

Factors that influence the decision to enter a faculty of Economics and management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power

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Abstract

This research aimed to The sample consisted of approximately 300 students, selected from a total population of 1,000 students in the academic years 2022 to 2024. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive and comparative statistics.

The results showed that the factors influencing students' decisions to enter the Faculty of Economics and Management were at a high level in all aspects. The highest mean score was Career Prospects (\bar{x} = 4.13), followed by Academic Resources (\bar{x} = 4.10) and Curriculum (\bar{x} = 4.08). Professional Support Services (\bar{x} = 4.04) and Further Education Opportunities (\bar{x} = 4.01) were also rated at a high level, while Institutional Prestige (\bar{x} = 3.96) received the lowest mean score but remained within the high level. The comparative analysis revealed no significant differences in students' decisions when classified by age, gender, and domicile; however, significant differences were found for parent occupation and family income. Students whose parents were government employees and those from middle-income families showed higher levels of decision and motivation to enroll.

Keywords: Enrollment Decision, Influencing Factors, Economics and Management, Vocational College, Guangxi

Introduction

In an era of rapid global expansion in higher education, choosing the right institution is crucial for students' academic experiences, career opportunities, and personal development (Achamrah, 2022). Universities must understand the factors influencing enrollment decisions to develop effective strategies and stay competitive. In China, vocational education has grown significantly, with Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power standing out for its specialized programs in water resources and electrical power. The college plays a key role in addressing the need for skilled professionals, particularly through its School of Economics and

Management, which attracts students from across the country. The increasing demand for its programs reflects the institution's strong academic reputation and the broader need for skilled professionals in China's economy.

Students' decision to study at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power is influenced by personal, familial, and external factors. Key considerations include the alignment of academic programs with students' interests and career goals, particularly in fields like business, economics, and management (Ha et al., 2011). The desire for stable employment and practical skills drives students towards vocational education, which is seen as a direct route to high-demand sectors such as water resources and electrical power (Chi, 2018). Family support and expectations also play a significant role, as do external factors like the institution's reputation, financial aid, and connections with local industries. Overall, students' decisions are shaped by a combination of personal aspirations, family influences, and the institution's practical offerings, making it essential for colleges to align programs with these factors to meet students' needs and ensure their success in the workforce.

This research focuses on the need for educational programs to adapt to the changing demands of industries. As global markets and technology evolve, educational institutions must provide both theoretical knowledge and practical skills aligned with employers' needs (Amoah et al., 2023). Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power's School of Economics and Management aims to bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world application by offering programs that combine academic theory with industry-specific skills. The study will explore how students perceive the alignment of these programs with job market needs and how socioeconomic factors, such as income expectations and career stability, influence their decisions (Areces & Rodríguez, 2022).

highlight that personal interests, such as a passion for business and leadership, significantly influence students' academic and career choices. This research aims to identify the main factors driving students to choose the School of Economics and Management at Guangxi Vocational College and explore how these motivations can inform strategies to improve enrollment rates. By understanding what students prioritize, such as academic reputation or career prospects, the study will provide actionable recommendations for aligning the college's programs with both academic and job market demands. The goal is to bridge the gap between students' perceptions and real-world expectations, ensuring that the curriculum prepares students for successful careers post-graduation.

This research aims to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the School of Economics and Management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power. The quantitative survey will collect data on

various factors, such as family expectations, job opportunities, and the relevance of the curriculum to industry demands. The goal is to provide insights for adjusting the institution's curriculum to better align with the needs of students and the job market, which will help attract and retain students, as well as foster long-term career success.

Research Objectives

1. Study to factors affection the decision to decide whether to study factors that influence the decision to enter a faculty of economics and management at Guangxi vocational college of water resources and electric power
2. Compare factors that influence the decision to enter a faculty of economics and management at Guangxi vocational college of water resources and electric power

Literature Review

1. Concepts and Theories Related to Basic Factors

The study of basic factors such as gender, age, domicile, parental occupation, and family income helps to understand the factors that influence individual behavior and development at different life stages, as well as the impacts arising from varying social and economic contexts. These factors significantly affect decision-making and interactions in society over the long term, particularly in terms of education and career choices. Key theories explored include Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which explains that students' motivation is influenced by three main needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Meanwhile, Expectancy-Value Theory by Gollwitzer et al. (1990) suggests that students' decisions to pursue certain academic paths are influenced by their expectations of success and the value they place on that success.

Additionally, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) helps explain decision-making by highlighting three factors: attitude toward behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, all of which affect the choice of study program. These decisions are not only based on intrinsic interest but also on external factors, such as family expectations and perceived barriers. Social Cognitive Theory emphasizes the role of observational learning and self-efficacy, where students with confidence in their abilities are more likely to choose academic paths aligned with their skills and interests. Human Capital Theory views education as an investment that enhances an individual's abilities and potential in the workforce, thus providing students with better employment opportunities and financial stability.

Socioeconomic Theory and Family Influence explain that the economic status and support from family play a significant role in shaping educational paths. Children from higher-income families tend to have better access to educational resources and are more likely to pursue fields

with high earning potential, while those from lower-income families may face barriers in advancing their education and careers.

2. Concepts and Theories Related to Factors Influencing

The factors influencing education and career development are closely interconnected and play a crucial role in shaping students' academic journeys and career paths. Institutional prestige enhances access to resources, networks, and job opportunities, which are key factors in the competitive job market. Meanwhile, a dynamic curriculum that adapts to meet industry demands equips students with relevant skills, preparing them for real-world challenges. Academic resources, such as libraries, research facilities, and qualified faculty, significantly impact students' learning and career readiness. At the same time, career prospects depend on the quality of education and connections to industries, with strong industry networks and alumni support playing a vital role in opening job opportunities. Professional support services, such as career counseling, mentorship, and job placement programs, are essential in helping students develop skills and prepare for the workforce. Finally, further education opportunities, such as postgraduate programs or professional certifications, are crucial for developing skills and staying competitive in the ever-evolving job market (Achamrah, 2022). Theories such as Human Capital Theory, Social Capital Theory, Career Development Theory, and Lifelong Learning Theory help explain how these factors contribute to long-term career success (Chi, 2018).

3. Concepts and Theories Related to The Decision to Enter the Faculty of Economics and Management

The decision to pursue a degree in Economics and Management is influenced by various interconnected factors, including personal interests, societal expectations, and external influences. Students are often drawn to this field by career goals such as financial security and career advancement. Economic rationality suggests that this decision is viewed as an investment for future success, with expectations of higher income and job stability. Additionally, family expectations, societal values, and the demand for professionals in sectors such as finance, marketing, and management play a significant role in students' decisions. The reputation of the educational institution and access to resources such as internship opportunities and networking connections further enhance the appeal of this field (Liu, Chen, & Zhang, 2019). Human Capital Theory and Expectancy Theory suggest that students are motivated by the expected rewards of a degree, including job security and higher wages (Vroom, 2024). Furthermore, social networks and mentorship opportunities play a crucial role in guiding students in their academic and career choices (Bourdieu, 1986; Bandura, 1997). Ultimately, intrinsic motivations and external factors, including career prospects and job market trends, shape students' decisions to study Economics and Management

In summary, the decision to pursue a degree in Economics and Management is influenced by a combination of personal interests, societal expectations, and external factors such as career goals, family expectations, and the demand for professionals in relevant sectors. Theories like Human Capital Theory and Expectancy Theory explain how students are motivated by expected rewards such as higher income and job security. Institutional prestige, academic resources, and networking opportunities also play a significant role in shaping these decisions. Additionally, social networks and mentorship contribute to guiding students toward their chosen academic paths, further influencing their decision-making.

Research Methodology

The research on "the factors that influence the decision to enter the Faculty of Economics and Management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power" is conducted using the following methodology:

Population and Sample

Population: The research subjects consisted of students from the School of Economics and Management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power, specifically from the 2022, 2023, and 2024 academic years, totaling 1,000 students.

Sample Group: The sample group was selected using the table for sample size determination. For a population of 1,000 students, the appropriate sample size is approximately 300 students.

Research Instruments

The research utilized a self-developed questionnaire divided into four sections:

Section 1: This section contained multiple-choice questions to gather demographic information from the respondents, including gender, age, domicile, parental occupation, and family income.

Sections 2-3: These sections consisted of questions using a 5-point Likert scale to assess students' opinions on the factors influencing their decision to enter the Faculty of Economics and Management. The scale ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The responses were analyzed to calculate the average score

Section 4: This section included open-ended questions to gather additional comments and suggestions regarding the factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the Faculty of Economics and Management.

Data Collection

Step 1: The researcher developed the questionnaire and obtained permission to collect data.

Step 2: An online questionnaire was designed, and a web application was created to host the survey link.

Step 3: The researcher obtained a letter from the degree program, which allowed students to reference it when answering the questionnaire. The researcher then distributed the questionnaire to students from the Faculty of Economics and Management.

Step 4: The researcher sent the online questionnaire link to students of the Faculty of Economics and Management.

Step 5: Data was collected from students who completed the online questionnaire. After two weeks, the researcher summarized the responses.

Step 6: Data was analyzed using SPSS statistical software to ensure completeness and reliability.

Step 7: The researcher synthesized, analyzed, and summarized the collected data.

Step 8: A comprehensive research summary was written based on the findings.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SPSS statistical software, with hypotheses tested using various methods. The t-test was used to compare differences between two variables, One-Way ANOVA was used to compare differences among more than two variables, Correlation Coefficient Analysis was used to analyze the relationship between independent variables, and Multiple Regression Analysis was used to examine the relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable. These methods enabled a thorough and accurate analysis of the data.

Results

The research on " Factors that influence the decision to enter a faculty of Economics and management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power" can be results as follows:

The research results for Objective 1. Study of Factors Affecting the Decision to Enter the Faculty of Economics and Management

The research identified several factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the Faculty of Economics and Management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power. These factors include personal, familial, and external elements such as career prospects, academic resources, and the reputation of the institution. The study analyzed students' opinions on how these factors contributed to their decision to pursue this particular faculty, revealing that career opportunities and the alignment of the curriculum with industry needs were the most significant factors.

Table 1. Summary of Overall Mean Scores of the Six Factors

| Topics | Mean | Standard Deviation | Meaning | Rank |
|---------------------------------|-------------|--------------------|-------------|------|
| Institutional Prestige | 3.96 | 0.68 | High | 6 |
| Curriculum | 4.08 | 0.70 | High | 3 |
| Academic Resources | 4.10 | 0.82 | High | 2 |
| Career Prospects | 4.13 | 0.80 | High | 1 |
| Professional Support Services | 4.04 | 0.70 | High | 4 |
| Further Education Opportunities | 4.01 | 0.73 | High | 5 |
| Total | 4.01 | 0.73 | High | |

Table 1. summarizes the overall mean scores of the six major factors influencing students’ decisions to enter the Faculty of Economics and Management, ranked from highest to lowest. The highest-rated factor was Career Prospects ($\bar{x} = 4.13$, S.D. = 0.80), suggesting that employment opportunities, job relevance, and future career advancement play the strongest role in shaping students’ enrollment decisions. This was followed by Academic Resources ($\bar{x} = 4.10$, S.D. = 0.82), indicating that students highly value access to updated materials, digital platforms, and supportive learning environments. The Curriculum ranked third ($\bar{x} = 4.08$, S.D. = 0.70), reflecting students’ satisfaction with course structure, content relevance, and alignment with career goals. Professional Support Services ($\bar{x} = 4.04$, S.D. = 0.70) were also regarded positively, highlighting the importance of academic advising, career guidance, and internship-related support. Lower-ranked factors included Further Education Opportunities ($\bar{x} = 4.01$, S.D. = 0.73), which remained within the high range, demonstrating interest in postgraduate pathways and academic development. The lowest-rated factor was Institutional Prestige ($\bar{x} = 3.96$, S.D. = 0.68), indicating that while reputation matters, students prioritize more practical aspects such as career outcomes and learning resources. Overall, the combined average score of all six factors was high ($\bar{x} = 4.05$, S.D. = 0.74), showing that students hold positive perceptions toward multiple dimensions of their academic experience, with career readiness and academic resources weighing most heavily in their decision-making process.

The research results for Objective 2. Comparison of Factors Influencing the Decision to Enter the Faculty of Economics and Management

The research compared factors such as age, gender, domicile, parent occupation, and family income to identify any significant differences in students' decisions. The study found no significant differences based on age, gender, or domicile. However, there were significant differences in students' decisions based on parent occupation and family income. Students whose parents worked in government sectors or had middle to high-income levels showed higher motivation and decision levels towards entering the faculty.

The research results for Objective 3. Exploration of the Model of Intention to Use Low-Carbon Technology Among Farmers in Mianyang City, Sichuan Province, People's Republic of China

The research also explored the model of intention to use low-carbon technology among farmers in Mianyang City, Sichuan Province. This part of the study aimed to understand the factors influencing the adoption of low-carbon technology among farmers, focusing on their perceptions of the technology's benefits and their intentions to implement it in their daily practices. This exploration helps to link educational and environmental decisions, understanding how farmers perceive technological change and sustainability in their agricultural practices.

Discussion

The research on "Factors that influence the decision to enter a faculty of Economics and management at Guangxi Vocational College of Water Resources and Electric Power" can be discussed as follows:

The findings of this research are consistent with previous studies emphasizing the importance of institutional reputation, curriculum quality, and career relevance in influencing students' educational decisions. A reputable institution often builds academic trust and social credibility, motivating students to select programs that ensure employability and long-term professional growth (Kim, 2004; Amoah et al., 2023).

The curriculum was also found to have a strong influence on students' decisions, supporting the results of Ha et al. (2011), who highlighted that programs aligning with career goals and providing practical learning opportunities enhance students' confidence in their future success. Likewise, sufficient academic resources and learning facilities were shown to positively impact satisfaction and readiness for real-world application (Areces & Rodríguez, 2022).

The significance of career prospects is consistent with the findings of Rasul et al. (2013), who emphasized that job opportunities and employability remain critical determinants of students' educational choices. Similar results were reported by Achamrah (2022), highlighting that perceptions of future career stability strongly influence students' decisions when selecting academic programs and institutions.

Overall, the results confirm that the six factors collectively shape students' decision-making and reflect the institution's strength in aligning educational quality with career and lifelong learning opportunities.

Recommendations

The findings of this study can be applied by educational administrators, policymakers, and related agencies in several ways:

1. The Faculty of Economics and Management should continue to strengthen its curriculum quality and teaching methods by integrating practical, career-oriented learning approaches.

2. The institution should enhance its career counseling and internship programs to increase students' employability and align academic learning with labor market demands.

3. The faculty should maintain strong communication with students' families and communities, promoting awareness of the value of vocational education.

4. It is recommended that the college develop more scholarships and financial aid programs for students from low- and middle-income families to ensure equal access to education.

5. Continuous improvement in academic resources, library systems, and online learning tools should be prioritized to sustain academic excellence and student satisfaction.

Future Researches

Future research could further explore other factors influencing students' decisions to study in vocational institutions, such as psychological motivation, peer influence, or digital media exposure. Additionally, future studies may apply qualitative or mixed-method approaches to gain deeper insights into students' attitudes and decision-making processes. Comparative studies across different faculties or institutions could also provide broader perspectives and contribute to the development of strategies for improving student recruitment and retention in higher education.

New Knowledge

This research presents new insights into the factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the Faculty of Economics and Management. Key factors include career prospects, family expectations, and the alignment of the curriculum with industry demands. It also highlights the importance of adapting vocational education curricula to meet the evolving needs of the job market, as well as the impact of socioeconomic status on students' educational choices. The exploration of low-carbon technology adoption among farmers in Mianyang City also reveals the significance of farmers' perceptions of the benefits of sustainable technologies in agriculture.

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