

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

Recent years have witnessed the mushrooming of private colleges in Malaysia. To attract more students, there is a need for the managers of these colleges to have a better understanding of the factors affecting the choice of college and courses. It is hoped that the findings of this small research would provide some relevant information to the college administrators on the students' perspectives of choosing a college or a course of study. The followings are the salient findings of a survey on a private college in Malaysia.

##### **6.1.1 CHOICE OF COURSE OR PROGRAMME**

In this study, a number of factors, both socio-demographic and academic, were found to influence the choice of course either individually or collectively. Choice of courses differ significantly between the two sexes. Female students are twice as likely as their male counterparts to join SAM or CAL rather than other internally assessed programmes. This shows that while male students show a preference for the internal assessment based courses, female students would prefer courses involving public examinations. The medium of instruction in the previous school and whether the students came from Science or Arts stream also affect the choice of course. Compared to the Arts students, Science students were found to be more likely to be enrolled in the SAM or CAL programmes. Students

would look at the usefulness and the relevancy of the course for their further studies or job prospects before signing up for the course. Polytomous logistic regression was used to model the choice of course. The above-mentioned variables were found to significantly influence the choice of course in this multivariate model.

### **6.1.2 DECISION MAKING ON CHOICE OF COLLEGE**

The decision making process is always crucial for parents. Who would make the decision on the choice of college? What are the factors that influence the decision-making? All these are of great interest to the private colleges. In this survey, mother's education and father's occupation are found to be important determinants on decision making. "How students came to know the college" was found to be one of the important factors affecting the decision making on choice of college. Parents with primary education tend to leave the decision on the choice of college to their children. Likewise, businessmen also leave the decision to their children.

### **6.1.3 DECISION MAKING ON THE CHOICE OF PROGRAMME**

Parents' education level was found to be an important factor that influences the decision on the choice of courses. Parents with tertiary education tend to discuss with their children on what course to enroll. Those with primary education would leave it to their children to decide on what course to take. The medium of instruction in the previous schools has a significant effect on who decide which

course to enroll. The Polytomous logistic model again was used to identify the factors that significantly affect the decision making process. The study showed that mothers with primary education when compared to mothers with secondary and tertiary education are 2.6 times and 6.3 times more likely to let their children decide what courses to enroll. Students from Chinese medium schools when compared to the government sponsored school students, are twice likely to make decision on their own than to discuss with their parents.

## 6.2 DISCUSSION

The private education industry has grown so rapidly over the last two years. The courses offered by colleges were basically market-driven. There was no proper planning for approving the courses conducted by the college until 1999. However, with the establishment of the Department of Private Education in the Ministry of Education, the courses offered by the private institutions are closely monitored. The findings in this survey have some impact on the courses to be offered by colleges. What the parents and students are looking for before choosing the course of study as well as college is definitely a good reference to this department to formulate suitable guidelines for the private institutions. The Ministry should also monitor very closely the administration and the academic standard of the private colleges. The increasing number of parents with higher education these days has changed the parents' perspectives of private education. They demand for high quality and standard of education for their children. The relevancy of the course of study really matters to the students, as they would

choose courses that they feel are relevant and their career development. The development of secondary education has also influenced substantially the courses conducted by the colleges. The non-English medium of instruction in the secondary schools has driven private colleges to introduce short English courses, which run concurrently with the academic courses the students had enrolled in. From the survey, the courses conducted by private colleges can be classified into 3 main categories - those that are fully externally assessed courses, those that are fully internally assessed courses and those involving both internal and external assessments. The demand for these courses depends very much on the students' academic background. Whether the students came from the Science or Arts stream somehow affects the choice of the courses. The emphasis of the Seventh Malaysia Plan was to produce more Science major students. This has again opened up the opportunity for the private colleges to introduce science-based courses to meet the demand created by this emphasis.

This survey found that students are very much involved in the decision making process in choosing the courses. Thus, private institutions need to device their marketing strategies in recruiting students. As admission to a college is no longer a one-man-decision, marketing strategies should target both the students and their parents.

Private institutions should look into the areas that can improve both the quality and standard of education. In October 2000, the Ministry of Education has made a call to merge the small-scale colleges as to provide better facilities for the students and to improve the quality of education.

### 6.3 FUTURE RESEARCH

From previous studies, variables such as the financial aid, parent's income, social economic status, the quality and standard of a course, tuition fees and the physical facilities are found to significantly affect the choice. But these are also considered as very sensitive to the Malaysian society. Both students and the private colleges were reluctant to provide such information. Future survey research on this topic can be improved by gathering additional information such as annual tuition fees, cost of living, better proxy for the parent's social economic status, the measures of the standard and quality of education provided by the college and the physical facilities provided by the college.

Future study on this topic may also place greater emphasis on comparing the enrollment pattern of some private colleges. A full-scale survey could be conducted to investigate factors affecting the choice of college and enrollment with the aid of multinomial model suggested in this study.