found that students valued location, non-academic service and funding. Litten (2011) cites China where students revealed that affordability, reputation and excellence were factors. An Australian study revealed status and esteem were essential factors, but according to Litten (2011), first-year students in South Australia ranked career groundwork; particular academic packages; proximity; quality of research programmes; and library facilities as a strong influence (Litten, 2011).

A study in South Africa showed those operational on-going activities; supporting services; status of the institutions; and entry requirements influence student beliefs (Martin and Dixon, 2005). In other recent research in South Africa, five sub-groups of choice factors were identified, namely employment possibilities; course content; student experiences; sporting aspects; and financial considerations (Bonnema and Van der Waldt, 2008).

Many authors note that in post-apartheid South Africa, linguistic factors are imperative (Foley, 2004; Divala and Waghid, 2007; Hay, 2008). Brand (2003) iterates that much of the past discrimination of HEIs originated from race differences and discrimination based on linguistic abilities.

According to the Ministry of Education (2002), language has challenged students in accessing and achieving success in Higher Education, mainly because African and other languages have not been developed as academic languages and a majority of students entering higher education are not fully proficient in English or Afrikaans.

The South African Post-School System (2012)

Category of students	Public Sector	Private Sector
University Students	953 373	97 487
College Students	657 690	115 586
Adult Education & Training Students	306 378	8 690
Ages 18-24 years not in education, employment or training	2 945 018	

Source: Shape of South Africa's Post-school education system 2012 (Charles Sheppard, 2012)

Trend 1 referred to Massification whereby the demand for HE is far exceeding the current capacity. India needed 1500 universities and 35 colleges by the year 2020 (National Knowledge Commission, India). In China the PHEIs increased by 20 from 2007 to 2010, giving them a total of 630 private institutions. Public institutions in

Kenya, Uganda, Nigeria and South Africa are experiencing enrolment beyond capacity and is required to increase enrolment from 1 million to 1.6 million by 2030 (NDP).

Trend 2 emphasised the decline in state funding, which is partially due to Massification. The State budget has been directed to projects or initiatives that indicate a tangible return on investments. A relationship of mistrust developed between the state and universities.

“Government subsidies are declining, tuition is rising and the cost per student is increasing faster than inflation or family income” (Duderstadt, 2007).

Trend 3 According to State-University Relations, Higher Education is important for any country’s development. However, it is in the best interest of citizens that funds are used appropriately and must be accounted for. Therefore, University must be protected by the pros and cons of politics. According to the Ashby Commission held in the 1960s, “The University in Africa occupies too critical an importance to be left alone to determine its own agenda/priorities and it should accept the hegemony of Government. This has regulated higher education in Africa with regard to academic freedom; institutional autonomy; and accountability to the state and the people” (Accra Workshop in 1972 on creating an African University).

Trend 4 demonstrates the fact that Academic Staff recruitment is a challenge across the globe. However, Africa is the emphasised continent with this challenge. Walshe (2008) posits that the most significant human element is an absence of sufficient highly qualified academics. A pandemic of enrolment explosion has taken place in recent years, without commensurate growth in faculty members”. The Secretary General of the African-American University (AAU) cited contributing factors as

opportunities abroad, retirement, lack of equipment and facilities. Furthermore, Africa has a poor PHD output rate (Walshe, 2008).

Douglas (2007) considered African-American students at a PHEI, which involved students who photographed the positive and negative images of the college. Douglas (2007) study revealed that some of the positive pictures included interactions with faculty; involvement of student organizations; mainly African lecturers from America; as well as social experiences in the residence hall. Negative factors included the limited number of Black-American students and faculty workforce; the prevailing ethnic and cultural discrimination; and apparent deficiency in the interest from workforces at institutions towards Black-American students (Douglas, 2007).

Hayden (2007) revealed that African-American students at HBIs (Historically Black Institutions) have social experiences that are dissimilar to those experiences received by African students in America at PWIs (Predominantly White Institutions). Satisfied students at HBIs shared emotions of satisfaction, adjustment and inclusion at the HEI. Furthermore, they displayed optimistic psycho-social change at colleges, acknowledgment of their beliefs and greater learning and occupational accomplishment of aspirations (Hayden, 2000:27).

Seiver's (2009) national survey inspected the factors that affect African-American students. The survey intended to clear doubts pertaining to reasons associated with college selection of a specific HEI and their expectations. Seiver's (2009) work is relevant as students had to list the characteristics in order of importance and the college choice-selection items included:

- Reputation of the college,

- Availability of majors,
- Availability of financial funding,
- Total cost,
- Job placement record,
- Quality of the faculty,
- Academic counselling,
- Geographic location,
- Number of students,
- Recreational facilities,
- Student/faculty ratio,
- Appearance of campus,
- Career counselling,
- Quality of student residence,
- Graduate school placement,
- Extra-curricular activities,
- Accessibility,
- Job opportunities in the area,
- Internships in the area,
- Opportunities for part-time work,
- Cultural opportunities in the area,
- Library facilities,
- Family ties to the college,
- Religious activities,
- Computer resources, and
- Volunteer programs

Students rated status of the college; availability of a specific major; the total financial implications; and the availability of funding as being the most significant factors when considering the college to attend (Seiver, 2009).

Substantial financial assistance offered to students encouraged their decision; the fee was affordable; the low cost of living in the area; and because they loved living away from their parents. They also nominated a PHEI influenced by friends; part-time employment during their studies; closer distance to their home; and assumed to complete their studies quickly (Wenglinsky, 2010).

Abraham and Jacobs (2009) cited feedback from a study focusing on students' perceptions and contentment which reflected that academic and social experiences received at the HEI are the factors that influenced respondents to attend at their respective desired institutions.

Results of Abraham and Jackson's (2009) study demonstrated that African-American students are generally not influenced by majors offered at the HEIs. The process of college choice-selection literature associated with African-American scholars generally proposed four focal factors that sway the choice-selection, namely Academic Issues (AIs) i.e. academic challenges; social issues/challenges (SIs); personal issues/challenges (PIs); and financial issues i.e. challenges associated with the cost of education (FIs).

2.13 Four-focal Factors (Abraham and Jackson, 2009)

- **Academic issues (AI)** at a HEI are a factor that impacted African-American students during the choice-selection process. Seiver (2013) revealed that if

HEIs have: decent educational/academic repute; highly qualified senior academics; and an assortment of academic offerings, then the institution will spike interest amongst African-American students. Allen (2015) contends that African-American students shared strong emotions in respect to the atmosphere or environment which they will be exposed to during their studies.

According to Allen (2010), students of the African-American culture experience academic challenges due to the workload and become discouraged should they be exposed to poor faculty support towards their coursework. Hence, reasonable academic success levels may not be attained. Therefore, these students are seeking supportive faculties. However, first-year students may experience challenges since they are still familiarising themselves with the campus (Sedlacek, 2007).

Sedlacek (2007) states that the availability of African-American academic and support staff at the PHEI is a concerning factor. In bridging the gap between students and same-race faculty staff, the emotions of fear and isolation will be alleviated (Sedlacek, 2007). Sedlacek (2010) confirmed that PHEIs have increased the number of African-American academics available to function in a supportive environment, hence they experience more comfort within the HEIs. Allen (2007) also confirmed that African-American learners at PHEIs experience greater relative gains and alleviated the emotional challenges of loneliness and isolation.

- **Academic issue** are merely one factor out of many other factors that influences selection and may be associated with the social environment of an HEI (Freeman, 2013).

- **Personal issues** have an emotional impact on student selection decisions. Some factors associated with personal issues are inspiration and guidance from relatives and colleagues, as well as self-assessments conducted by learners prior to engaging HEIs (Abraham and Jacobs, 2009; Freeman, 2013).

Personal factors were classified into the subsequent categories: influence of peers/colleagues/relatives; emotional/social challenges, as well as cultural/traditional influences (Freeman, 2013).

Freeman (2009) postulates that African-American students who have parents or siblings that already have HE qualifications often follow the advice offered by these family members.

Abraham and Jacobs (2009) declared personal factors as inspiration and guidance from parents and friends.

- **Financial issues** are a common factor amongst African-American students, especially when preparing for HE. Consequently, these students are forced to rely on financial aid. Welingsky (2009) posits that the financial issue and financial aid concerns are placing the institutions under huge pressure. Paulsen (2015) confirms that in pursuit of the challenges mentioned above, African-American students have the benefits of financial funding to access HE. Hence, this benefit promotes higher education and will ensure progression in the amount of qualified Negro-American students.

Abraham and Jacobs (1990) conducted a study and brought to light that Negro-American students remained attracted towards enrolment at a particular institution

because of the financial funding provided. However, colleges then either invite an added number or a lesser number of students due to the fact that elements related to costs are never consistent. The provision of financial funding becomes less inviting when students realise that attending college may include other costs, like travelling cost related to proximity of the institution or boarding and lodging costs related to the travelling distance (Paulsen, 2015).

Canale's (2009) study observed the relative significance of various factors impacting on decisions made by students. Canale's results indicated that 76% rated "excellent teachers" as being a critical factor. In descending order, the next contributing factor was "area of study available".

Martin and Dixon (2005) conducted an investigation related to Social Learning Theory based on how persons may react when their own actions versus how persons react when external forces impact on them. The instrument was called the College Choice Influence Scale (CCIS) and assumed that student's response was that they pursued college for a multiplicity of reasons.

Martin and Dixon (2005) stipulated that the sub-scales of CCIS involved: (i) opinions of the HEI; (ii) aspiration to study; (iii) external stimuli; (iv) independent social activities; and (v) family educational history. The three broad categories of the choice-selection process are:

- sub-scales (iii) is the predisposition/tendency phase;
- Sub-scales (i) and (iv) are the searching phase; and
- Sub-scales (ii) and (v) are making a decision

The study reflects that students residing in low-income homes are duty bound to take advice from family members as compared to those students who reside in higher income homes (Martin and Dixon, 2005).

2.14 Models in determining students' choice of a college

a) Choice Models

According to Ros and Scarpa (2008), Choice modelling is used to better understand how the choice-selection process changes when an individual is provoked by multiple alternatives. The information obtained from the data and subsequent analysis provides a cost-benefit-analysis for an organization to have a stronger understanding of its potential clientele. While choice modelling began with industry and conducting research on tangible food or drink products, college choice modelling has become a more common activity for enrolment management and admissions offices of colleges and universities. Mathematical choice models have evolved in the past fifty years. Seven models of choice are explained to present the evolution of the models and what influential factors could be examined to provide a new model. A new model is necessary to discover if the landscape of admissions has changed and what factors play an influential role in college choice for high school seniors who wish to pursue further education. Mathematical theories that have been created in the past have all expanded from earlier work to create a more definitive and succinct process. The expansion of these theories has created more empirical evidence that captures the essence of decision making. College decision-making is a process that encompasses multiple layers, including some that can or cannot be impacted by the institution (Rose and Scarpa, 2008).

b) Luce's Choice Model/Axiom

The Luce model of choice, also known as the Luce Choice Axiom, originated as an economics market analysis forecasting tool (Luce, 1959). Luce created the model using a mathematical formula which postulates the probability of choosing an item over another when many options are not affected by the presence or absence of other items (Luce, 1959). In 1977, during a re-evaluation of his previous work, Luce found that while the probability of a choice being made remained, a response bias could occur based on the experimental run (Luce, 1977). In other words, each time the experiment is run, differences can occur which would lead to response bias. The Luce model is important because it began the dialogue of interactions of factors of influence which was later used in college choice modelling by researchers in the late 1970's. Luce's model used the utility measure that was expanded on in McFadden's later models (Manrai, 1994).

c) McFadden's Choice Modelling

McFadden (1981) expanded on early choice models to create a model that is respected in the field of mathematics and choice or decision-making fields. Evidence of this respect was shown when McFadden won the Noble Prize for his theory (McFadden, 1981). McFadden's Choice Modelling (1981) theory explains and predicts human decision-making behaviour. Choice modelling contains many favourable attributes, including forcing respondents to consider trade-offs between attributes; estimating the level of customer demand for an alternative; and reducing the incentive for respondents to behave strategically (McFadden, 1981). While this model contains the component of choice, many of the potential choices in the theory

did not involve the complexity of college choice. College choice expands beyond the options in this model, including the economical and intellectual benefits of a college degree.

d) Chapman's Model of Student Choice

In 1981, Chapman created his own version of a model of student college choice. In his model, Chapman viewed the interrelationship between the influential variables and examined how those relationships affected college choice. His model contained external influences and student characteristics as the base for the model. The intersection of the variables constitutes the nexus of his model. According to Chapman (1981), external influences include:

(a) Significant persons; (b) fixed college characteristics; and (c) college efforts to communicate with prospective students. Student characteristics include: level of educational aspiration; high school performance; socio-economic status (SES); and aptitude (Chapman, 1981). While Chapman's model can be viewed as a strong step forward in the college choice modelling field, a weakness is that some of the influences have changed since its inception. These changes that reduce college choice included communications to prospective students using websites, emails and other forms of social media.

e) Hossler and Gallagher's (1987) Choice Model

In 1987, Hossler and Gallagher (1987) created a model of college choice of high school students that included three stages, namely awareness of attending college;

seeking of information and consideration of choices; and the final decision (Hossler and Gallagher, 1987). While this model only contains three stages of the college decision-making process, it is significant because it was one of the first models of choice which specifically falls in the realm of college choice and decision-making (McDonough, 1997).

f) Cabrera and La Nasa's (2000) Choice Model

In 2000, Cabrera and La Nasa created a choice-selection model comprising stages including several influences and conclusions per stage. The stages included are secondary grade levels, namely: (a) 7-9 predisposition stage; (b) 10-12 exploration of information stage; and (c) 11-12 selection/decision phase. Each stage offers factors of influence consistent with the perception development of the student. Cabrera and La Nasa (2000) postulates that the model utilises a time-based method for the reviewing of influence through the financial and sociological eye of high school seniors and their selection procedures.

g) Perna's (2006) Choice Model

Perna (2006) proposed a conceptual model of choice-selection which encompasses layers, namely (a) social influence; (b) cost/financial implications and the strategy framework, background of higher education; (c) history of high school and community background; and (d) habitus.

In Perna's (2006) model, the experiences, financial and college strategy context of the decision is the outermost layer and is impacted 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)".

The next layer of Perna's conceptual model discusses the role of the HE context in college selection. HEIs influence choice-selection of colleges in three ways (Perna, 2006):

- Information provided by the college to prospective students and families;
- Attributes and characteristics of each institution; and
- Availability of place for admission (Perna, 2006).

Layer 3: The background of the school attended and community circumstances of the student impacts on their ultimate decision. At this stage the student is provided assistance in the process, but it also contains some restrictions. Teachers and guidance counsellors provide information to students regarding the institution from promotional material provided to the school by the institution. However, Perna (2006) posits that the school context can be limited based on the income of high schools and the amount of material the school has, as well as the ability for guidance counsellors to provide the information accurately and effectively (Perna, 2006).

Habitus is the last layer of the contextual model. The habitus discloses "an individual's demographic characteristics, particularly gender, race/ethnicity and SES, as well as cultural and social capital" (Perna, 2006). Perna (2006) views this layer as supreme in the decision process since it considers the individuality of the student.

This multi-layered model is constructed on the postulation that decision-making has multiple stages of influence and hypothesizes that college choice-selection is

established on the cost-benefit evaluation of enrolling and analysing the benefits against cost (Perna, 2006).

Each model of choice provides a different lens and new perspective into decision making, with later versions focusing on college choice exclusively. The Perna (2006) model was utilized as the foundation of this study because the model contains layers that are pertinent to the influences in the current study. The current study views common and uncommon factors that impact on student decisions. The conclusions drawn from this study will impact on both staff at institutions involved with admitting students, as well as counselling at high schools .

2.15 Theoretical framework in determining student's choice of a college

At the time of this research being undertaken, no current up-to-date, interconnected or cohesive theoretical framework or theory of PHEIs existed that explains or determines their size, scope and survival (Trevino-Rodriguez and Bontis, 2007; Christman, Chua and Sharma, 2003). To contextualise according to Cullen (2005), a family-owned (private) business is one which has been started by an entrepreneur/founder and which eventually progresses to being owner-managed and results in more than one member working in the business, which leads to a family partnership. The business is expected to be passed on to succeeding generations of the family, sometimes through marriage, which leads to sibling partnerships and eventually family syndicates, where the descendants of the founder own, control or participate in and/or benefit from the business. Most PHEIs are private, sole proprietor and/or family managed, comprising of a directorate that are the decision

makers within the institution and are governed or regulated by authorities, which places the majority of the PHEIs within the description explained by Cullen.

However, the Scientific Management approach suggests that three input or task-based variables are the key factors for effective functioning of family (private) businesses, namely Culture, Organisation and Management (Floriani, 2007).

The 'Scientific management' approach will be explored in order to logically outline how different activities of family businesses on the whole lead to outcomes of success. Scientific management is a theory of management that analyses and synthesizes workflows with the main objective of improving economic efficiency, especially labour productivity.

Mohammadi and Mohamed (2011) state that the Grand Models are based on a theory which illustrates consumer decision-making as a multiple-staged and complex process involving five main stages, namely:

Stage 1) Problem recognition;

Stage 2) Information research;

Stage 3) Alternative evaluation and selection;

Stage 4) Outlet selection and purchase; and

Stage 5) Post-purchase processes.

The theory describes the decision-making process as a funnel-like one, in that travellers narrow down choices among alternatives. Choices are impacted by socio-psychological factors like attitudes, motives, values, personal characteristics, as well

as non- psychological factors like product, design, price and advertising (Sirakayaa and Woodside, 2005).

Gilbert (1991) explains that Grand Models have 6 common points, namely:

- They perceive consumer behaviour to be a constant decision-making process;
- The behaviour of consumers is emphasized;
- Behaviour is treated as an individual concept that can be explained;
- A buyer is viewed as an individual who searches, evaluates and stores information;
- Buyers narrow down the information in time, and choose from the alternatives they developed during the decision process; and
- Feedback from the final purchase is included in the models to emphasise the effect of the decision on future purchase.

Hunt and Madhavaram (2006) describe the Resource-advantage (R-A) theory as an evolutionary, process theory of competition that was first articulated in Hunt and Morgan (1995). Since then, it has been developed and summarised and reviewed in Hunt (2000) and in Hunt and Morgan (2005). Hunt and Madhavaram (2006) describes the R-A theory is a general theory of competition that describes the process of competition. The theory emphasises the importance of

- Market segments;
- Heterogeneous firms;
- Comparative advantages and disadvantages in resources; and
- Market place positions of competitive advantage or disadvantage.

There are many categories of resources, which are defined as a tangible and/or an intangible entity available to produce efficiently and/or effectively market offerings that have value for some marketing segments. Resources can be categorized as financial (cash/ access to financial markets); Physical (plant/ equipment); Legal (trademarks/ licences/ accreditation); Human (skills and knowledge of employees); Organisations (competencies/ controls/ culture); Informational (knowledge from the consumer/ competitive intelligence); and Relational (relationships with suppliers and customers).

When firms have comparative advantage in resources, they will occupy market place positions of competitive advantage for some market segments. These positions of competitive advantage then result in superior financial performance and vice-versa. Therefore, firms compete for comparative advantages in resources that will yield marketplace positions of competitive advantage for some market segments and thereby superior financial performance. Hunt (2002) posits that firms occupying positions of competitive advantage continue to do so if they reinvest in the resources that produced the competitive advantage and rivals' acquisitions and innovation efforts fail. R-A Theory places great emphasis on innovation, both proactive and reactive. Hunt (2002) describes the theory as therefore inherently dynamic and disequilibrium, not equilibrium, is the norm. The R-A Theory is an integrative theory because it is a general theory of competition that is geared towards the general theory of marketing (Hunt, 2002).

2.16 Summary

This chapter began with a history of recruitment and higher education in the United States, as well as PHEIs. The chapter also provided a profile of private college

students. The choice models section described choice modelling and the progression of models to include college choice. The section covering demographics reviewed the literature sources pertaining to gender; race/ethnicity; and socio-economic status, including financial assistance/funding. Literature relating to social inspirations delivered influential factors of family, secondary level influences, collegiate athletics and reputation. The institutional influences literature review included promotional and marketing/advertising materials, proximity of the institution and campus infrastructure/development.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a basis for this research about college choice and factors influencing college choice in private colleges. The factors of demographics, social status and institutional influence provide a sound framework for the research and illustrated a gap in the studies reviewed. This literature review was compiled to create a basis for the study.

The next chapter deals with the research methodology employed in dealing with the study.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

“Give a man a fish and feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime” (Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001)

3.1 Introduction

According to Mouton (2000), the research design of any proposed study is in broad terms, a plan, map or a blueprint of how the research is to be conducted pursuant to finding answers to the research problem of that particular study. Mouton (2000) defines research design as a set of guidelines to be followed in addressing the research problem. On the other hand, a methodology relates to a systematic execution of the research design (Fouche and Delport, 2014).

In this study, the quantitative research methodology was used. The quantitative methodology was considered to be suitable as the study investigated the factors that determined students' choice of a PHEI. The study required the respondents to share a range of perceptions for their choices of a PHEI in an attempt to uncover trends in thoughts and opinions into the reasons for the students' choice of a PHEI. The quantitative methodology allowed the researcher to interpret and describe the trends and patterns that emerged.

Quantitative research is about asking people for their opinions in a structured way in order to produce hard facts and statistics to guide the research. To obtain reliable statistical results, it was important to survey people in large numbers and to ascertain that they were a representative sample of the target market. Quantitative

research provides a measure of how many people think, feel or behave in a particular way and uses statistical analyses to determine the results.

The quantitative methodology that this study adopted focused essentially on the use of hypotheses by measuring thoughts into distinct measures with the use of numbers. Neuman (1997) states that the data is quantified and the hypothetical descriptions are largely causal and logical. Curwin and Slater (2004) concur with this view that the data collected is numerical. Thereafter, problems or challenges will be identified and solved using the quantitative approach. Denscombe (2004) views numbers, calculations and formulae as the core components of the quantitative approach. The measurement standards pre-existed and are procedurally standard and duplicated, hence the approach was essentially deductive. Data collected was from a relatively large sample and will be presented through graphs and tables.

For the purposes of this research, the sophisticated software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used.

Aliaga and Gunderson (2000) iterated Quantitative research as “explaining the phenomena by collecting numerical data that are analysed using mathematically based methods (in particular)”.

The quantitative/measurable view is described as being realistic or sometimes ‘positivist’. According to Shuttleworth (2010), realists adopt the view that the research does uncover present realities. “The truth is out there” (Shuttleworth, 2010:3). Objective research methods were used to uncover the truth. A Quantitative research design is an excellent way of finalising results and proving or disproving a

hypothesis. Since the structure has not changed in centuries, it is standardised across many scientific fields and disciplines. After statistical analyses of the results, a comprehensive answer is reached and results can be legitimately discussed and published. Shuttleworth (2008) suggests that quantitative experiments also filter out external factors if properly designed, making the results gained real and unbiased (Shuttleworth, 2008).

The methodology was considered to be most appropriate to the aim and objectives of this research study. A questionnaire and technological devices e.g. e-mail and the internet was used to facilitate the questionnaire distribution, as well as to collect data from the sample population at the selected PHEI Campuses in Durban, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pietermaritzburg. The questionnaire was used as part of the exploratory research because it provided insight into 'how' people think, rather than 'how many' people think in a certain way (Kotler and Keller, 2012).

3.2 Population/ Target population

According to Polit and Hungler (1999), the population can be seen as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. Amongst all the programs offered at the selected PHEI (College), the program with the highest number of registered students, per program, at each of the selected college branches, was the Diploma in Management. Due to the large numbers of students that enrol for this programme nationally, the students in this program formed the target population from which the sample for the research was selected. Furthermore, the Diploma in Management was a program that was offered

at all the branches of the selected College in South Africa and hence formed a good representation of a PHEI in South Africa. The selected private owned college was based in more than one province within South Africa for example: The PHEI had its footprints in KZN (Durban and Pietermaritzburg), Gauteng (Johannesburg) as well as Western Cape (Cape Town). The availability of the privately owned College in multiple provinces in South Africa justified it as a good representation of South Africa as a whole. Coldwell and Herbst (2004) define a sample as a finite part of a statistical population, whose properties are studied to gain information about the whole.

At the selected PHEI, the Durban campus had the highest number of registered students nationally. This was followed by the Pietermaritzburg, Johannesburg and Cape Town campuses respectively. The total number of first-year students registered for the Diploma in Management at the selected PHEI was then 281, in the 2015 academic year. All students registered at the selected private college in the programme formed part of the sample population nationally.

3.3 Sampling Method

The technique employed in this study was the Simple Random Sampling Method. This method gave each sample an identical opportunity of being nominated. A list of all first-year Diploma in Management students at each of the 4 campuses of the selected college (PHEI) was compiled. A total of 281 students were sampled. All first-year students in the Diploma in Management qualification at all 4 campuses were invited to participate in this research.

3.4 Measuring instrument

Data was collected from the respondents by means of questionnaires. The questionnaire was designed to collate demographic data from students, as well as data relating to the influential factors that impact on their choice-selection of a PHEI. The questions were both specific and general. Specific questions required students to provide a specific response. General questions were open-ended and allowed students an opportunity to indicate their opinions. The instrument was divided into 3 sections whereby section A covered the personal information, Section B focused on the offerings and standards of delivery offered at the selected college and Section C was open ended questions whereby the student was allowed to be more detailed in their answers.

The questionnaire was distributed to all individuals within the target population via the internet and personally. The use of the internet facilitated the conducting of a national study. It also allowed the study to be completed within the time frame and catered for any budgetary constraints.

All sample elements were invited to participate, through a personal email addressed to each student within the invited target population. All elements of this invited sample were provided with an informed consent form. This form outlined the aims and objectives of this study and also sought their consent to participate. Permission from the institution allowing the researcher to conduct the study was provided to all elements of the invited sample. The completed questionnaires were returned via the internet or handed in personally. Those elements that returned the questionnaire timeously became part of the data producing sample.

3.5 Data Analysis

The raw data was analysed and transformed into a narrative and graphical format that made it easily understandable and interpretable. Data was tabled according to questions in the instrument, analysed and reported on descriptively. Graphs and tables were used to support the narrative analysis and description of the data. Jothikumar, *et al.* (2005) describe this as 'descriptive statistics'. Jothikumar *et al.* (2005) describe 'descriptive statistics' as a technique that shrinks data samples into summary declarations and thereafter measures the data. Large masses of data necessitate organisation, summary and extraction of the critical figures enclosed within the data for reporting purposes. Profiles, patterns and relationships as well as trends within the data, are identified using Descriptive statistics (Jothikumar *et al.*, 2005).

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyse the data and to compile graphs and tables in support of the quantitative reporting of the data.

3.6 Pre-testing (Pilot study)

It is critical to ensure that a pilot study is administered or conducted in the process of constructing the questionnaire. The pre-testing process is conducted in order to check for wording glitches in the questions or any other element that could impede the instrument's ability to collect data in an economical and systematic fashion (Angen, 2000).

As the researcher was based in Durban, pre-testing was done with students at the Durban campus only. By prior arrangement with a lecturer, the researcher attended one of the lecture sessions of the Diploma in Management programme and briefly described to the students the intention and nature of the survey that was to be undertaken. Ten volunteers outside of the sample were then asked to complete the questionnaire. The researcher then met with the respondents to discuss any problems that had been encountered with the questionnaire and/or any suggestions that they may have had for improving the questionnaire. Fortunately, no problems were encountered and students had no suggestions.

Reliability and **validity** are the two utmost important aspects of precision/accuracy. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. For newly developed constructs, a reliability coefficient of 0.60 or higher is considered as “acceptable”. The table 4.1 below reflects the Cronbach’s alpha score for all the items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Cronbach’s Alpha Score

Section	Name	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
B1	Branding of the Institution	4	0.696
B2	Cost Factors	3	0.651
B3	Accessibility of the Institution	3	0.630
B4	Quality of the institution	6	0.603

The reliability scores exceed or approximated the recommended alpha value for all sections. This specifies, for these sections of the study, a degree of acceptability and consistent scoring.

3.7 Delimitations/scope

This study was:

- Limited to a single PHEI;
- A national study conducted at the 4 campuses of the selected PHEI; and
- Limited to first -year Diploma in Management students.

3.8 Validity and reliability

Wagner (2000) defines validity as the degree to which a research study measures what it intends to measure. There are two main types of validity, namely internal and external. Internal validity refers to the validity of the measurement and test itself, whereas external validity refers to the ability to generalise the findings to the target population. Wagner (2000) both states that are very important in analysing the appropriateness, meaningfulness and usefulness of a research study. Validity is extremely important because should the results of a study be deemed not valid, then they are meaningless. If the study does not measure what it sets out to measure, then the results cannot be used to answer the research question, which is the main

aim of the study. Wagner (2000) contends that these results cannot be used to generalize any findings and thus become a waste of time and effort (Wagner, 2000)

3.8.1 How validity was ensured

The pilot study ensured that the questionnaire was valid. The literature review informed the construction of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was relevant to the aims and objectives of this study, hence a factor analysis test was conducted.

3.8.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results. Reliability is important in that it shows the results of a study to be consistent and repeatable. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used. The use of probability sampling ensured that the sample was representative of the population and that the results obtained are reliable.

3.9 Anonymity and confidentiality

It was imperative that accurate and honest opinions from participants were received. Obtaining accurate and honest opinions became a challenge when students had to answer sensitive questions about their experiences or actions. Allowing students to respond anonymously was one way of overcoming this challenge. Anonymity was important to have allowed the respondents the opportunity to respond truthfully and

without restrictions. In this study, the respondents were not anonymous to the researcher, but are anonymous to any reader of the research report.

Keeping information confidential is one way of ensuring that respondents answer accurately and honestly without fear of being victimised. Furthermore, the ethical responsibility is not only to provide accurate information on the study, but also to protect the “security, dignity and self-worth” of the respondents. Part of protecting the students that participated included minimizing any potential risk or harm that might have occurred when they shared their experiences with others.

Confidentiality is important as it prevents any victimization and/or stereotyping of respondents. No names of respondents were used in the writing of the research report. The use of the internet ensured direct contact between the researcher and the respondents, thereby keeping correspondence confidential.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical clearance was obtained from the Durban University of Technology (DUT), as well as the selected PHEI.

All elements of the selected sample were invited to participate in this research via the internet. Participants were not in any way incentivised and furthermore, participation was entirely voluntary and at the discretion of the respondents.

3.11 Summary

In this chapter, an overview of the research methodology used during this study was presented. Chapter Three provided an explanation of the population and target population; the sampling method; measuring instrument; data analysis method; process of pre-testing; the methods used for data collection; reliability and validity used to conduct this research.

This chapter further analysed the population and target population together with the data collection instrument, being the questionnaire.

Validity, reliability and ethical concerns regarding the measuring instrument were analysed through Inferential Statistics, with emphasis on the Chi-square Test and Correlation Analysis, and the techniques used during the research.

The findings and discussion of the study are presented in Chapter 4.

“Education is not preparation for life, education is life itself” (Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001)

CHAPTER 4: INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the outcomes and discusses the findings attained from the survey. The questionnaire, which was distributed to students, was the primary tool used to collect data and SPSS version 22 analysed the responses received. Descriptive statistics in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures present the outcomes of the quantitative data that was collected. Inferential techniques contain the use of correlations as well as chi-square test values, which are interpreted with the use of p-values.

4.2 The Sample

A list of all first-year Diploma in Management students at each of the 4 campuses of the selected PHEI was compiled. The total of 281 students formed part of the sample population. All students at all 4 campuses were invited to participate in this research. In total, only 249 questionnaires were successfully despatched timeously and 175 responded accordingly, which is an acceptable 70.2% response rate.

4.3 The Research Instrument

The level of measurement with regard to the instrument was at a nominal or an ordinal level and contained 45 items. The instrument was divided into sections as illustrated below:

- A Biographical data
- B Likert Scaled questions to test students' perceptions
- C Student Response questions

4.4 Reliability Statistics

Reliability and **validity** are the two utmost important aspects of precision/accuracy. Reliability is computed by taking several measurements on the same subjects. For newly developed constructs, a reliability coefficient of 0.60 or higher is considered as "acceptable". The table 4.1 below reflects the Cronbach's alpha score for all the items that constituted the questionnaire.

Table 4.1: Cronbach's Alpha Score

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B4	Quality of the institution	6	0.603

The reliability scores exceed or approximated the recommended alpha value for all sections. This specifies, for these sections of the study, a degree of acceptability and consistent scoring.

4.5 Factor Analysis

4.5.1 Why is factor analysis (FA) important?

The primary objective of FA as a statistical technique is data reduction. A typical use of factor analysis is in survey research where, according to Factor Analysis Rotation (2011), researchers aim to present a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. Each question answered on its own will provide an inadequate measure but holistically, they provide a better measure of the attitude. Factor analysis establishes whether or not the three processes measure the same thing. If that is the situation, then they will be pooled to create a new variable. Factor Analysis Rotation (2011) confirms that factor techniques used in a situation are applicable to many situations. Collected Data was examined using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22, in both the pilot as well as actual study.

A researcher may want to know if the skills required to be a decathlete are as varied as the ten events, or if a small number of core skills are needed to be successful in a decathlon. In-order to perform a factor analysis, one need not believe that factors actually exist. However, the factors are understood, named and referred to as real things (Factor Analysis Rotation, 2011).

The matrix tables precede a summarised table reflecting the outcomes of the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test. The pre-requisite is that the KMO Measure of

Sampling Adequacy must exceed 0.50 and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity should not surpass 0.05. The conditions are contented in all instances for the purpose of this study, which permits the factor analysis procedure.

Factor analysis is conducted for the Likert scale items only. Certain components were further sub-divided into finer components. The rotated component matrix provides the explanation below:

4.5.2 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 4.2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Section	Name	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity		
			Approx. Chi-Square	Df	Sig.
B1	Branding	0.589	134.042	6	0.000
B2	Cost	0.518	53.551	3	0.000
B3	Accessibility	0.560	55.738	3	0.000
B4	Quality	0.616	110.675	15	0.000

4.6 Rotated Component Matrix

4.6.1 B1– Branding

Table 4.3: Rotated Component Matrix for Branding

Rotated Component Matrix ^a		
B1– Branding	Component	
	1	2
Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa	0.887	-0.024
Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution	0.890	0.031
The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	-0.081	0.924
The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	0.531	0.513
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

4.6.2 B2- Cost

Table 4.3: Rotated Component Matrix for Cost

Component Matrix ^a	
B2- Cost	Component
	1
I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International	0.810
The cost of my studies was irrelevant when I chose my institution to further my studies	0.418
The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions	0.853
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. a. 1 components extracted.	

4.6.3 B3- Accessibility

Table 4.4: Rotated Component Matrix for Accessibility

Component Matrix ^a	
B3- Accessibility	Component
	1
Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home	0.833
Transport arrangement to Oval International is most convenient as opposed to other Private Higher Education Institutions	0.771
Oval International is centrally situated	0.576
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. a. 1 component extracted	

4.6.4 B4 – Quality

Table 4.6: Rotated Component Matrix for Quality

Component Matrix ^a		
B4 – Quality	Component	
	1	2
The entrance requirements at Oval International are lower than that of other PHEI's	0.647	-0.184
The relatively small number of students per class was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	0.686	0.180
The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	0.647	0.354
The fact that there have been no student boycotts and protests at Oval International was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	0.654	0.104
Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	0.097	0.811
All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited	0.065	0.708
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Factor analysis is a statistical technique used to reduce data. Survey research uses factor analysis, whereby a researcher intends to signify a number of questions with a small number of hypothetical factors. With reference to the table above:

- The extraction method: the principle component analysis, Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. This is an orthogonal rotation process that minimizes the overall number of variables and increases loadings on each factor, which simplifies the interpretation of factors.
- Inter-correlations amongst variables are indicated by Factor analysis/loading.

- Items of questions that loaded similarly imply measurement along a similar factor. An examination of the content of items loading at or above 0.5 (and using the higher or highest loading in instances where items cross-loaded at greater than this value) effectively measured along the various components.
- The statements that constituted sections B2 and B3, which was the cost factor and the accessibility respectively, loaded perfectly along a single component. This denotes that the statements that constituted these sections perfectly measured what it set out to measure.

Sections B1, the Branding and B4, Quality of the institution, split into two sub-themes within the major theme. These are identified by colour coding.

4.7 Section A: Biographical Data

This section summarises the respondent's biographical characteristics.

4.7.1 The tabulated information below is the respondents overall gender distribution by age.

Table 4.7: Gender Distribution by Age

			Gender		Total
			Male	Female	
Age	18-25	Count	52	117	169
		% within Age	30.8%	69.2%	100.0%
		% within Gender	94.5%	97.5%	96.6%
		% of Total	29.7%	66.9%	96.6%
	26-35	Count	2	2	4
		% within Age	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	3.6%	1.7%	2.3%
		% of Total	1.1%	1.1%	2.3%
	36-45	Count	1	1	2
		% within Age	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	1.8%	0.8%	1.1%
		% of Total	0.6%	0.6%	1.1%
Total		Count	55	120	175
		% within Age	31.4%	68.6%	100.0%
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	31.4%	68.6%	100.0%

The approximate ratio of males to females is 1:2 (31.4%:68.6%).

In the age category of 18-25 years, males were 30.8% and 69.2% were females. In the female (only) category, 97.5% are of the ages between 18-25 years which is 66.9% of the sample total.

Half of the respondents in the age category of 26 to 35 years were male. In the males (only) category, 3.6% were between the ages of 26 to 35 years. This category of males between the ages of 26 to 35 years formed 1.1% of the sample total.

Finally, according to the age category of 36-45 years, males were 50%. Similarly, 50% were females. Within males (only), 1.8% were between the ages of 36-45 years. For females (only), 0.8% were between the ages of 36-45 years. This category of males between the ages of 36-45 years formed 0.6% of the total sample, which is identical to that of the females in the same category.

The reason for this question and the focus on these categories is that students in Higher Education have no specific age requirements, but are rather an approximate in that they enrol immediately after Grade 12 or at a later stage. This question provides the researcher with more information and understanding of the target population in this research. In terms of the research study, age and gender of the respondents play a key role in understanding how individuals in these demographic categories apply their minds when making career choices and selecting an institution to further their education. It is important for marketing aspects in that the media targeted has to be age appropriate and understand the type of medium to be used. Furthermore, it points to the authenticity of the sample in that only those students applicable to higher education have responded as an extremely younger age would have indicated non-authenticity.

4.7.2 Racial Composition

The figure below indicates the racial composition of the sample.

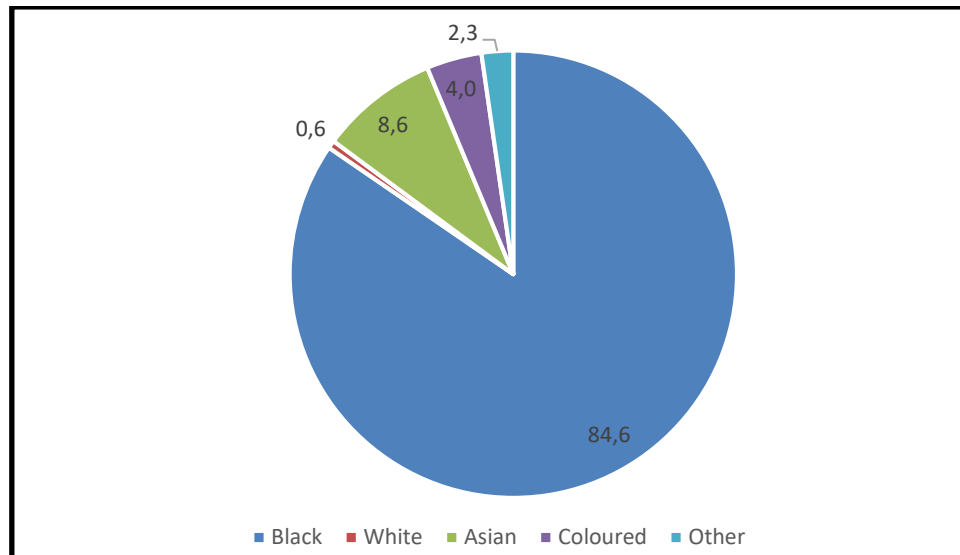


Figure 4.1: Racial Composition of the Respondents

The sample was predominantly (84.6%) African (Black) as they make up the majority of the student population, with Coloureds and Asians making up approximately 13% and whites 0.6% of the total sample. White students are the minority of the total student population, as well as the sample population. Litten's (2011) research noted that White-American applications are received earlier in the process as compared to Negro-American applications (Litten, 2011).

Racial composition information provides greater detail and understanding of the races of the population attracted to the institution. Firstly, the racial composition provides authenticity to the research and there is clear evidence across the respondents that the survey was not biased in any way. Secondly, this research will

be used for marketing purposes of the institution. It will provide the institution with information regarding target areas and races, which will aid them in allocating budgets and media campaigns appropriately. The institution will either capitalise on the large black student population or implement efforts to grow the minority 'other' populations.

In a similar survey conducted on student choices and influences in America, it was indicated that whilst access to higher education has increased for minorities (Kim, 2004), the college decision-making process for minority students compared to that of their white peers is quite different (Trent, 2011 and Owens-Nicholson, 2011). The differences are compounded when the differences among minorities are considered. Each minority group has cultural differences that can change their college choice-decision process from that of the peers and includes: (a) proximity to home; (b) willingness to accept loans; and (c) other group specific attributes (St. John, 1999). Financial need and availability is one of the largest factors for all students who are planning on attending college but it is even more common for minority students in their decision-making process and can often determine which school they ultimately decide to attend (Kim, 2004).

4.7.3 Respondents per province

The home province of the respondents is shown in the table below.

Table 4.8: Home Province Distribution of Respondents

	Frequency	Percent
KZN	130	74.3
Gauteng	27	15.4
Western Cape	9	5.1
Other Provinces (students studying at the targeted provinces but reside outside the provinces)	9	5.1
Total	175	100.0

The purpose of this question was to provide authenticity to the survey in that the survey only targeted the provinces where the selected institution has campuses. Secondly, as already stipulated, the research is intended to increase enrolment figures and secure the future existence of the organisation. This information will guide the marketing strategy and budgets to either capitalise on provinces with higher numbers and/or engage efforts to grow branches in provinces with smaller student numbers.

KZN is the head office of the private higher education institute in question, which has the largest intake of registered students. Hence, the largest number of respondents per province was from KZN i.e. 130 students which is 73% of total respondents

followed by Gauteng with a 15.4% response rate and then Western province with 5.1%.

4.8 Section B: Section Analysis

This section analyses scoring patterns of the respondents. Every factor is investigated in every section. The agreement (positive statements) and disparity levels (negative statements) followed similar procedures whereby they were collapsed to show a single category of “Disagreement” (negative statements).

Outcomes from the variables that represent each section are initially presented by means of summarised percentages.

Further analyses of the results are indicated according to the significance of the statements.

4.8.1 B1: Branding as a factor of influence

The table below summarises the scoring patterns.

Table 4.9: Scoring Patterns as a factor of influence

B1 Branding	Agree		Do not know		Disagree		Chi Square
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	p-value
Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa	116	66.3%	25	14.3%	34	19.4%	0.000
Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution	91	52.0%	46	26.3%	38	21.7%	0.000
The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	123	70.3%	7	4.0%	45	25.7%	0.000
The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	72	41.1%	39	22.3%	64	36.6%	0.006

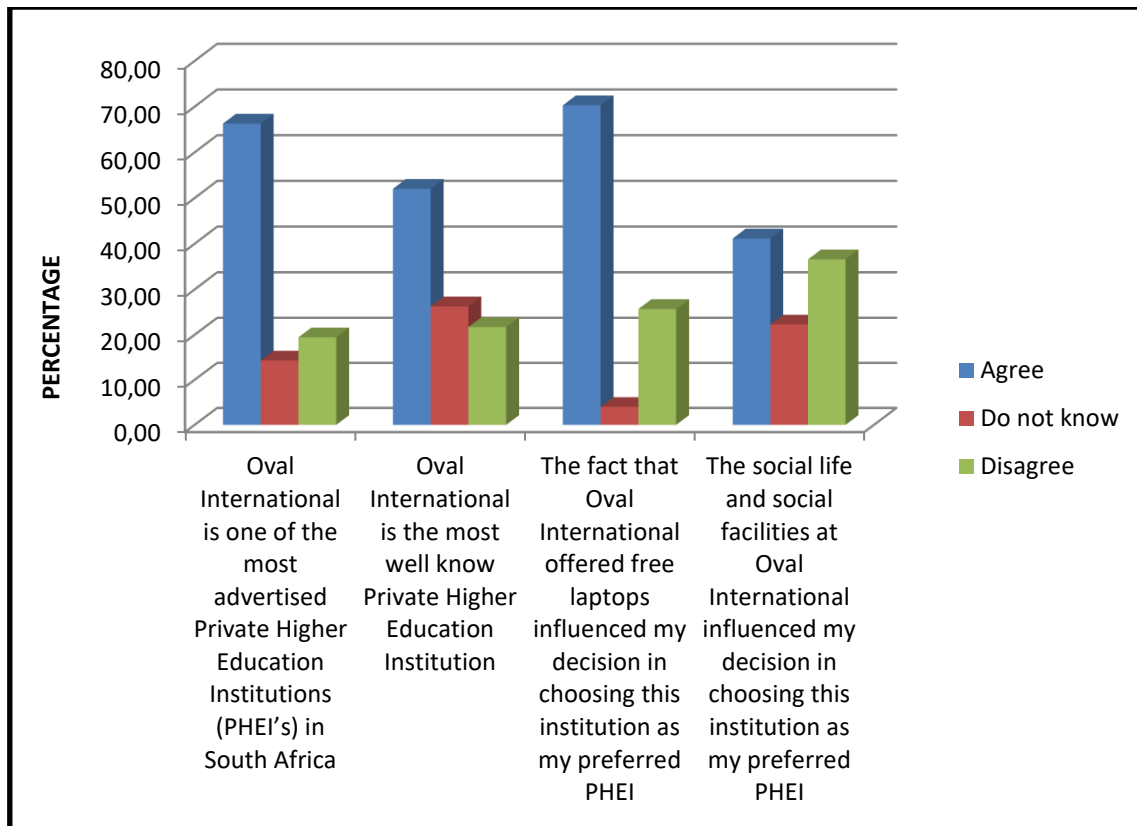


Figure 4.2: Scoring Patterns for Branding as a factors of influence

The purpose of the questions in this section was to establish the positioning of the brand, the brand image amongst students at the institution, as well as the level of impact of branding on the respondent at the time of registration. The question provided relevant information with regard to brand awariness before registration, as well as brand perception and promotions used to increase branding.

The following patterns are observed:

- Both statements show higher levels of agreement, with one being at a lower level, however, still exceeding levels of disagreement;
- There are no testimonials indicating disagreement levels being higher;

- The significance of the differences is verified and shown in the table; and
- The fact that a higher percentage was in agreement and acknowledged information regarding the branding, promotion and advertising of the PHEI is evidence that branding has created awareness.

The statistics of the survey indicate that:

- 66.3% of the respondents identified agreement that Oval International was one of the most advertised institutions in the private industry of Higher Education, whilst only 19.4% disagreed and felt that they would have been other institutions more widely advertised. Only a minority of 14.3% did not know whether the institution was the most advertised or not. It is noted from the respondents that majority of the students have been aware of the publicity of Oval International.
- Fifty-two percent of the respondents agreed with Oval International being the most well known institution in private higher education; whilst 21.7% disagreed and felt that there are other institutions more identified than Oval International and 26.3% did not know if Oval International is the most well-known institution or not. It is once again brought to attention by more than 50% of the respondents that Oval is widely advertised and hence a well-renowned Institution in the industry.
- With regard to promotion and advertising, 70.3% agreed that the 'Free laptop' promotion influenced their decision in choosing their private institution of study; whilst 25.7% felt that it was not a deciding factor to choose an institution to pursue their studies. Only 4.0% were unsure if it was a deciding

factor or not. With advertising and promotion, the majority of respondents indicated that through the promotion and advertising of Oval International, they were aware of the additional benefits offered and this hence impacted on their decision.

- Only 41.1% of the respondent were aware of the social activities of Oval International and indicated that it did influence their decision and 36.6% disagreed; whilst 23.3% were unsure of the social activities and whether it did influence their decision.
- Advertising and promotion questions created a strong positive agreement with 66.3% and 70.3% respectively, as compared to knowledge of unadvertised information regarding accessibility of the institution and social activities at 52.0% and 41.1% respectively. This indicates a strong positive influence of branding and advertising.

Further supporting the marketing and branding initiative and its impact, the literature review indicated the following:

“Since the Internet boom, 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 a 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 (Hegeman, Davies and Banning, 2007). 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.”

Campus visits impact greatly on parents and students in influencing their final decision as visual appearance of the infrastructure can create or enhance a positive influence. Chute (1989) discovered that display of a positive attitude of current students and staff was an influential factor as it indicated the atmosphere that a potential student would study in.

Adams and Eveland (2007) stipulated that it is imperative that an institution connects with students through arranging campus tours for potential learners, as well as presentations and visitations with high schools leavers. Providing information in the earlier stages has added advantages.

A chi-square test was conducted to conclude whether or not the scoring patterns per statement were significantly different per option. However, as a result the null hypothesis indicates that similar numbers of respondents scored across each option per statement. The alternate indicates that a significant difference exists between agreement and disagreement levels.

The results are tabulated below. The highlighted sig. values (p-values) are below 0.05 (the level of significance), which implies that the distributions were dissimilar and that the differences were significant.

4.8.2 B2 Cost as a factor of influence

Table 4.10: Cost as a factor of influence

B2 Cost	Agree		Do not know		Disagree		Chi Square
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	p-value
I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International	113	64.6%	6	3.4%	56	32.0%	0.000
The cost of my studies was irrelevant when I chose my institution to further my studies	87	49.7%	35	20.0%	53	30.3%	0.000
The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions	90	51.4%	47	26.9%	38	21.7%	0.000

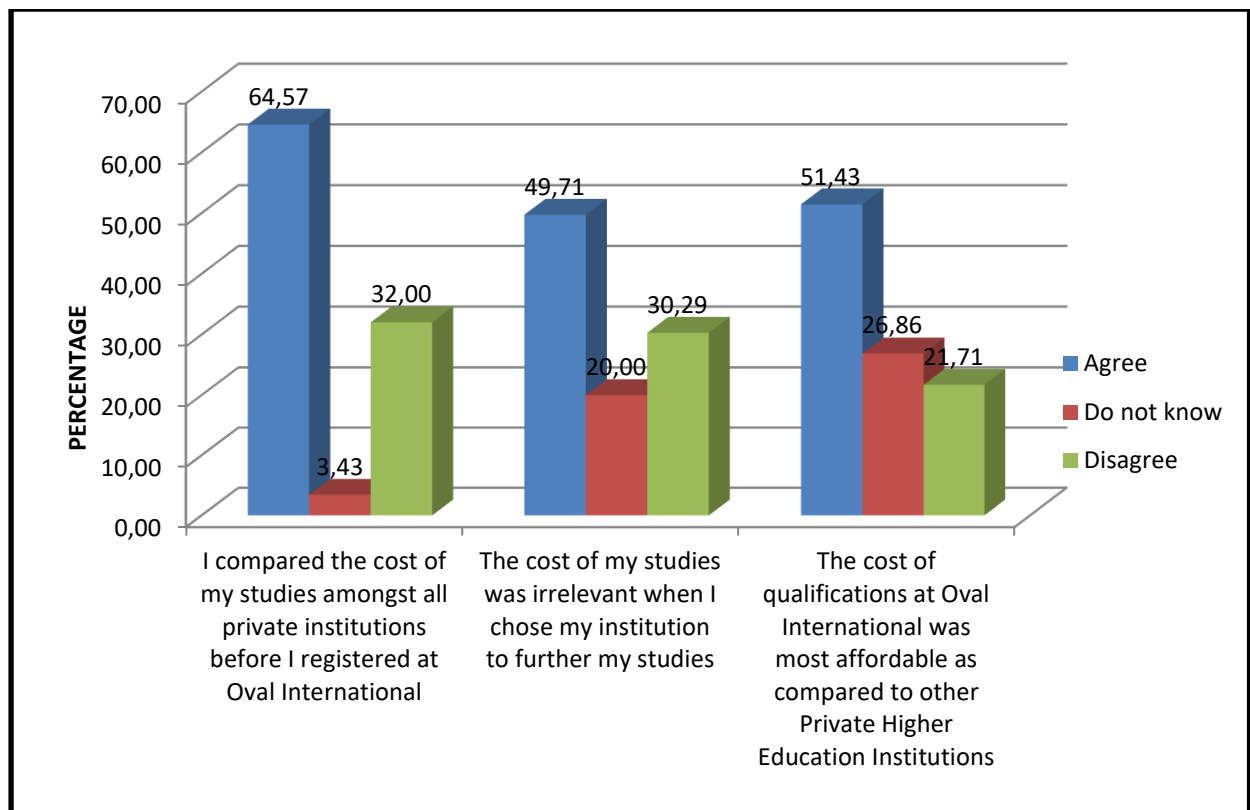


Figure 4.3: Cost as a factor of influence

The purpose of including the questions above in the survey was to analyse the impact of costing on the students' decision. The responses would indicate the relevance of the cost of a qualification, as well as the validity of the answers provided since questions were rephrased with the expectation of the same answer to validate the honesty of the respondent in the survey. This will provide an indication to the institution whether to keep the costing within the average range of competitors or alternatively, increase costs and maximise profit. Ultimately, profits can be maximised either on the costing of the course or the number of enrolments.

The following patterns were observed with regard to costs as an influencing decision in college choice:

- All statements indicated higher levels of agreement.

- There are no statements indicating higher levels of disagreement.

A significant 64.6% compared costs of their studies before they registered at Oval International and 32.2% disagreed and did not regard the cost of the studies; whilst 3.4% did not know if research with regard to cost was done prior to studies.

In close correlation to the question above where 64.6% compared costs, a significant percentage of 51.4% indicated and agreed with the cost of Oval International being most affordable as compared to other institutions, whilst only a minimal 21.7% disagreed with Oval International being the most affordable institution. Only 26.9% indicated that they had no knowledge of the information regarding the institution being the most affordable institution.

Almost half of the respondents (49.7%) indicated that the cost of their studies were irrelevant to the choice of their institution and that other factors influenced their decision; whilst 30.3% disagreed and alleged that the cost factor was totally relevant in the decision and 26.9% were unsure if cost was relevant or irrelevant in the decision of where to study.

In proving the results justifiable, the literature reviewed placed emphasis accordingly that the cost of attending an institution when choosing a particular college is a factor definitely considered. Broekemier and Seshadri (2010), surveyed high performing students who required financial assistance and the effect that financial funding had on pursuing their studies. According to Broekemier and Seshadri (2010) students consider financial funding as an integral part of the decision. A second choice institution can become the first choice institution based on financial circumstances. In reviewing the above results, it is noticeably evident that overall respondents have indicated that costs have been considered and impacted on their decision.

4.8.3 B3 Accessibility as a factor of influence

Table 4.4: Accessibility as a factor of influence

B3 Accessibility	Agree		Do not know		Disagree		Chi Square
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	p-value
Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home	69	39.4%	28	16.0%	78	44.6%	0.000
Transport arrangement to Oval International is most convenient as opposed to other Private Higher Education Institutions	68	38.9%	57	32.6%	50	28.6%	0.244
Oval International is centrally situated	123	70.3%	45	25.7%	7	4.0%	0.000

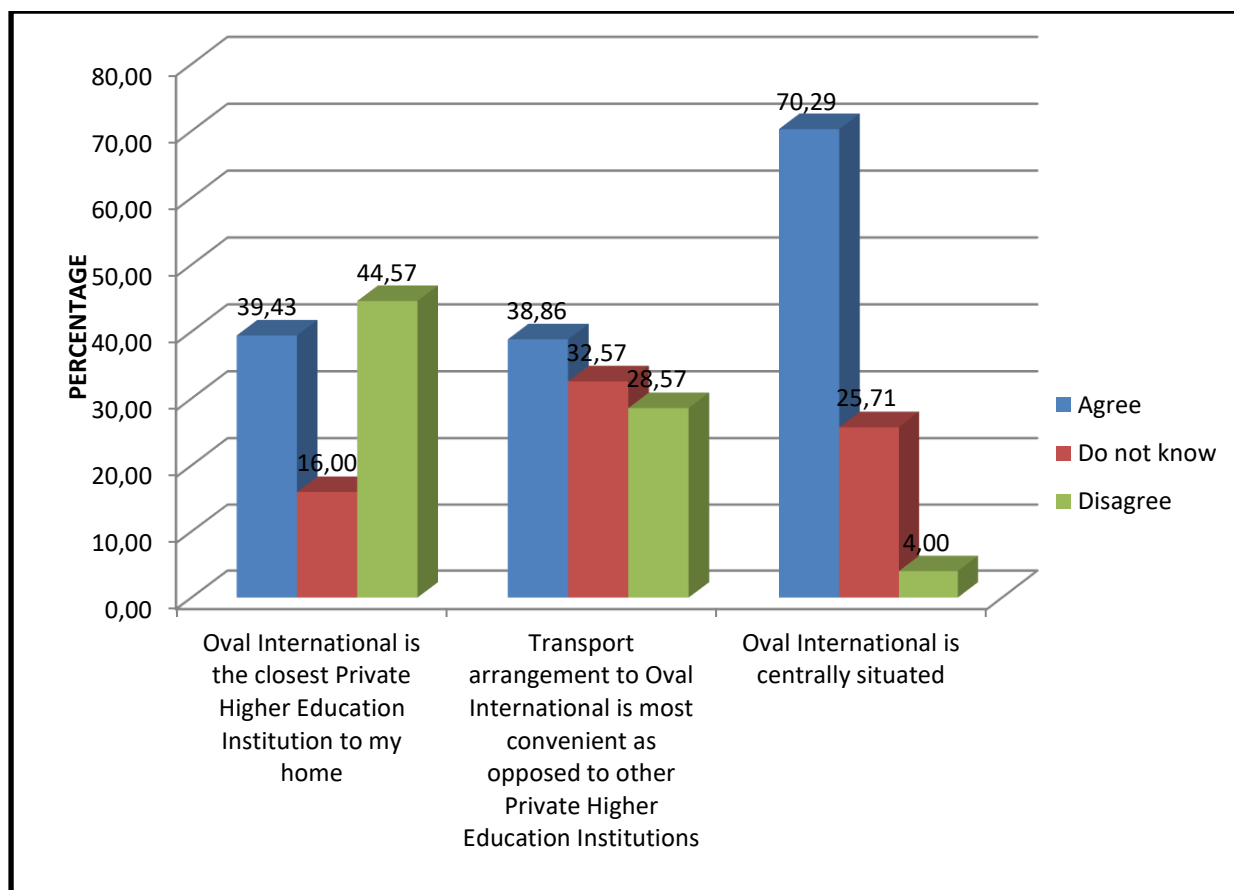


Figure: 4.4: Accessibility as a factor of influence

Note that transport arrangements is not significant.

The above-mentioned questions regarding transport were included in the questionnaire for the purpose of identifying accessibility as a factor of influence. For the purpose of this research, if the campus was more accessible, will Oval International have more students?

Accessibility was insignificant as a factor to a student's decision in selecting a PHEI. Whilst 44.57% of the respondents indicated that Oval International is not the closest PHEI to their home, it is rather significant that they have opted to study at Oval

International. However, 38.8% indicated that transport arrangements are easily available to travel to the institution.

In justification of the findings, the literature review earlier by Southerland (2006) underlined an additional imperfection in the Model of Hossler and Gallagher (2015), which is founded upon high school students and is limited to students beyond the traditional age, which forms part of the target market as well. Reality is that students are “increasingly older, returning to school because of work-related issues, and attending on a part-time basis” (Broekemier, 2002). This indicates that with modern technology, students are able to study part-time or online to eliminate issues of proximity. Those students that have ironed out affordability will travel or relocate to enjoy the college or social “life” experience.

Kotler and Fox (1995) postulate that although traditionally ‘distribution’ referred to the physical location of a university and its campus, technological developments have helped higher education organizations to increase service accessibility through electronic platform usage. For example, E-learning programs have been adopted by many international universities in-order to gain market share and target those consumers who perceive geographic or time difficulties in physically attending university courses (Kottler and Fox, 1995).

4.8.4 B4 Quality as a contributing factor

Table 4.12: Quality as a factor of influence

B4 Quality	Agree		Do not know		Disagree		Chi Square
	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	Count	Row N %	p-value
The entrance requirements at Oval International are lower than that of other PHEIs	81	46.3%	73	41.7%	21	12.0%	0.000
The relatively small number of students per class was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	71	40.6%	40	22.9%	64	36.6%	0.011
The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	68	38.9%	41	23.4%	66	37.7%	0.021
The fact that there have been no student boycotts and protests at Oval International was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	117	66.9%	29	16.6%	29	16.6%	0.000
Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	82	46.9%	85	48.6%	8	4.6%	0.000
All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited	125	71.4%	43	24.6%	7	4.0%	0.000

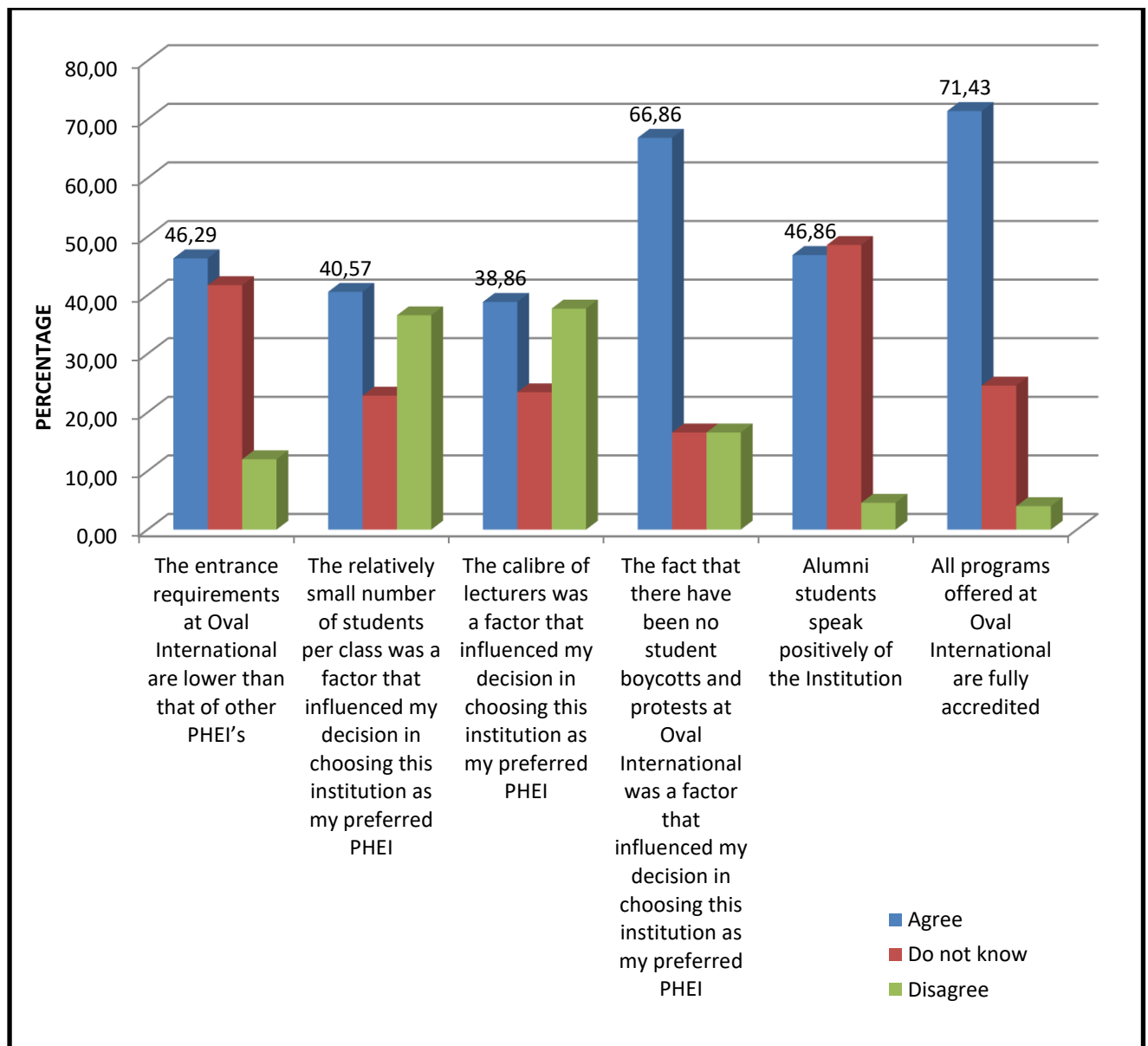


Figure 4.5 Quality as a factor of influence

Quality was one of the factors investigated in this study. Hence, questions on Quality were posed to the respondents. The intention was to find out if the Quality of an Institution is detrimental to the decision of selecting a PHEI, if they are aware of the quality of the PHEI and what factors contribute the most to the quality of the institution that students are aware of, as well as how much more focus can be placed on quality that will create a greater impact.

When the survey questioned the quality of an institution, the outcome was as follows:

- Most respondents (46%) agreed that the entrance requirements at Oval International were lower than other PHEIs and 12% disagreed on the same statement. However, 41.7% indicated that they did not know.
- Most respondents (40.6%) indicated that the smaller class sizes at Oval International influenced their decision, whilst 36.6% disagreed and 22.9% were unsure.
- A significant number (38.9%) specified that the calibre of lectures was an influencing factor, whilst 37.7% were in disagreement and 23.4% were unsure.
- In researching whether a positive history of protests and boycotts at Oval International was an influencing factor, 66.9% indicated that it did influence their decision and 16.6% specified that it did not influence their decision, whilst 16.6% indicated that they were unsure.
- Almost 46.9% specified that the alumni rendered a positive image of the institution and they agreed it impacted on their decision to choose Oval International, whilst a minimal 4.6% disagreed and disclosed that it did not play a significant role in their decision and a larger proportion of 48.6% indicated that they did not know.
- When assessing the quality, a strong significant percentage of 71.4% indicated that they were aware that all programs were fully accredited at Oval

International, whilst only 4.0% disagreed. However, 24.6% of the sample population indicated that they did not know.

The findings of the Higher Education Quality Committee's (HEQC) evaluative study of institutional audits (2006) supports the view that the private higher education providers themselves intervene to gain recognition: "... they believe participation would provide them with possible new insights which would strengthen the institution" (Council on Higher Education, 2007).

4.9 Section C: Hypothesis Testing

The traditional approach to reporting a result requires a statement of statistical significance. A **p-value** is generated from a **test statistic**. A significant result is indicated with " $p < 0.05$ ". These values are highlighted with a *. A second Chi-square test was performed to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between the variables (rows vs columns). The null hypothesis states that there is no association between the two. The alternate hypothesis indicates that there is an association. The table below summarises the results of the chi-square tests.

Table 4.13: Results of the Chi-square Test

	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Gender	24.143	1	0.000
Race	459.143	4	0.000
Age	314.96	2	0.000
Province	231.651	3	0.000
Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa	86.206	2	0.000
Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution	27.989	2	0.000
Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	65.223	2	0.000
The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	119.909	2	0.000
The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	10.16	2	0.006
All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited	125.394	2	0.000
I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International	98.274	2	0.000
The cost of my studies was irrelevant when I chose my institution to further my studies	23.909	2	0.000
The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions	26.48	2	0.000
Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home	24.354	2	0.000
Transport arrangement to Oval International is most convenient as opposed to other Private Higher Education Institutions	2.823	2	0.244
Oval International is centrally situated	119.909	2	0.000
The entrance requirements at Oval International are lower than that of other PHEI's	103.194	3	0.000
The relatively small number of students per class was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	9.063	2	0.011
The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	7.76	2	0.021
The fact that there have been no student boycotts and protests at Oval International was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	88.503	2	0.000

The p-value between “Gender” and “I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International” is 0.026. A significant relationship exists between the variables which are highlighted in yellow implying that the gender of the respondent played a significant part, indicated according to how respondents viewed the cost of studies amongst all private institutions.

All values without an * (or p-values above 0.05) do not share a significant relationship.

4.9.1 Correlations

Bivariate correlation was also executed on the (ordinal) data. See [Appendix A](#) for the results. (See excel sheet: Correlations; table too large to put here. Refer to appendix).

The following patterns are indicated:

- A directly proportional relationship amongst the variables is shown by Positive values, whereas an inverse relationship is shown by a negative value.
- a * or ** indicates all significant relationships.

4.9.1.1 Branding

Table 4.14: Bivariate Data Correlation for Branding

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well-known PHEI
Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	175	
Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution	Correlation Coefficient	.673**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	175	175
Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	Correlation Coefficient	.208**	.264**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.000
	N	175	175

“Alumni students speaks positively of the Institution” has in addition direct relationships with “Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa” as well as “Oval International is the most well-known Private Higher Education Institution”, with correlation values of 0.208 and 0.264 respectively. Respondents indicated further in the survey that the alumni has a robust impact on the publicity of the brand in that the more positively they speak about the brand, the more advertised the PHEI will be and hence be one of the most well-known brands in South Africa.

“The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI” and “Alumni speaks positively of the institution” has a direct relationship with a correlation value of 0.226. This relationship indicates that promotions will encourage alumni to speak positively of the brand and increase awareness, hence increasing publicity.

“Oval International is the most well-known PHEI” and “Oval International is the most advertised PHEI in South Africa” has a correlation value of 0.673. The direct relationship is due to the indication by respondents that since Oval international is the most advertised brand, it also one of the most well-known PHEIs.

According to the literature reviewed, it is indicated that the subject of institutional choice has been trending from as early as the 1970s. From an institution’s perspective competition has increased and student admittance has decreased. Consequently, extensive research is being conducted with the intention of creating better marketing and advertising strategies (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

A key attribute in the marketing of an institution is the Physical factors as institutions are more likely to boost the tangibility of the PHEI and its offerings to learners bearing in mind that there is very little to inspect (Gibbs and Knapp, 2002). Physical factors include buildings of the institution; branding and image; facilities; office layout; etc. Parents, peers and students create an impression of quality through their physical inspection and what they see at face value (Hayes, 2009).

4.9.1.2 Quality

Table 4.15: Bivariate Data Correlation for Quality

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well-known PHEI	Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	The fact that Oval Int. offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	The social life and social facilities at Oval Int. influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	All programs offered at Oval Int. are fully accredited
Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa	Correlation Coefficient	1.000					
	Sig. (2-tailed)						
	N	175					
Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution	Correlation Coefficient	.673**	1.000				
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000					
	N	175	175				
Alumni students speak positively of the Institution	Correlation Coefficient	.208**	.264**	1.000			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.006	0.000				
	N	175	175	175			
The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	Correlation Coefficient	0.011	0.061	.226**	1.000		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.889	0.419	0.003			
	N	175	175	175	175		
The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	Correlation Coefficient	.293**	.332**	.221**	.190*	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.003	0.012		
	N	175	175	175	175	175	
All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited	Correlation Coefficient	.205**	.214**	.280**	.177*	.268**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.007	0.004	0.000	0.019	0.000	
	N	175	175	175	175	175	175

“All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited” shares significant relationships with:

“Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI’s) in South Africa”;

”Oval International is the most well-known Private Higher Education Institution”;

“Alumni students speak positively of the Institution”;

”The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI”; and

“The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI”; with correlation values of 0.205; 0.214; 0.280; 0.177; and 0.268 respectively.

The respondents surveyed indicated that should all courses at Oval International be fully accredited, then it will be the most well-known PHEI and that the alumni will continue to speak proudly of the Institution and its promotions and student life, ultimately having a huge impact on its advertising and hence becoming the most advertised PHEI.

Table 4.16: Bivariate Data Correlation – Branding versus Quality of Lecturers

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well-known PHEI	Alumni students speak positively of the Institution
The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	Correlation Coefficient	.234**	.369**	.252**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.000	0.001
	N	175	175	175

The correlation value between “Alumni students speak positively of the Institution” and “The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI” is 0.252. This is a directly proportionate relationship. Respondents point out that a better lecturer will promote positive communication from the alumni and vice-versa.

In summary, social influences have played a strong role in a high school senior’s college decision-making process. Creating a favourable image is daunting for an institution, given the plethora of messages each student receives (Armstrong, 2009). As cited by Cabrera and La Nasa (2008), the impact of strong influential people in the lives of high school seniors is the most important factor in the decision-making process.

4.9.1.3 Cost

Table 4.17: Bivariate Data Correlation for Cost

CORRELATIONS		The fact that Oval Int. offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	All programs offered at Oval Int. are fully accredited	I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval Int.
I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International	Correlation Coefficient	.277**	.228**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.002	
	N	175	175	175

The correlation value between “I compared my costs of studies with all institutions before I registered at Oval International” and “The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI” is 0.277, as well as “All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited” with a correlation value of 0.228. Respondents indicated that costs influenced their decision in selecting a PHEI and the laptops were additional value for money, provided that all courses were fully accredited.

Table 4.18: Bivariate Data Correlation of Cost versus Branding

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well-known PHEI	I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval Int.
I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International	Correlation Coefficient	-0.057	0.048	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.457	0.531	
	N	175	175	175

A negative correlation value of -0.057 was indicated between “I compared my cost with all institutions before I registered at Oval International” and “Oval International is the most advertised PHEI in South Africa”. This indicates an inverse relationship, meaning that respondents felt that even if the PHEI was most advertised, they would not have considered the institution if the costs were not affordable and competitive.

Table 4.19 Bivariate Data Correlation of Cost versus Branding

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well-known PHEI	I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval Int.
The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions	Correlation Coefficient	-0.029	-0.052	.488**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.705	0.491	0.000
	N	175	175	175

A negative correlation value of -0.052 was indicated between “I compared my cost with all institutions before I registered at Oval International” and “Oval international is the most well-known PHEI in South Africa”. The inverse relationship described by respondents indicates that irrespective of whether they are the most renowned PHEI in South Africa or not, if the cost were not affordable and competitive, Oval International would not have been an institution of their choice.

In-order to justify the inverse negative relationship according to literature, the crucial conception within the Econometric models of choice is a representation that students maximize by often using a cost-benefit-analysis of high quality versus low cost (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Furthermore, Hossler and Gallagher (2015) state that these models believe that students consider institutions whereby they evaluate the pros and cons, conclude reasonable outcomes and hence rationally decide on college choice, whilst maximising benefits and reducing costs (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

This is an indication that Cost is a factor of influence in that a student will analyse benefits or quality against cost and ultimately try to reduce costs as far as possible, even though it may have a negative effect on the benefits.

Furthermore, Pugsley (2004) emphasised that under the current economic crisis, both parents and students are concerned about cost and this has impacted greatly on the purchasing power of attending HEIs (Pugsley, 2004). However, when considering the price policy and costing of a programme, consideration must be given to its impact on the brand image as consumers' mentality is under the impression that expensive products are more valuable. At the other end, discounted fees, bursaries and scholarships are an attractive means of gaining larger market share (Pugsley, 2004).

Students enrolled at PHEIs do not have the advantage of accessing government funding such as NSFAS or government bursaries. Access or admission into PHEI is purely based on their own affordability (Ellis and Steyn, 2014). In quoting the literature by Ellis and Steyn, students fund their own studies and depending on the wealth of the student, students are definitely going to review costs amongst all PHEIs and consider the cost as a factor before registration.

4.9.1.4 Accessibility

Table 4.20: Bivariate Data Correlation of Accessibility

CORRELATIONS		Oval Int. is one of the most advertised PHEI in South Africa	Oval Int. is the most well know PHEI	The fact that Oval Int. offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	The social life and social facilities at Oval Int. influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	Oval Int. is the closest PHEI to my home
Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home	Correlation Coefficient	.162*	.185*	.176*	.158*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.032	0.014	0.020	0.037	
	N	175	175	175	175	175

“Oval International is the closest PHEI to my home” shared a relationship with the following:

- “Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI’s) in South Africa”, with a correlation value of 0.162. Students indicated that although the PHEI was closest to their home, advertising influenced their decision in choosing the selected PHEI. This is an indication that advertising does impact on an institution’s image and reputation and influences student opinions and decisions.
- “Oval International is the most well-known Private Higher Education Institution”, with a correlation value of 0.185. There is a direct relationship between the distance and the popularity of the organisation. Respondents indicated that the institution can be closest to their home, but the more popular and renowned the

institution, the more likely they are to select the institution as their preferred choice to further their studies.

- “The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEIs’ which indicated a correlation value of 0.176. The direct relationship indicated by students presents that promotions and added value to a course has encouraged them to further their studies at the institution closest to them. An institution can be closest to their home, but promotions and added benefits will attract students to the institution, irrespective of distance.
- “The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI”, with the correlation value being 0.158. The respondents indicated that a relationship exists between the distance and social facilities and life at campus. Selecting the Institution closest to their home was decided by the social factors offered at the institution. This is evidence that the more social facilities and events offered by an institution, the greater are the chances that the student will be enticed to register at the institution to further their studies.

Sewell and Shah (2008) emphasised the social-psychological and social-structural in the attainment of teaching and working antecedents. Whilst it is noted or presumed that with the Econometric models students are balanced in the decisions that they make, status attainment models conceive higher relations between variables which assess student behaviours as individuals, as well as the

broader social constructs (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). The distinct benefit of the Combined models is 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 perspective of economics” (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). According to the literature review, it is clear that students will make decisions around social status whilst trying to maintain low costs. However, if the cost of distance affects the budget to a large extent, social status will be considered as a factor of influence.

According to a further review of literature, obtaining and consuming information in a social setting is regarded as essential rather than merely a prerequisite. Hossler and Gallagher (2015), taking this into perspective, suggests that consideration must be given to characteristics of the decision-making theory and sociology. Reviewing the information indicated that social and cultural expenses awards the opportunity to introduce the college choice-selection processes, changing responsibilities of parents/guardians, guidance counsellors, as well as schools (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015). Combined choice Models include facets of the economic/ costs or financial and sociological models (Hossler and Gallagher, 2015).

Table 4.21: Bivariate Data Correlation of Accessibility versus Quality, Branding and Cost

CORRELATIONS		The social life and social facilities at Oval Int. influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI	All programs offered at Oval Int. are fully accredited	I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval Int.	The cost of qualifications at Oval Int. was most affordable as compared to other PHEIs	Oval Int. is the closest PHEI to my home
Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home	Correlation Coefficient	.158*	.178*	.161*	.265**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.037	0.018	0.033	0.000	
	N	175	175	175	175	175

- “All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited”, which indicated a correlation value of 0.178. The relationship indicates that the institution closest to their home will be a choice provided that the courses are fully accredited. The greater the accreditation, the stronger the influence.
- “I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International” indicated a correlation value of 0.161. There is a direct relationship between distance and cost of the respondents’ studies. Students will compare costs of studies in relation to distance. The distance is a factor. However, it is influenced by the affordability and cost of the course compared to other institutions. The more affordable the course, the more likely the decision is influenced.

- “The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions” indicated a correlation value of 0.265. Students compared the cost of other institutions (distant and not distant). However, the cost at the selected institution was most affordable and hence they have chosen Oval International to further their studies. This is an indication that the decision of cost supersedes the decision of distance of the institution from where the student resides.

Additionally, in service marketing, ‘place’ is the convenient location of the institute, allowing students easy-access. Ivey and Naude (2004) and Maringe (2006) regard place as the environment and residential facilities of the actual campus.

Kotler and Fox (1995) postulate conventionally ‘distribution’ related to the physical location of an institution. However, technological enhancements have allowed HEIs to increase service delivery through E-Learning platforms. These platforms have been instituted by many HEIs to gain market share of those students that would have had difficulties with time and transport.

Chute (2009) also found proximity to be a strong influence on students, with students sending applications and ultimately attending institutions closer to the vicinity of their homes. Students that are disadvantaged opt to stay at home and travel within the vicinity to study, as opposed to paying for accommodation costs to study away from home. Conversely, according to Chute (2009), there were increased opportunities for students to travel in comfort to institutions not in the proximity of their home due to the increase in transportation opportunities made available to them.

4.10 Summary

This chapter offered a comprehensive analysis and presentation of the data collected from the questionnaires in this research. The data extracted was analysed, processed into numerical and graphical representation for easy understanding and interpretation and was presented based on the critical issues pertaining to the structure of the questionnaire.

Cronbach's Alpha was used for the purpose of determining the reliability of the questionnaire and factorial validity was established by submitting the data for factor analysis. The findings from the factor analysis and Rotated Component Matrix (a) were presented and discussed for each segment.

The output of the Chi-square, KMO, Bartlett's Test and correlation Analysis were discussed, highlighting the significant relationships and differences identified between the variables. The significant relationships identified for each of the sections were further summarised in tables and the direct proportional relationship between these variables was explained.

The conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The best advice I ever got was that knowledge is power and to keep reading.”

(Educational Quotes – BrainyQuotes: 2001)

5.1 Introduction

Chapter Five depicts a summary of the previous chapters of the research. It draws conclusions and makes recommendations based on the results of the study. The purpose of this research was to identify factors that influence a student’s decision in selecting their PHEI to continue their higher education studies.

The chapter will conclude the findings obtained in this research and provide recommendations for implementation by higher education institutions in respect of Branding, Cost of qualifications, Accessibility, as well as Quality of the institutions.

5.2 Summary of the Theoretical Study

Chapter One provided insight into the reasoning behind the research, with an insight into the background and an outline of the research problem; the research methodology that was used to collect and analyse the data, as well as related limitations and delimitations experienced by the researcher during the research.

Chapter Two provided a profile of private college students. The choice models section described choice modelling and the progression of models to include college

choice. The demographic section reviewed literature sources related to gender, ethnicity, as well as socio-economic status and financial requirements. The literature regarding social influences provided influential factors of: relatives of the student, secondary level influences, sports offered at the institution and status. Marketing and promotional material; proximity/distance of the campus; and infrastructure of the college appeared in the literature relevant to social influences of the decision-making process of college choice.

The purpose of this chapter was to provide a basis for the research about college choice and factors influencing college choice in private colleges. The research reviewed indicated demographics, social and institutional factors as an influence on student's choice. These factors illustrate a gap in the literature as well as provide a framework for the research. This research explores the factors of influence on a student's decision to register at institutions and aims to fill the gap in the body of knowledge. This literature review was compiled to create a basis for the study.

5.3 Summary of the Empirical Study

Chapter Three provided an overview of the research methodology used during this study. Chapter Three provided an explanation of population and target population, the sampling method; measuring instrument; data analysis method; process of pre-testing; the methods used for data collection; reliability and validity; etc. used to conduct this research. The chapter further analysed the population, and target population together with the data collection instrument, the questionnaire.

Validity, reliability and ethical concerns regarding the measuring instrument was analysed through Inferential Statistics, with emphasis on the Chi-square Test and Correlation Analysis, and the techniques used during the research.

Chapter Four offered a comprehensive analysis and presentation of the data collected from the questionnaires in this research. The data extracted was analysed, processed into numerical and graphical representation for easy understanding and interpretation and was presented based on the critical issues pertaining to the structure of the questionnaire. Cronbach's Alpha was used for the purpose of determining the reliability of the questionnaire and factorial validity was established by submitting the data for factor analysis. The findings from the factor analysis and Rotated Component Matrix (a) were presented and discussed for each segment. The output of the Chi-square, KMO, Bartlett's Test and correlation Analysis, were discussed highlighting the significant relationships and differences identified between the variables. The significant relationships identified for each of the sections were further summarised in tables and the direct proportional relationship between these variables was explained.

5.4 Attainment of Objectives

The main choice factors to influence a student's decision considered during this study were accessibility, branding, quality and cost. In concluding the research, the outcomes of the variables were as follows:

5.4.1 Accessibility

It is common that should an institution be centrally located and easily accessible, then it would attract a higher number of students as it will alleviate many challenges regarding requirements such as transport, time, costs, inconvenience, safety, etc. However, according to the outcomes of the research, it was noted that accessibility and point of location of a campus was an insignificant factor in the decision-making process of the respondents as they regarded additional factors to be more advantageous such as social, costs and additional factors despite the location. According to Hossler and Gallagher, students take into consideration factors such as status and social facilities available.

It was noted in the hypothesis testing that over 70% of the respondents indicated that Oval International was centrally located and close to 40% indicated that it was closest to their homes. However, the correlation value between accessibility and cost comparison is 0.161 which indicates that had accessibility been the contributing factor, then further research into costs by the respondents would not have been vital. It is further evident that despite the locality of the institution, students seek additional invaluable wholesome experiences such as a social life and status, which are additional benefits compared to just studying in convenience.

According to Kotler and Fox (1995), even though conventionally accessibility has aided higher education organisations, E-Learning platforms have been implemented by institutions both nationally and internationally at universities in-order to target the market share of those students who have difficulties in physically attending college/lectures due to geographic or time constraints.

5.4.2 Costs

It was interesting to have identified the negative correlation value between cost and branding as the outcome indicated that despite the positive brand image, more than 60% compared cost and agreed that Oval International was most affordable and concluded registration.

Opposing the above-mentioned statement, approximately 30% of respondents indicated that they disagreed with the fact that the PHEI was the most affordable and that cost was irrelevant and continued to register. It is revealed by Pusley (2004) that students perceive that having a social life and status would be a 'story to tell' regarding their college life and was adding substantial value. Funding transport would have been part of the budget to further their studies in any event. Contrarily, under the current circumstances affecting purchasing power in the general economic crisis, student discounts, bursaries and scholarships offered may also serve as an attraction to potential students.

In concluding the cost of the qualification and or affordability as a factor, it is safe to say that cost has impacted largely on the decisions made by students as a large proportion of the respondents compared costs on various levels i.e. cost of transports, cost of the course, etc. before concluding registration. In South Africa, people are currently undergoing an economic and unemployment crisis whereby the country has actually reached "Junk Status". According to NCA.com (2017), this means paying higher debt costs and would mean less money for critical services such as housing, education, and sanitation. Hence, a decrease in the country's purchasing power will cause potential students, parents, guardians and other fee

payers to interrogate their spending potential before commissioning any agreement that will consume their income.

Students enrolled at PHEIs do not have access to government financial assistance in the form of state-loans or state-bursaries. Government funding is only made available to students studying at government universities/ colleges. Admittance to PHEIs is determined by the wealth of the student and not by financial support from the government (Ellis and Steyn, 2014).

Students consider the cost of attending an institution when selecting a particular institution or college/university. Broekemier and Seshadri (2010) took into consideration high performing students that required financial funding and the factors that influenced these students. In deciding between first-choice and second-choice institutions, it was noted that in deciding between their first choice and second choice institutions, financial availability was a crucial factor. With financial assistance being a concern, it is relatively easy for an institution to move from second choice to first choice based on the financial aid made available to students (Broekemier and Seshadri, 2010).

5.4.3 Quality

Upon investigating quality as a contributing factor, it was specified by a large percentage, which exceeds 70% of Oval International students, that the institution's courses were fully accredited. A noteworthy 30% disagreed and a noticeable 30% did not know whether all courses were fully accredited or not. However, despite their

limited knowledge regarding the accreditation of the institution (quality), the respondents continued to take a final decision and confirm their registration at the institution.

To a larger extent, the alumni endorsed the professional image of the institution to the respondents who acknowledged the insight of the information they received. The voice of the alumni allowed potential students to believe that the experience of studying at Oval International will be an invaluable one.

It is concluded that advertising, branding and alumni promoted the information of quality, which relished a significant role in persuading students in making an informed decision. Quality was a contributing factor to students' decision in selecting Oval International. However, this was only a reasonable percentage and not to the expected percentage perceived that all students register based on the quality of the accreditation or that the qualification is fully accredited. This was made evident by the substantial number of respondents who indicated strongly that they were either unaware of whether the courses were accredited or disagreed that the courses were fully accredited.

Hossler and Gallagher (2015) postulated that contrary to the Econometric model discussed in the literature review, it is not to be assumed that students possess correct information or that they have the ability to make rational decisions. Students do not use the information they obtained correctly to make well-informed rational decisions.

5.4.4 Branding

It was interesting to identify how public relations, branding, marketing, promotions, advertising, etc. can impact on a consumer's decision and how in the human mind-set, one manipulates one's mind and voluntarily surrenders actions to make a confirmed affirmative judgement to effect progressive changes in one's life.

When scrutinizing branding as a factor to favour the decision-making of students, it was astonishing to find that to a larger extent respondents were knowledgeable of the existence of the institution as well as its campaigns and promotions. More than 60% confirmed that Oval International was the most advertised institution and more than 70% of registered students were fully aware of the promotion of laptops and added benefits offered by the selected PHEI before registration, which contributed to them making the affirmative decision to register.

When considering other influential factors such as cost, quality and accessibility, it was established that the dynamics of branding shared strong reliable associations with other varying factors to enhance the choice decision. The factors of branding in itself were promotion of the laptop, advertising and the positive experience and voice of the alumni of Oval International which ensured that it maintained competitive advantage in the private higher education industry.

According to Litten's Five-Phase Model (2014), the five phases of the process involved in decision-making, namely: an aspiration to attend college/higher education; the actual decision to commence the process; obtaining information regarding institutions and courses; applications to institutions; and registration or admittance at the institution of choice are explained. Litten's choice model

acknowledged a range of variables that influence students in the selection of an institution.

Litten's (2014) Five-phase model explains that the factors of influence include:

- Background/history of the student (race, earnings, socio-economic status, parents' or guardians qualifications, ethnicity of the family, personalities of parents/ peers/ guardians, religious conviction, gender);
- Personal Characteristics (ability of the student academically, self-esteem, morals and values, intentions, character and lifestyle of the student);
- Social composition and quality of the high school that the student attended;
- Student's academic performance (results and understanding of curriculum);
- Environment of the institution (professional and operational structure of the institution, financial requirements and cultural atmosphere);
- Marketing, advertising and counselling methods used (parents or guardians of the student, counsellors or programme advisors, peers, media, institution's representative, etc.);
- Characteristics of the Institution's cost of studies, size of the institution, programs offered, atmosphere, management of the institution); and
- Rules and regulations of the Institution, as well as availability of financial assistance offered by the institution.

In conclusion, the investigation provided insight into whether or not branding, cost, accessibility and quality are factors that influence the decision of potential students to select a particular PHEI as opposed to any other PHEI or government-subsidised institution.

The factors investigated in this research definitely have influenced decisions of students selecting their preferred private institute of higher education. They are all factors that influence the decision of a potential student. Although it is definite to say that all factors impact on a students' decision in selecting a PHEI, it is indeed noted that each factor impacts to a varying extent in that the factors such as branding and cost of a course play a more influential role, as opposed to quality and accessibility. There is not just a single factor that is in the mind of a potential student when deciding. As the study stipulates, there are multiple variable factors that are influencing their decisions.

In justifying that all factors discussed in this investigation influences a students' decision in some way or the other, Chapter Two: Literature Review talked about the Perna Choice Model which revealed that decisions are influenced in four ways and multiple layers, which are:

- Social forces;
- Economic and policy framework;
- School and community framework; and
- Habitus.

Perna (2006) believed that the multiple layers of the model are founded on the supposition that multiple factors influence a student's selection result, which is ultimately based on an evaluation of the benefits versus costs. This evaluation is not only shaped by supply and demand but furthermore by an individual's habitus, the family, the school which the student attended, community circumstances, higher education environment, social attainment, financial funding as well as policy and procedures. However, Perna (2006) indicated that the final layer of the model is the

individual's habitus, which he also viewed as the most important layer of the decision-making process as the individual student is taken into account together with the characteristics specific to that student. According to the individual's habitus, demographics and location, gender, race/ethnicity as well as SES and cultural or social capital is considered (Perna, 2006).

The process of choosing a private college can be challenging and stressful (Whitehead, Raffan and Deaney, 2006). 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).

5.5 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions and findings reached, the researcher provides the following recommendations;

- PHEIs need to consider avenues that close the gap of costing versus furthering higher education. Potential students who are denied access into government-subsidised institution seek entrance into private higher institutions and in choosing PHEIs, they will no longer have access to NSFAS, which is government funding to higher education and only applicable to government institutions and not for PHEIs. It is recommended that PHEIs seek opportunities from companies and other bursary funding organisations to aid students with funding their higher education. This will increase

opportunities for potential students to reach their dreams, as well as increase the student base for the PHEI.

- Higher education institutions or researchers, for future research, can further research the extent to which parents have an influence in deciding the choice of the institution or course. In further investigation regarding parental influence, researchers need to identify how knowledgeable parents are with regard to institutions and courses when making or assisting their child in making choices regarding further studies, as parental influence was not considered in this research.
- Researchers need to consider non-quantitative models in order to fully assimilate the factors that influence or affect students' choice of influence. A quantitative model may not necessarily provide a good fit in drawing conclusions on the relationship between the two variables. The fact that the three independent variables could not account for all the changes in the dependent variable, forms a research question.
- The Department of Education and PHEIs, together with Government institutions, need to have career guidance sessions for parents and children over convenient times for working parents in-order to educate the community regarding the required information and the process regarding registration for higher education. It is advised that these sessions commence whilst children are still in Grade 10.

- Branding has been a rather outstanding factor amongst others. PHEIs should take advantage of the opportunity in engaging potential students and influential members in advertising open days to promote higher education and encourage early registration processes to accommodate more students and early financial planning.
- Companies and institutions should form a stronger alliance to ensure that quality is maintained within institutions and to promote student preparedness for the working environment. Work integrated learning should form an integral part of a student pursuing higher education. In this way, potential students place more emphasis on quality as opposed to the current knowledge and emphasis.
- The Department of Higher Education should place more emphasis on campaigning knowledge workshops of quality and registered higher education institutions to ensure that the respective community has in-depth knowledge of quality and make informed decisions prior to registration. It is clearly indicated that students do not place emphasis on quality as much as they should.
- Institutions that have landmarks in rural and suburban areas must provide substantial facilities, extra-mural activities and make provision for a social life for potential students to increase the demand for students surrounding the campus to register at the campus. Extra effort should be placed on promoting the campus and creating a status and demand in order to prevent students

from registering elsewhere, as well as seeking additional beneficial student support facilities and services that provide a wholesome experience.

- It may be worthwhile for future research to investigate whether age, gender and other demographics have a relationship with students' choice of a private institute and to what extent. This will enable private institutes to predict the extent to which their students will be satisfied and influenced based on their actions.

5.6 Conclusion

In South Africa, a plethora of private higher institutions exist, which provides an alternative option for students who have successfully completed the NSC examinations and have not been accepted at government-subsidised institutions due to insufficient seats, costs or entry requirements etc. Once again, students are faced with an auxiliary challenge of making a decision as to which PHEI will be the most suitable alternative to government-subsidised institutions in order to further their education.

Hence, it was envisaged that the study would shed light on the reasons why students choose to study at a particular PHEI as opposed to choosing any other PHEI.

The outcomes of this research will be used to improve the quality at PHEIs and ultimately, PHEIs will adopt the strategies that are going to enable them to plug the gap that government-subsidised institutions cannot fulfil. Furthermore, the knowledge provided in this investigation with regard to the

factors that influence a student's decision of selecting a PHEI will empower all PHEIs to have a better understanding of how to influence prospective students to enrol at their institutions; enhance the facilities provided; use funds more meritoriously; gain competitive advantage and unique market positioning; maintain a positive brand image; and improve on service delivery in the education industry.

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LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: An investigation into the factors that influence students' choice of a selected Private Higher Education Institution in South Africa.

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Divanisingh Kuber Singh, BTech Business Administration

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr S. Govender

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Outline of the Procedures: (Responsibilities of the participant, consultation/interview/survey details, venue details, inclusion/exclusion criteria, explanation of tools and measurement outcomes, any follow-ups, any placebo or no treatment, how much time required of participant, what is expected of participants, randomization/ group allocation)

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: None Applicable

Benefits: Researcher will publish the information and outcomes of the research to enlighten and enable decision makers to make informed decisions when selecting an institution to further their education.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: There will be no adverse consequences for the participant should they choose to withdraw.

Remuneration: There is no remuneration involved in this research.

Costs of the Study: Please see the Budget: Section a page 3 for a detailed description of the costs to be incurred.

Confidentiality: It is imperative that accurate and honest opinions from participants are received. Obtaining accurate and honest opinions becomes a challenge when students have to answer sensitive questions about their experiences or actions. Allowing students to respond anonymously is one way of overcoming this challenge.

Anonymity is important to allow respondents the opportunity to respond truly and without restrictions. In this study, the respondents will not be anonymous to the researcher, but will be anonymous to any reader of the research report.

Keeping information confidential is one way of ensuring that respondents respond accurately and honestly without fear of being victimised. Furthermore, the ethical responsibility is not only to provide accurate information on the study but also to protect the “security, dignity and self-worth” of the respondents.

Part of protecting the students participating includes minimizing any potential risk or harm that might occur when they share their experiences with others.

Confidentiality is important as it prevents any victimization and or stereotyping of respondents.

No Names of respondents will be used in the writing of the research report. The use of the internet will ensure direct contact between the researcher and the respondents thereby keeping correspondence confidential.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

For any further information or enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact:

The Researcher,

Divani Singh

Phone: 073 675 7089/ 031 305 6192

Email: divani.singh@gmail.com

Or,

The Supervisor,

Dr S. Govender

Phone: 082 375 7722

Email: dr1govender@telkomsa.net

Or,

The Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof F. Otieno on 031 373 2382 or dvctip@dut.ac.za.

General:

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population e.g. isiZulu.



APPENDIX C

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Divanisingh Kuber Singh (name of researcher), about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Divanisingh Kuber Singh _____ **Full**
Name of Participant **Date** **Time**

Signature / Right Thumbprint

I, Divanisingh Kuber Singh, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Divanisingh Kuber Singh _____ **Full**
Name of Researcher **Date** **Signature**

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) **Date** **Signature**

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) **Date** **Signature**

Please note the following:

Research details must be provided in a clear, simple and culturally appropriate manner and prospective participants should be helped to arrive at an informed decision by use of appropriate language (grade 10 level - use Flesch Reading Ease Scores on Microsoft Word), selecting of a non-threatening environment for interaction and the availability of peer counseling (Department of Health, 2004)

If the potential participant is unable to read/illiterate, then a right thumb print is required and an impartial witness, who is literate and knows the participant e.g. parent, sibling, friend, pastor, etc. should verify in writing, duly signed that informed verbal consent was obtained (Department of Health, 2004).

If anyone makes a mistake completing this document e.g. wrong date or spelling mistake a new document has to be completed. The incomplete original document has to be kept in the participant file and not thrown away and copies thereof must be issued to the participant.



Faculty of Management Sciences

Department of Commerce

Date

Dear Participant

Student : Divanisingh Kuber Singh

Contact Details

Phone: 073 675 7089/ 031 305 6192

Email: divani.singh@gmail.com

Dr S. Govender

Supervisor / Promoter

The Supervisor,

Dr S. Govender

Phone: 082 375 7722

Email: dr1govender@telkomsa.net

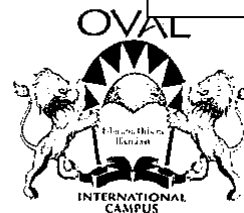
Co-Supervisor/Co-Promoter

Contact Details



Oval International Computer Education

Head Office : 27 -31 Joe Slovo (Field) Street, Durban, 4000
P.O. Box 2671, Umhlanga Rocks, 4320
Phone : 031-3056192 Fax : 031-3062150



1 June 2015

To Whom it may concern

Re: Letter of permission to conduct a study at Oval International

This letter serves to confirm that Ms. Divanisinh Kuber Singh, a registered MTech Student (ID number 7701240699088) in the Faculty of Management Sciences at Durban University of Technology, has been granted permission to conduct the study title: **"An investigation into the factors that influence student's decision in choosing a Private Higher Education Institution in South Africa"** at Oval International Education for the purposes of completing her MTech.

This permission is granted with the condition that Ms Singh will respect Oval International's rights to commercial-in-confidence information, and will hold the highest degree of confidentiality in this regard. Ms Singh undertakes that no information will be divulged to any third party. Oval International reserves the right to take legal action against Ms Singh if these conditions are not upheld.

Publication of the thesis in part or full may only be done upon the signed permission from the Managing Director of Oval International.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information.

Yours faithfully

Mrs. Geetha Maharaj
Chief Executive Officer
Oval International Education
Tel: 0313056192
Mobile: 0827813032
Email: gmaharaj@oval.co.za
Website: www.oval.co.za

Letter of Informed Consent

I _____ (the undersigned),
hereafter referred to as the respondent, hereby confirm that I am a first year student registered at the
selected private higher education institution and that I am enrolled for the Diploma in Management.

I am studying at the _____ Campus. My student Number is

I hereby consent to participate in the research being conducted by Ms.DivanisinghKuber Singh, who
is currently employed at Oval International Education, thereafter referred to as the researcher, on the
topic: **An investigation into the factors that influence students' choice of a Private Higher
Educational Institution (PHEI) in South Africa.**

I understand and accept the following:

- My participation in this research is entirely voluntary.
- I am free to terminate my involvement in this research and or to cancel my consent for participation in this research at any time should I so desire and will in no way result in me being rewarded or penalized either in my professional or personal capacity.
- I have been invited to participate in this research by virtue of the fact that I am part of the student population of the selected PHEI.
- My invitation to participate in this research is based on the fact that my name was randomly selected as part of a sample of first year Diploma in Management students studying at the selected PHEI.
- The researcher is undertaking this research in her capacity as a student of Durban University of Technology (DUT) and currently completing her Master Degree – MTECH Marketing.
- My role as a participant in this research is to complete the questionnaire truthfully, by sharing my personal experiences and insights relating to the factors that influenced my decision in choosing a PHEI.
- My responses will be used by the researcher to write a research report that will be used for academic purposes only.
- The researcher undertakes to write her report in a manner that my identity will not be revealed and my anonymity will therefore be guaranteed.
- I will not receive any reimbursements in exchange for any information rendered and or in lieu of my participation in this research.
- I undertake to provide honest answers to all questions posed and not to mislead the researcher in any way.
- I agree to a follow up interview with the researcher should the researcher need to seek clarity on any information rendered by myself.
- I am fully conversant with the English language and I am comfortable communicating with the researcher in English only.

I hereby acknowledge that the researcher has:

- Discussed the aim and objective of this research project with me.
- Discussed the contents of this agreement / consent with me.
- Explained the implications of my signing this agreement.

In co-signing this agreement the researcher undertakes to:

- Abide by moral and ethical standards applicable to academic pursuits.
- Maintain confidentiality, anonymity and privacy regarding the identity of all respondents.
- Record and report information accurately, as provided by the respondents.
- Treat all respondents with dignity and respect.

Signed on _____ (date) _____ (time)

At _____ (place)

_____ (Respondent)

_____ (Researcher)

For any further information or enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact:

The Researcher,

Divani Singh

Phone: 073 675 7089/ 031 305 6192

Email: divani.singh@gmail.com

Or,

The Supervisor,

Dr S. Govender

Phone: 031 711 0401

Questionnaire

Section A

Please tick (v) the appropriate box

1. Gender

Male	Female
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2. Race

Black	White	Asian	Coloured	Other
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3. Age

18-25	26-35	36-45	46 and over
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4. Province

KZN	Gauteng	Western Cape	Other
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Section B

Please tick (v) the appropriate block

1. Oval International is one of the most advertised Private Higher Education Institutions (PHEI's) in South Africa.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. Oval International is the most well know Private Higher Education Institution.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. Alumni students speak positively of the Institution.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. The fact that Oval International offered free laptops influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
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5. All programs offered at Oval International are fully accredited.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I compared the cost of my studies amongst all private institutions before I registered at Oval International.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. The cost of my studies was irrelevant when I chose my institution to further my studies.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. The cost of qualifications at Oval International was most affordable as compared to other Private Higher Education Institutions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. Oval International is the closest Private Higher Education Institution to my home.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. Transport arrangement to Oval International is most convenient as opposed to other Private Higher Education Institutions.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. Oval International is centrally situated.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. The entrance requirements at Oval International are lower than that of other PHEI's.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. The social life and social facilities at Oval International influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. The relatively small number of students per class was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. The calibre of lecturers was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. The fact that there have been no student boycotts and protests at Oval International was a factor that influenced my decision in choosing this institution as my preferred PHEI.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Do not know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Section C

1. Why did you choose to study at a PHEI as opposed to a state subsidised institution?

2. What was the main contributing factor that influenced your decision to study at Oval International as opposed to any other PHEI?

3. How would you rate the PHEIs when compared to the state subsidised institutions?

Thesis

ORIGINALITY REPORT

% **12**
SIMILARITY INDEX

% **9**
INTERNET SOURCES

% **4**
PUBLICATIONS

% **8**
STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Submitted to Mancosa Student Paper	% 1
2	ir.dut.ac.za:8080 Internet Source	% 1
3	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	% 1
4	Submitted to Ghana Technology University College Student Paper	<% 1
5	scholar.lib.vt.edu Internet Source	<% 1
6	digital.library.unt.edu Internet Source	<% 1
7	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source	<% 1
8	Filip, Alina. "Marketing Theory Applicability in Higher Education", Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2012. Publication	<% 1
9	ir.dut.ac.za Internet Source	

