

Stochastic Modelling and Computational Sciences

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY ON STUDENT PERSPECTIVES IN PRIVATE UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENTS

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ABSTRACT

The higher education sector is one of the most essential component for the growth and development of any economy. The study here is keen to understand the scenario of private higher education institutes operating in India by providing a detailed insight into the students' perspective towards the environment provided for study and other curricular activities in these institutes. A total of 284 responses have been collected from the following private universities of the Northeast India region. It is found that the satisfaction levels towards the provisions of the private institutes are also high which further boosts the overall perception about these institutes. The students have been positively motivated by their education these private institutes and pose a validity towards the good environment provided by them in their growth and development. The study results are in concordance with those provided by where a positive perception of students towards the private higher education institutes have been established. Through the mean score analysis, it is observed that there are variations in their agreement levels based on the age group that these students belong to.

Keywords: Higher; Education; Private; University; Perception

1. INTRODUCTION

The higher education sector is one of the most essential component for the growth and development of any economy. The presence of a strong higher education sector not only influences the contribution to the economic development but also secures the future of a country by creating educated individuals for the future (Sudakova et al., 2022; Trawalter et al., 2021). In the last decade, the importance of private higher education institutes in an emerging economy like India have been realised (Tilak, 2018). Among the academicians as well as policy makers, the need to include more private higher education institutes to facilitate education for majority of the students have been suggested (Garwe, 2016; Kwiek, 2018). In India, there are many private higher education institutes that have managed to provide quality education to the students through the time. These institutes have been successful in providing a wide range of courses including engineering, social sciences, medical to science and technology. The institutes have also contributed towards research and development area through the rigorous studies across different fields. According to (Rathore, 2023), there are a total of 366 private higher education institutes in the country which operate at a university level.

The demand for private higher education institutes over the period of time has substantially increased (Yaakub & Mohamed, 2019). There are more and more students joining into these education institutes over the period of time. The need to understand the private higher education sector in detail becomes necessary as it can provide essential insights for the further development in the sector. The study here is keen to understand the scenario of private higher education institutes operating in India by providing a detailed insight into the students' perspective towards the environment provided for study and other curricular activities in these institutes. This would help in answering the following research question –

RQ1: Does private higher education institutes provide a satisfactory environment for its students?

In order to answer the question, a systematic study have been conducted here. The literature review conducted for the purpose of the study is provided in the next section below.

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2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

(Demir et al., 2021) conducted a study to understand the perception about online meeting platforms in private universities. The study investigated the perception of 200 lecturers working in such universities to understand about the service quality provided. It is found that the service quality in these online platforms directly impact on the satisfaction levels and perceived value in the private universities. (Abbasi et al., 2020) have done the study to understand the perception about e-learning in a private medical college during the COVID-19 period. With a total of 377 students being investigated it is found that the negative perceptions about the online classes are higher among them (Mandasari, 2020). did study to understand about the sustainable use of e-learning systems across universities to promote a self-directed learning practice. With the responses collected it is found that the impact of online learning system has a positive impact on they're learning engagement, motivation and achievement with an increase in their academic performance. (Garcia-Iruela & Hijon-Neira, 2020) based their study on one of the most emerging aspects of the students learning process i.e., gamification of the process of learning. The perception of students with respect to gamification is enquired for in this study. Through the mode of a survey, the responses are gathered from students about the gamified elements they have experienced during their course. (Ahmed et al., 2018) considered the area of Sudan and investigated about the perception of students towards the learning environment available with respect to their year of study. The performance of the students are highly dependent on the perception held by these students. (Balagova and Halakova, 2018) conducted a study for measuring the teacher and students interaction and comparing the self-perception of teachers from the point of view of the students'. It is quite important that there is a good relationship between the teachers and the students.

The review shows that the number of studies focusing on the perception of students towards the private university environment are limited and hence the following objectives are generated for the purpose of the study-

1. To understand the perception of students towards the environment of private universities.
2. To determine the levels of satisfaction among the students about their decision to study in private universities.

The methods used to fulfil the above objectives are given below.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study have used a systematic method of arriving at the results of the considered problem in hand. The study is descriptive in nature and considers a quantitative approach to understand the situation. The population of the study as can be estimated from the objectives would be the students studying in the private universities of India. However, in understanding about the private higher education situation and its research, it is observed that the number of studies with respect to the Northeastern part of India is quite limited. There are a substantial increase in the number of private universities in the region and the number of students seeking their education in them. In order to bridge this gap in literature, the Northeast India have been selected as the geographical scope of the study.

The study have used non-probabilistic sampling method for collecting primary data from the students. The criteria for consideration include these students having to pursue any course in a private university across the states of Northeast India. For collecting primary data, a structured questionnaire in the 5 Point Likert type scale have been used. The secondary sources of data are mostly from journal articles, books, reports and information from official websites associated with higher education. A total of 284 responses have been collected from the following private universities of the region.

Name of the Private University	State
Don Bosco University	Assam
Kaziranga University	Assam
Royal Global University	Assam
Arunachal University of Studies	Arunachal Pradesh
The ICFAI University	Nagaland
Mahatma Gandhi University	Meghalaya

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The statistical analysis conducted from the data collected above are provided below.

4. RESULTS

The 284 primary datasets are being analysed using the SPSS software for data analysis.

Before proceeding to the final understanding of the objectives, the demographic composition of the respondents are provided below.

Frequencies of Gender			
Gender	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
FEMALE	69	52.7 %	52.7 %
MALE	62	47.3 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Age			
Age	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
18 yrs-20 years	177	62.8 %	62.8 %
21 yrs-23 years	89	31.6 %	94.3 %
24 yrs-26 years	16	5.7 %	100.0 %

Frequencies of Education			
Education	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
Graduation	30	10.6 %	10.6 %
Senior Secondary School	254	89.4 %	100.0 %

The above tables show that the students being investigated consists of 52.7% female students. The age group that is majorly found across the respondents include 62.8% in the 18-20 years. This shows that majority of them are pursuing their graduation in these private institutes with the highest level of education for 89.4% being senior secondary.

In order to understand the perception of these students about the environment provided by the private universities they are a part of, a scale with 17 items have been provided. The descriptives of the responses provided are shown below.

Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
I believe that it is necessary to continue in higher education to improve as a person	285	4.78	5	0.624	3	5

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Descriptives									
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum			
I believe that economic benefits are the most important advantage of having higher education	285	4.13	5	0.998	2	5			
My parents/guardians influenced my plan to continue onto higher education	285	3.35	3	1.079	1	5			
The subjects I study in secondary school encourage me to pursue higher education studies in a private institute	285	2.74	2.00	1.183	1.00	5.00			
I think that even without gaining a higher education degree in a private institute, I can get good job	285	4.19	5	1.186	1	5			
My friends had a direct influence upon my plans to study in a private institute	285	4.08	5	1.178	2	5			
My teachers motivated me to continue higher education	285	3.42	3	1.067	1	5			
I believe that if I get a higher education degree from a private institute, I will bring honor to my family	285	2.82	3	1.229	1	5			
A higher education degree from a private institute would improve my chance of getting a good job with a high salary	285	3.85	5	1.297	1	5			
The specialization I study at higher secondary school influenced my plans	285	2.88	3	1.024	1	5			
I believe that higher education qualification will enable me to contribute to society and to help other people	285	2.77	2	1.251	1	5			
I believe that gaining higher education is an investment for my future	285	3.17	3.00	0.511	2	5			
I believe that I have an aptitude for higher education studies	285	3.85	4	0.649	2	5			
I believe that students in higher education have an interesting life	285	3.54	3.00	0.715	2	5			

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Descriptives										
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum				
I am satisfied with regard to the facilities	285	4.11	4.00	0.725	2	5				
I am satisfied with my decision to join the institution	285	3.44	3	0.706	2	5				
I am satisfied with the institution	285	3.79	4	0.824	2	5				

The mean scores being calculated across the 17 items showed that the highest score is at 4.19 and lowest score is at 2.77. The highest score is for the item showing the belief that without higher education the respondents can gain a good job. The level of agreement with this statement is quite high. The lowest level of agreement is with respect to the agreement that seeking higher education in the private university would give them the chance to serve the society. The respondents have very low level of agreement with respect with this statement. Overall, the mean scores are in the higher range of agreement about the perception of private institutes.

The last three questions in the list of items represent the satisfaction levels of the respondents towards the private institute they are studying. The mean scores there are found to be quite high ranging as high as 4.11. This shows that the satisfaction levels of these students from the private institutes that they are a part of is quite high.

Further, the questionnaire included a total of three items that analysed the overall perception of the students about the private universities in the Northeast India. The mean scores generated are as follows-

Descriptives										
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum				
I feel great about the private universities in Northeast	285	3.92	4.00	0.814	2	5				
I feel Confident about the private universities in Northeast	285	3.92	4	0.687	2	5				
I feel Comfortable about the private universities in Northeast	285	4.08	4	0.827	3	5				

The above three statements generate the highest mean score of 4.08 and lowest at 3.92. It is seen that the agreement about being comfortable in the private universities is the highest followed by equal level of agreement for feeling great and confident about these private universities.

By looking at the mean scores for satisfaction and overall perception about the private universities, it is seen that the agreement levels are high and positive. This shows that the private universities have been able to create a positive perception in the mind of the students.

In order to understand further, the study has undertaken a number of more statistical analyses. Based on the scores, there are three factors being identified with respect to the statements about. With a total of 14 items, the factor of "Perception towards Private Institute Environment", "Satisfaction Levels of Students" and "Overall Perception about Private Institutes" have been considered.

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Descriptives						
	N	Mean	Median	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Perception towards Private Institute Environment	285	3.54	3.57	0.252	2.50	4.21
Satisfaction Levels of Students	285	3.78	3.67	0.410	3.00	4.67
Overall Perception about Private Institutes	285	3.97	4.00	0.461	3.00	5.00

It is seen that out of the three extracted factors, the highest mean score is for the overall perception levels which stands at 3.97. It is followed by satisfaction levels and then perception levels towards the environment. Out of the scores generated, it can be stated that as the perception for environment is low, in the future there can be certain changes made to make these scores rise.

The above scores are now being analysed with respect to the demographics of the study to understand the presence of any significant association.

Independent Samples T-Test - Gender				
		Statistic	df	p
Perception towards Private Institute Environment	Student's t	-0.974	124	0.332
Satisfaction Levels of Students	Student's t	-0.689	125	0.492
Overall Perception about Private Institutes	Student's t	-0.952	126	0.343

In case of gender, it is seen that the perception and satisfaction levels of the students towards the private institutes does not change. It is irrespective of the gender of the student that they have these levels of agreement.

Independent Samples T-Test - Education				
		Statistic	df	p
Perception towards Private Institute Environment	Student's t	0.804 ^a	271	0.422
Satisfaction Levels of Students	Student's t	1.026	274	0.306
Overall Perception about Private Institutes	Student's t	-1.080	274	0.281

^a Levene's test is significant ($p < .05$), suggesting a violation of the assumption of equal variances

In case of the education level of students, a similar situation is observed where based on the degree they hold, the perception and satisfaction are not associated.

One-Way ANOVA – Age Group				
	F	df1	df2	p
Perception towards Private Institute Environment	0.793	2	40.8	0.459

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One-Way ANOVA – Age Group				
	F	df1	df2	p
Satisfaction Levels of Students	6.211	2	40.6	0.004
Overall Perception about Private Institutes	4.054	2	36.4	0.026

The significant demographic association in case of the study is observed for that of the age group of the students. It is seen that the satisfaction levels and the overall perception levels about the private institutes vary with respect to the age group the respondents belong to. In order to understand the exact levels at which these differences occur, a Games -Howell post hoc analysis is conducted.

Games-Howell Post-Hoc Test – Satisfaction				
		18 -20 years	21 -23 years	24 -26 years
18 -20 years	Mean difference	—	0.176	0.17255
	p-value	—	0.002	0.284
21 -23 years	Mean difference		—	-0.00379
	p-value		—	0.999
24 -26 years	Mean difference			—
	p-value			—

Games-Howell Post-Hoc Test – Overall Perception about Private Institutes				
		18-20 years	21-23 years	24 -26 years
18 -20 years	Mean difference	—	-0.108	-0.345
	p-value	—	0.009	0.060
21 -23 years	Mean difference		—	-0.236
	p-value		—	0.262
24 -26 years	Mean difference			—
	p-value			—

Analysing both the table of post hoc analysis above, the differences among the age groups that are significant include 18-20 years with that of 21-23 years.

As the results from the analysis are being derived, a detailed discussion is provided in the next section.

5. DISCUSSION

The importance of higher education system in a country has already been established by many researchers. In continuation to the same, the study here has included a quantitative approach with 285 students to identify their

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perspective towards private university environment. The study includes considering the perspective for the environment with respect to a number of different parameters. It considers the benefits towards their future that this would bring, contribution to the society and the honour they would carry to their families. It is seen that the perspective on the environment provided by private institutes is a composition of all the above mentioned elements. While it is seen that their levels of agreement on providing a social contribution is comparatively lower, but with respect to gaining a competitive position among others through their higher education in the private institutes have been clearly established. It is found that the satisfaction levels towards the provisions of the private institutes are also high which further boosts the overall perception about these institutes. The students have been positively motivated by their education these private institutes and pose a validity towards the good environment provided by them in their growth and development. The study results are in concordance with those provided by where a positive perception of students towards the private higher education institutes have been established. Through the mean score analysis, it is observed that there are variations in their agreement levels based on the age group that these students belong to. In case of the satisfaction levels and the overall perception there are significant mean score differences observed.

6. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The need to understand the take of students towards the private education institutes are extremely important as there is going to further increase in such institutes in the near future. The idea of the environment that a student undergoes during their study period can provide an useful insight into the expectations of others. The study through primary data have been successful in providing a detailed perception which can be useful for future course of time. The mean scores does provide the idea that there are scopes for betterment where a more inclusive pattern in these institutes towards society development is provided. Moreover, the need to take steps for developing a job-oriented culture for the interested students can help to excel better.

In academics, there can be qualitative studies be initiated to understand the perception of these institutes in detail. Moreover, the age group wise difference in perception can be studied in the future context of time.

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