

CRITERIA TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A FACULTY FOR TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATING STUDENTS

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Abstract. *In a society characterized by an abundance of information, the decision to choose a particular faculty from a multitude of national and international, public or private options will be based on certain selection criteria. In this regard, the present study aims to investigate the criteria that are considered by the Technology High-school graduating students in choosing a certain faculty from many possible choices. To achieve this aim, we performed an ascertaining research on a batch of 91 High-school students enlisted to 3 programs belonging to the Technology line of studies: Natural resources, Services and Technics. The 3 Technology High-schools belong to the rural area, and the students included in this study were registered in the 12th grade, during the school year 2016-2017. The collection of data was achieved by applying a questionnaire of opinion to the 91 students included in the target group. The results were processed with the statistical program SPSS 17. The conclusions of the study reveal the fact that the most important selection criteria used by students in their final year in High-school in order to choose a faculty are the faculty field of study, the profession they train for during the faculty courses; faculty prestige; home-proximity; entrance conditions; positive aspects found out from others. As one may notice, students have in view mainly the future potential of a profession, which could provide a high quality life style, but they also take into consideration aspects relating to admission and accessibility to the university environment (distance from home, costs etc.). The results open the perspective for more ample studies regarding the best ways to integrate the High-school students coming from rural areas in higher education.*

Keywords: *selection criteria, faculty selection, high school*

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of the actual society regarding higher education, faculty entrance, and the keen competition found at the level of the educational market (MOOGAN, 2011) are mirrored upon the identification and approaching of the most relevant selection criteria concerning the decision making to attend a certain faculty. The multitude of options, both public and private faculties, on a national or international level contributed to the investigation and consideration of a bunch of selection criteria that the graduating students analyze, in order to outline an optimal decision. This exploring behavior of the high-school student, who analyzes aspects of the aimed domain, represents a way in which the students make contact with various occupational environments and explore diverse career opportunities (BĂBAN, A., 2011). The beneficiaries of a career decision have to be provided with access to counseling services which have to meet attributes such as transparency, innovation, flexibility and differentiation, in order to meet the needs caused by the situational diversity of those involved in the ongoing of a decisional process. (JIGĂU, 2007, HIEBERT, 2001 CITED IN WITKO ET.AL., 2005; TULBURE, 2011). Thus, an adequate orientation supposes, before engaging a decision, the real awareness of the need to make a decision and the corresponding motivation of the students to enroll in this process. (GATI & ASHER, 2001; TULBURE, 2010). SOUTAR & TURNER (2002) were the one who identified in their research four determinants which outline the preference for a certain type of university for those who leave high-school, graduates in Australia: "adjustment, adequacy of courses", "academic reputation", "job perspective" and the "quality of teaching". Another study undertook by CJRAE Satu Mare in 2013 reveals the fact

that the majority of questioned students consider that the most important criterion in choosing a faculty is that of own aspirations (32%), followed by income and then by the prestige of the profession they are training for. Only 10% of the students appreciate home proximity as the most important criterion in choosing the faculty. There also resulted, based on the study, that the Technology line of study graduates will form the seed bed for the work market both at the national and the international level. At the level of 2015, CCOC inside USV conducted a study at the level of 1st year students enrolled in the first semester, who investigated, along with other aspects, the main criteria of academic orientation on the USV level. These criteria included firstly” home proximity, “to a great extent” 39, 9% and ”to a large extent” 18, 1%). Secondly in criteria hierarchy came”teachers quality”- 22, 1%”to a very large extent” and 35, 6%”to a large extent”. Thirdly came”the prestige of the university”, 18, 8%”to a very large extent”; 24, 5%”to a large extent”.

RESOURCES AND METHODS

The research aims at investigating the criteria at the basis of Technology high-school students ‘decision to choose the faculty they intent to go to.

This research was accomplished during the first semester of the academic year 2016-2017, and it has the structure of a transversal quantitative research. Data collection was accomplished by using a close-answer questionnaire of opinion, which was applied to each student belonging to the selected group. The descriptive statistical analysis was conducted using the statistical program SPSS 17.0.

The target population included in the study represents a group including 91 students from 12th grade studying in 3 Technology High - school in rural areas (two from the district of Gorj, one from Timiș). A percent of 34% are male subjects (N=31), and 66% are feminine subjects (N=60). The age average range was between 17 and 19 years (M=17.58; SD=0.61).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

By following the research direction, the students were supposed to give scores from 1 to 5, to a set of 10 selection criteria of the faculty, 1 for the lowest, and 5 for the highest value. The average scores got for each criteria, and the corresponding standard deviation are presented in Table 1:

Table 1

Selection criteria used in choosing a faculty		
Selection criteria	Mean	SD
Future profession	4.42	0.96
Future profile of the faculty	4.09	1.07
Disciplines of study	4.06	1.06
Faculty prestige	3.77	1.03
Found positive aspects	3.40	1.24
Acceptable taxes	3.31	1.22
Easy admission	3.05	1.25
Home proximity	2.87	1.38
Friends/colleagues who already study there	2.86	1.36
File based selection	2.83	1.29

The analysis of results reveals the fact that, in students' opinion, the most important selection criterion is considered to be the profession one trains for during the academic program. Students find their paths on the medium and long run, and they are pretty pragmatic regarding professionalization. We also notice that on the 2nd place there comes the future profile of the faculty, a sign that the students choose professions that are looked for inside and outside the country. The students are equally interested in the disciplines they are going to study, as they are searching for some continuity between high-school and faculty. A very important selection criterion proves to be the faculty prestige. As they have large options at their disposal, the students have the tendency to choose established faculties, of national and international prestige, and they take into account a lot the positive aspects found out from friends or former colleagues who already study at the faculty or from people who know the academic environment.

Criteria's with lower impact have in view school taxes, as the students hope that they can get a financed place from state budget. Home proximity seems to count only to a lower extent; students are already pretty independent relating to the family environment. Of little relevance also is the aspect relating to the difficulties of entrance, as the file selection supposes only a formal registration, based on the average score of the Bacalaureate in over 90% of the study programs.

CONCLUSIONS

In the light of the displayed results, universities have to permanently adjust and update their educational offer, based on the criteria that have the precedence in the process of choosing the future faculty by the future students. The study programs of the faculties should include a curriculum centered on high professionalization, on building cognitive competencies, but especially functional and action ones, with the perspective of high quality professional training of human resources. Specialists in university education, both teachers and researchers, have to train the graduates capable to successfully integrate on a competitive and dynamic work market. The study also offers openings to deepen the issues concerning the successful integration of students coming from the rural area in higher education.

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