Conative Dimension of Attitude: An Investigation on Student Influencing Stimuli in Decision-Making Processes

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates various stimuli that influence students' expressed choice of university, including physical, psychological, social, and virtual factors. Using a combination of survey research and statistical analysis, the study examines the role of these factors in shaping students' decisions and provides information on the decision-making process. The findings suggest that the support provided through the Virtual Factors is of considerable value for the students when making one of the most important decisions regarding the university to enrol to. Using the Kruskal-Wallis test, it emerges that there are some persistent gender concordances on price perception, study programme's features, and even family effects. Using a sample of 828 respondents, the present research takes and adds a new angle by examining the effects of these dimensions on the conative aspect of the attitude and describes a behavioural orientation based on the ranking of these factors. This study advancement will be therefore directed to the completion of these factors as well as the ongoing research regarding the factors on how to change the attitudes of students on university study programmes, and thus the selection of these programmes.

KEYWORDS: *social factors in decision-making conative dimension, attitude, behaviour, higher education.*

JEL CLASSIFICATION: *I21, I23, I25, M31, O33, P46.*

1. INTRODUCTION

University is a vital determinant factor in an individual path of life affecting academic and career prospects, as well as personality development. Despite fierce competition among universities, many of them are trying to respond but also adapt to changing student needs, which has resulted in an increased focus on factors that influence students when choosing a university, something that has received growing attention in recent years. Obviously, this tip also bears in mind that the choice of a university is one of the most significant moments of life with immediate consequences for professional development and student expert level. There are many factors that can impact the decisions made by these institutions, including their ranking on Wall Street, financial status, and even what field of work they want to specialise in. This has made these elements even more significant in the wake of the education industry fast becoming digitalised and globally integrated within recent years. This is in addition to new models, such as e-learning, that are increasing the number of mobile students and allow them to enrol for courses from remote areas making the decision-making process even more complicated. Today, students are free to choose and tackle almost another country by attending a university that is located in that city. Today's educational institutions do not

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compete solely on educational excellence, but also on their ability to meet the diverse needs of potential students, including their social, physical, and psychological preferences. Understanding the stimuli that drive students to choose the best possible option will be a great help for educational institutions and has become crucial and essential in the candidate recruitment process, which is continuously being refined. In this study, we aim to investigate stimuli that motivates students on the choices they express when selecting a university. Focusing on physical, psychological, virtual, and social factors, this research provides an in-depth analysis of the decision-making process in university selection. The reviewed literature has extensively covered the concept of attitude and its dimensions, particularly how these attitudes can be shaped and modified over time. The second section of the paper presents the analysed and interpreted specialised bibliography, starting with the detailed description of the concept of attitude and its cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions. The third section represents the research methodology, which consists of a combination of survey research and statistical analysis to evaluate the impact of these factors on students' decision-making process, using the SPSS software tool. Section 4 presents the data analysis and interpretation of results. The final section presents the conclusions and findings of the research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Attitude and its dimensions

Defleur & Westie (1963) view the concept of attitude in a more syncretic non-academic context which had connotations with the positioning of an artist's subject in the foreground, in comparison to the backdrop. They state that over the ages these meanings have not been static, and the word has evolved towards the ability to define opinion of a subject regarding a particular political discourse; modes of thinking typical of certain social strata or professional community; or even the general tendencies of a person to act in regard to the environment or the world around them rather. Therefore, with the increase in the population of students and professionals participating in undergraduate and postgraduate studies, as shown in the report from the Ministry of Education shown in Figure 1, this research seeks to understand the parameters that affect decision making in the selection of the best alternative.

It is also found that attitude is one of the most reliable predictors of behavioural intention, particularly in consumer behaviour as quoted by Lasut et al. (2022). Seeking of favourable attitudes that are directed towards taking certain actions appears to account towards the behavioural intention to perform such actions. Also known as attitudinal commitment, for example, in shopping is Whurwicz, (2022) & stated also by Lasut et al. (2022). Lasut et al. (2022) posit that social norms are important in defining behavioural intentions as they are the beliefs held by other people which help or hinder a behaviour, and when social norms are positive, they will enhance the intention positively. McCartan and Elliott (2018) offer a contribution to the subject in question by measuring one of the two components of the attitude that has been recently measured, whether the action is perceived as positive or negative. This study implies that as more positive aspect comprises extremity than the negative with all available dimensions, it is more likely to be retrieved. Such viewpoints make it reasonable to come to a conclusion that attitude as one of the personality traits, is highly oriented towards an action and therefore action is taken on the basis of it. At the same time this proposition recognises that the development of attitudes depends on the information and the processing that people engage in. The most basic or even the most reflexive of actions is actually cognised behaviour which stems from another cognitive process and like any other mental process is comprised of cognitions, feelings, and volitions. It can be fully described only in terms of these three aspects, meaning that every case of instinctive behaviour involves

knowledge about an object, feelings about it, and an attempt to approach or distance oneself from that object (Hilgard, 1980). Thus, attitude, as a mental process, encompasses the three aforementioned dimensions: affective, cognitive, and conative, as can be seen in Figure 2.
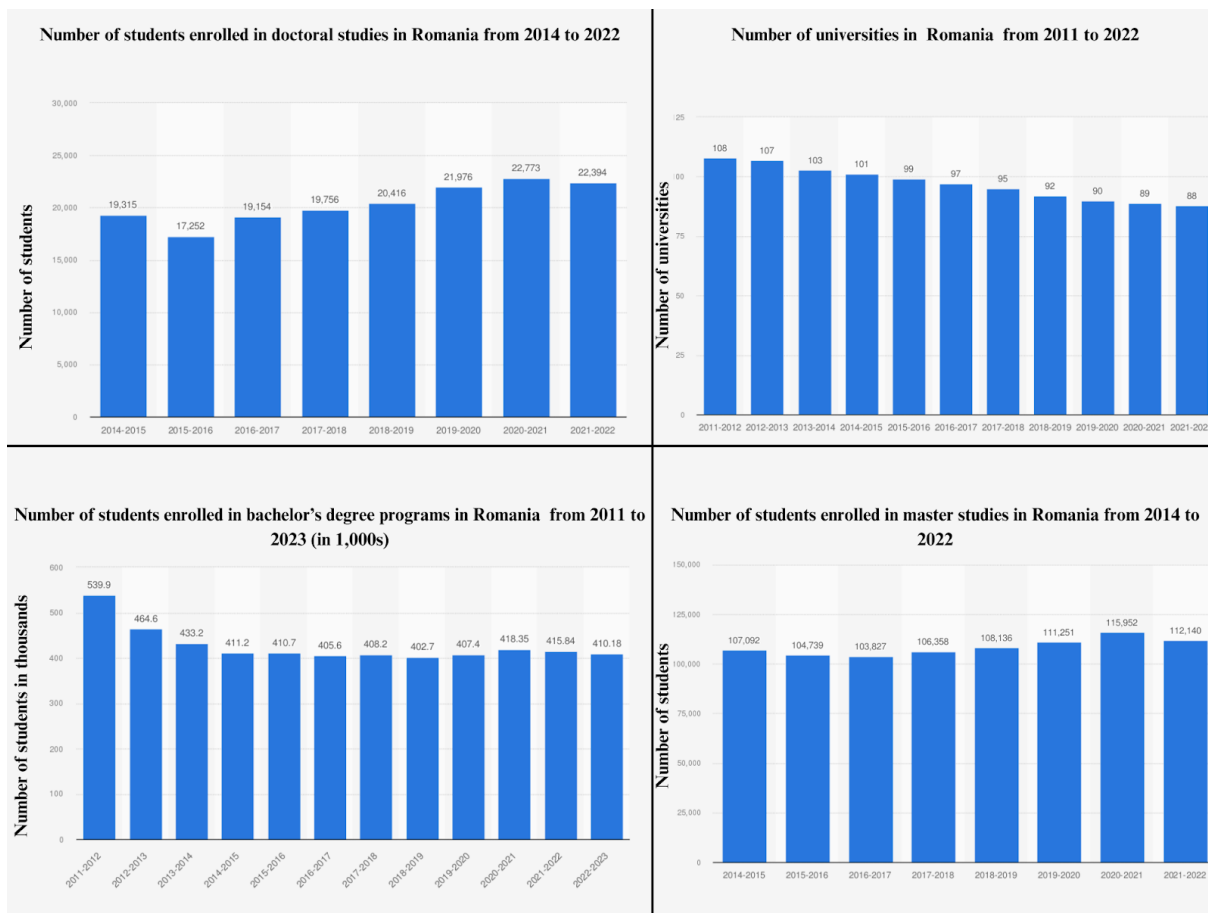

Figure 1. Study on Higher Education from Romania
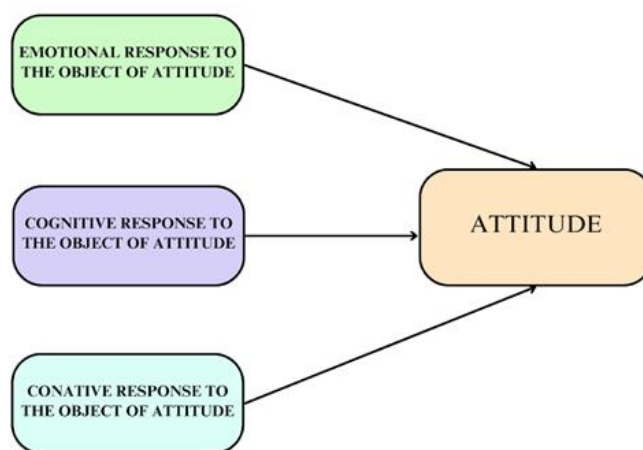*Source*: Adapted from Ministry of Education and Research (2021).

Figure 2. The tridimensional conceptualisation of attitude
Source: Adapted from Weinlich & Semerádová (2022)

As indicated by Quoquab & Mohammad (2020), the three dimensions express the following characteristics:

- Cognitive dimension: Takes account of one's extent of an object's awareness, knowledge, beliefs or thoughts, and features that he/she may ascribe to that object. This dimension of an attitude is a person's opinion or belief about something. In this regard, this relates to how knowledgeable the students are about the product/programme of the universities, and what image they hold of it.
- Affective dimension: This domain includes feelings of pleasure, dislike and even likes. It is the affective or emotional dimension of attitude that may show an individual's warmth, enthusiasm, or wish towards the study programme of a university, and how useful or detrimental it is to the student if selected.
- Conative dimension: It is one of the psychological concepts which explains the behaviour or the thought process which is directed towards the action and that reflects the efforts that one is ready to put towards work to accomplish a goal. It is the dimension closest to intention that encompasses a behaviour by a student that is more overt, such as when one, for instance, indicates an intention to buy the university product.

2.2 The changing attitude

- In walking through the steps that enable a university to attract students, it is perfectly alright to assume that the university makes efforts to devise the ways in which students can change their minds regarding the decision to enrol in a particular study programme. There is in fact a deeper or shallower degree of attitude change depending on the way attitude is approached, be it a structure of some content in the head of the person, or a temporal sentiment, or a meshed mixture (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2019). With this philosophy, it is quite difficult to understand why attitudes change because they are perceived as part of the mechanisms of permanent memory and can only be accessed when there is a need or an occasion for it. Considering attitudes to be under the influence of temporal factors, such as the individual's mood at the time, is likely to account for why attitudes tend to change regularly. An intriguing study by Franco & Hawkins (2021) in their article notes that even within the area of university choice, there is still even gendered behavioural difference, but this time also associated with various factors.
- Maio & Haddock (2007) extracted four principles about how attitude can be modified: (1) elements of a message or a persuasion context have the potential to induce attitude change; (2) motivation and the ability to adopt the correct attitude enhance the impact of relevant information; (3) congruence between the message and easily accessible information and objectives facilitates persuasion; and (4) persuasion can take place without awareness.
- Applying the above, we can conclude that individuals, in our case, students, can undergo attitude changes regarding the study programme if they have not formed it in an unconscious context (for example, a childhood trauma related to that field of study). Explicit attitude can be modified through messages, persuasive information, and a good understanding of the individual's motivation.

2.3 Changes brought about by the Internet in Higher Education

Constantinides & Stagno (2012) note the increasing importance of social networks regarding the choice of a university even at the time of carrying out the study. Internet penetration within many Industries and its perturbation in its usage in communication, technology, and education markets has been observed by Alqahtani (2019). In the case of education, he mentions that student's willingness to study online is increasing more and more due to the fact that it is flexible and easy, and that new and more efficient means of communication have evolved the means of information exchange. Boca (2021) focusses on the role of the internet

in how students behaved, particularly in relation to the opportunities presented by the e-learning experience, which was the only research option for most universities during Covid-19. The same study (Boca, 2021) also finds that 43.3 percent prefer face-to-face study programmes, while 33% of students agree that study programmes should be done online. Even Titthasiri (2013) uses the observation of the existing gap between online versus traditional study preference.

However, the Internet has not only changed the approach to study methods, but also personal perspectives, society, and, further, the way it influences the needs, perception, and attitude of consumers and, implicitly, students in the position of choosing a study programme. A study by Burdett (2013) shows that students gave greater importance to traditional resources and external factors compared to resources when choosing a study programme. However, in the 21st century where people regard the Internet as the best ready alternative to employ in seeking any information, this situation is bound to go up. The educational field also experiences these transformations, especially in the current context; after the COVID-19 crisis, the Internet has become the major channel for resource design and the teaching-learning processes (Segura-Robles et al., 2020).

It is also pertinent to mention that the limitations which many universities have imposed on the usage of information technologies for the environment showing the problems of education which perform the main purpose of technology integration into learning, have been explained long before. Regardless how the technology sticks to the inadequacies of educational 'offerings' students will need to change their psyche (Pinaraswati, 2020). and social and personal meted out to students in making judgements regarding the choice of their university continue to dominate.

Ashrafi et al. (2022) have shown in one of their models that the ease of use and the perceived utility of the product/service affect the attitude. In their model, Ajzen (1991) emphasises individual action plans, as well as the components shaping them. In this context, he adds that the change of some behaviour intentions can be determined by an attitude toward the behaviour, a subjective evaluation of a normative belief, and perceived behavioural control over that behaviour, as depicted in Figure 3.
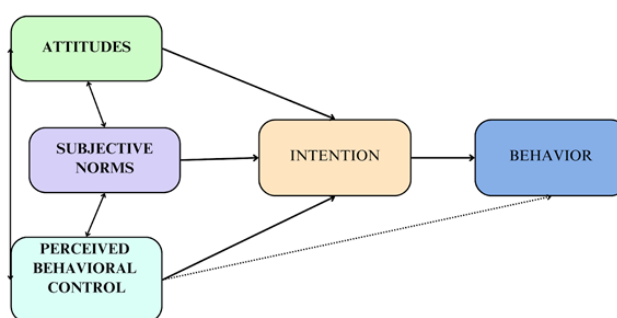

Figure 3. Theory of Planned Action Model
Source: adapted from Ajzen (1991)

Another pertinent model is that of the Engel-Blackwell-Miniard model (Engel et al., 1968), where the significance of attitude in the behaviour of the consumer and decision making attributes to the consumer behaviour model. In fact, toleration is probably one of these constructions expressed in terms of the 'model of attitude toward behavior' (Bagozzi & Warshaw, 1990) where regardless of the best of intentions, the status-quo is eventually

reinstated. However, in the Goal-Directed Behaviour model (Bagozzi et al., 2002) depicted above, attitude is not so deterministic when examining marketing-related behaviour. Rather, desire is perceived to have more weight on intention than attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived control. Another use of the variable "attitude" is in the Howard and Sheth model, as seen in Figure 4, where decisions are influenced by the attitude towards the brand/product, and attitude depends on the product knowledge level.
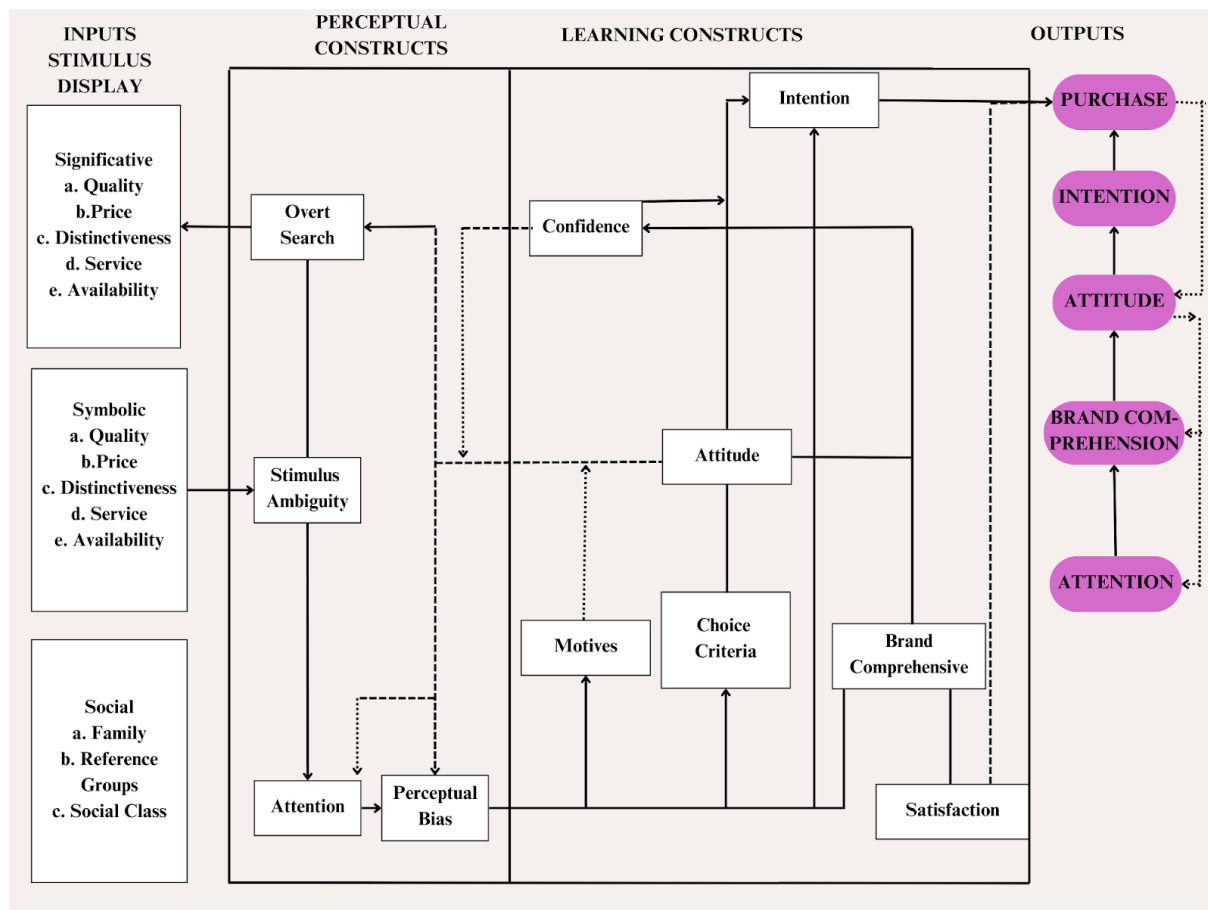

Figure 4. Howard-Sheth Model
Source: Adapted from Howard & Sheth (1970)

In all of the aforementioned models, it can be observed that the attitude is influenced by other variables. Whether we are talking about psychological (internal) factors or physical (external) factors, attitude is a variable that can be controlled through the marketing actions of organisations.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The decision-making problem, in the context of research on the attitudes of candidates toward university study programmes, involves the need for a comprehensive and extensive understanding of the effect of influencing factors on the creation and change of these candidates' attitudes. At the same time, it is crucial to analyse and understand how various variables and contexts influence their attitudes and preferences towards university study programmes, in order to make informed and effective decisions for the creation and promotion of these programmes.

This study aims at testing in more detail the usefulness of one of the replications of the Howard-Sheth model, which has been recently modified to reflect the contemporary trend and to create a stereotype of fluid behaviour, depending on the aspects of this new model. This is in order to allow the consumer in this case UJ product acquisition to be done within the first instance more accurately, faster and efficiently.

This research seeks to enable students achieve the overall goals by pursuing the following specific objectives.
- Assessing the tangible, intangible, social, and cyber rights factors that are in relation to students' views towards the course they wish to study.
- Examining the factors nature of the found and the students behaviour in selecting a study course.
- Analysing the reasons behind students' selection of a study programme and assessing if this selection raises or lessens these reasons.
- Designing a behavioural approach for higher education institutions, those working in the field of educational policy, and educational advisers aimed at correctional influence on students' attitudes and choice of the education programme.

The research hypotheses are as follows:

H1. Starting from the assumption created by Howard & Sheth (1970) stating that physical, psychological, and social factors play a significant role in decision-making and, therefore, in attitude modification, at least one variable containing one of these factors is more important than those in Virtual Factors.

H2. Based on the statements of Burdett (2013); Alqahtani (2019); Constantinides & Stagno (2012), there is a significant interaction and positive reciprocal influence between all identified factors.

H3. There are differences between the gender of respondents (Albarracin & Shavitt, 2017; Franco & Hawkins, 2021) regarding the influence of factors on the expressed decision to choose a study programme.

H4. Based on the opinion of Pinaraswati (2020), psychological factors have a more significant influence on the process of changing attitudes and decisions of students regarding the choice of study programme, compared to other considered factors.

In the current research, we used a mixed method approach including survey factorial analysis to explore the degree to which physical, psychological, social, and virtual stimuli impact students' university preference. The survey used a sample of 828 students from high schools and universities in Romania, and the survey was carried out via the Internet. The survey included a set of questions to determine the weighting of the different stimuli offered and to gauge how these stimuli affected the dimensions to join any one of the offered college programmes. Using stratified sampling, a report from the Ministry of Education and Research (2020) shows that during the period of the 2019-2020 academic year, a total of 543,299 students were placed in higher education institutions in Romania, of whom 407, 373 were registered in bachelor's courses, 111,251 in master's courses, 21,976 in PHD courses and 2,696 postdoctoral courses.

Process initiation is based on the sample size formula on study (1) (Cătoiu et al., 1999).

$$n_e = \frac{t^2 \cdot p(1-p)}{\Delta \omega^2} \tag{1}$$

where:

n - sample size

t - probability of guaranteeing the result
p - probability of possessing the characteristic
Δw - maximum accepted error
We arrived at the following calculation:

$$n_e = \frac{1,96^2 \cdot 0,5(1-0,5)}{\pm 0,034^2} = 830 \tag{2}$$

In line with the being inclusive of the survey computation on final sample size taking into account the number of students (N) as Ocang et al. (2020) explained as divulged by the Ministry of Education and Research (2020):

$$\eta_f = \frac{N \cdot n_e}{N + \eta e} => \eta_f = \frac{543299 \cdot 830}{543299 + 830} = 828 \tag{3}$$

We used SPSS and SmartPLS to analyse the data collected from the 828 respondents. For the research, a questionnaire was constructed that contained questions with all the variables of the Howard-Sheth model. However, for this analysis, we focused, as shown in Table 1, on the factors that can influence the conative dimension of attitude.

We built four blocks of variables that influence attitude. The variables in these blocks are represented by stimuli on decision-making behaviour. On the one hand, there are significant stimuli that influence the decision in terms of the material conditions of products/services, and, on the other hand, symbolic stimuli with immaterial influence related to the psychological representation of the product/service. Another block of variables, social stimuli, represents influences shaped by society and its members. Lastly, a block was built from the influences in the virtual world, namely friends present on social networks and groups to which respondents may belong, including people whom they do not know.

The document in which the questionnaire was placed was made in Google Forms so that it can easily be distributed to the respondents. It was distributed to the target group of potential students, including graduating class high school attendees, undergraduate and postgraduate students in their last years. This distribution started on the 10th of February 2021 and was mostly via email. The questionnaire was circulated immediately after contacting high schools and faculties of universities in the country's regions. The cut-off date for this particular activity was on 20th June 2021.

Table 1. Description of Variables

Latent variable	Item Codification	Item	Conceptual description	Operational description
Physical Factors	QP	Order the following factors in ascending order (assigning numbers from 1 - very unimportant, to 5 - very important) that would influence your choice of a specific faculty, considering the material aspects of each element.	Quality of programme	1 - very unimportant; 2 - unimportant; 3 - medium; 4 - important; - 5 very important
	AP		Availability of programme	
	DisP		Distinctive elements	
	PP		Price of programme	
	SP		Services of programme	

Latent variable	Item Codification	Item	Conceptual description	Operational description
Psychological Factors	**Qp**	Order the following factors in ascending order (assigning numbers from 1 - very unimportant, to 5 - very important) that would influence your choice of a specific faculty, considering the immaterial, psychological aspects of each element:	Quality of programme	1 - very unimportant; 2 - unimportant; 3 - medium; 4 - important; - 5 very important
	Ap		Availability of programme	
	Disp		Distinctive elements	
	Pp		Price of programme	
	Sp		Services of programme	
Social Factors	**SC**	Rank in ascending order (assigning numbers from 1 - the least, to 3 - the most), the social factors that would influence you to choose a particular faculty:	Social Class	1- Least important 2 - Moderately important 3 - Most important
	FAM		Family	
	RG		Reference group	
Virtual Factors	**VirFr**	If more of your friends on social networks were to recommend a particular faculty, you would be in:	Social media friends	1 - Strongly Inclined Against 2 - Inclined Against 3 - Neutral 4 - Inclined Towards 5 - Strongly Inclined Towards
	VirGr	To what extent do you consider the information on social media groups regarding university admissions?	Online groups of friends	1 - Not at all 2 - Slightly 3 - Moderately 4 - Very much 5 - Extremely
Conative attitude	**CA**	At the moment, how determined are you to attend the courses of a particular faculty?	Conative Attitude	a. Very determined b. Not determined at all c. Not sure

Source: Own work

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS INTERPRETATION

Research objective 1. For the first research objective, it was necessary to determine which of the factors under scrutiny has the least significance in a hypothetical conative dimension determination model. For this reason, two indicators were used, Outer Weights and Outer Loadings to quantify the role of each variable in its composition and, accordingly, to evaluate the relative significance of the factors within the framework of the model. As Table 2 and Figure 5 shows, a lot of analytical variables that are below limits of acceptability in a potential model have also been noted. RG (Reference Group) and VirGr (Online Friends Group) have the highest Index of External Loadings among the indicators, highlighting the lower contribution of the indicators to the latent variable. As even for Outer Loadings indicator of metric RG (Reference Group) has weightableness that is significant (weight of 0.742), means that, does more fit into latent variables of VFG than all other indicators. The coefficients of negative sign show that such indicators are negatively related to the latent factor. The analysis shows that Hypothesis H1 can be disregarded because the factor belonging to the Virtual Factors block is the weakest on dimensions contributing.

Table 2. Loadings and External Weights of Model Variables

	Outer loadings			Outer weights
AP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.712		AP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.311
Ap <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.729		Ap <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.253
CA <- CONATIVE ATTITUDE	1.000		CA <- CONATIVE ATTITUDE	1.000
DisP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.638		DisP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.274
Disp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.699		Disp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.275
Fam <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.282		Fam <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.137
PP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.020		PP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	-0.282
Pp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.129		Pp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	-0.179
QP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.676		QP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.292
Qp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.608		Qp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.233
RG <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.899		RG <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.742
SC <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.675		SC <- SOCIAL FACTORS	0.435
SP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.840		SP <- PHYSICAL FACTORS	0.490
Sp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.905		Sp <- PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS	0.558
VirFr <- VIRTUAL FACTORS	0.354		VirFr <- VIRTUAL FACTORS	-0.090
VirGr <- VIRTUAL FACTORS	0.997		VirGr <- VIRTUAL FACTORS	1.035

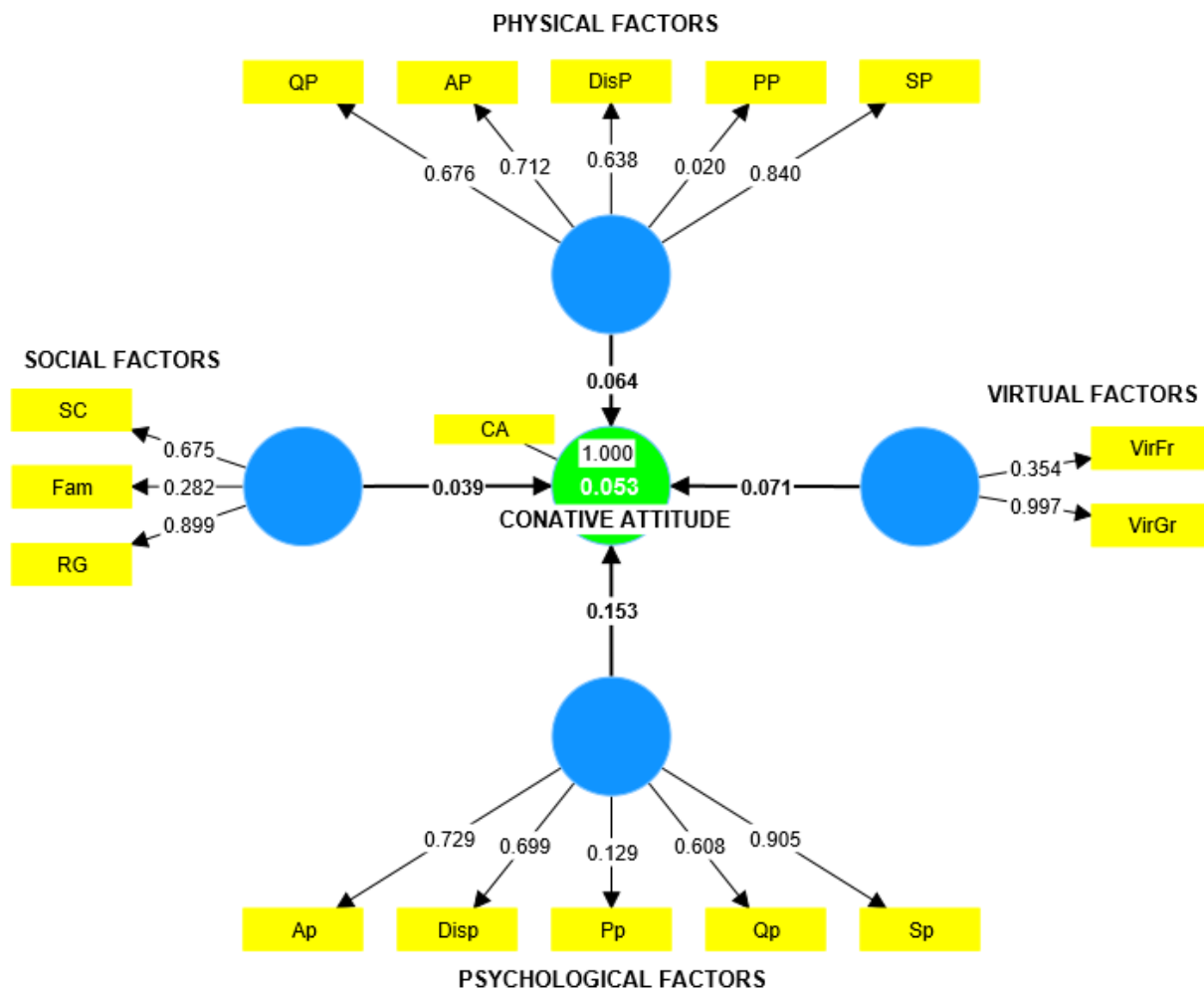*Source:* Own research – generated with SmartPLS

Figure 5. Factor- Conative Attitude Model
Source: Own work – generated with SmartPLS

Research objective 2. The Pearson correlation analysis carried out in relation to the information contained in Table 3 so as to understand the relationships between the variables. It should be noted that not always the case of linear dependence expresses the highest correlation coefficient of 0.807, this is found between variables QP and QP. Numerous factors can be taken into account to explain the strong correlation; these include the satisfaction of students towards their educational experience or even the infrastructure employed by the learning institutions or the courses offered themselves. On the other hand, the lowest coefficient of correlation also on an absolute scale is 0.003, this being the case for variables SP and SC. This weak correlation suggests that although good services are provided, certain expectations may never be met. Part of the hypothesis performs well and it is only in respect to the variables CA and PP which are those that record negative coefficients with the highest values. Therefore, reasoned that the relation between these variables is, as negative as it is hence the reason why hypothesis H2 is rejected! It can be explained based on the empirical data that precede the statement of hypothesis H2: positive correlations between qualities CA and PP are devoid of real ground.

Table 3. Correlation Coefficient between Variables

Correlations

	CA	QP	PP	DisP	SP	AP	Qp	Pp	Disp	Sp	Ap	Fam	RG	SC	VirFr	VirGr
CA	1	.098**	-.095**	.092**	.165**	.105**	.091**	-.070*	.107**	.217**	.098**	0.009	0.048	0.028	-0.008	.089*
QP	.098**	1	.150**	.341**	.437**	.379**	.807**	.166**	.264**	.361**	.326**	0.039	-0.019	-0.028	0.017	0.006
PP	-.095**	.150**	1	.276**	.197**	.278**	.152**	.782**	.213**	.208**	.231**	0.013	.121**	-0.004	.106**	0.062
DisP	.092**	.341**	.276**	1	.428**	.426**	.301**	.212**	.746**	.402**	.374**	0.034	0.051	-0.056	0.028	0.016
SP	.165**	.437**	.197**	.428**	1	.513**	.468**	.185**	.443**	.756**	.479**	0.048	-0.017	0.002	-0.016	.075*
AP	.105**	.379**	.278**	.426**	.513**	1	.408**	.251**	.381**	.507**	.797**	-0.006	.098**	0.003	-0.031	.092**
Qp	.091**	.807**	.152**	.301**	.468**	.408**	1	.199**	.306**	.420**	.366**	.085*	-0.034	-0.023	0.027	-0.019
Pp	-.070*	.166**	.782**	.212**	.185**	.251**	.199**	1	.252**	.227**	.258**	0.036	.092**	-0.003	.123**	.083*
Disp	.107**	.264**	.213**	.746**	.443**	.381**	.306**	.252**	1	.525**	.415**	0.065	0.054	-.090**	0.034	0.027
Sp	.217**	.361**	.208**	.402**	.756**	.507**	.420**	.227**	.525**	1	.578**	0.057	-0.015	-0.066	-0.026	.095**
Ap	.098**	.326**	.231**	.374**	.479**	.797**	.366**	.258**	.415**	.578**	1	0.01	0.042	-.082*	-.072*	0.063
Fam	0.009	0.039	0.013	0.034	0.048	-0.006	.085*	0.036	0.065	0.057	0.01	1	.157**	0.066	.102**	0.057
RG	0.048	-0.019	.121**	0.051	-0.017	.098**	-0.034	.092**	0.054	-0.015	0.042	.157**	1	.312**	.246**	.252**
SC	0.028	-0.028	-0.004	-0.056	0.002	0.003	-0.023	-0.003	-.090*	-0.066	-.082*	0.066	.312**	1	.251**	.125**
VirFr	-0.008	0.017	.106**	0.028	-0.016	-0.031	0.027	.123**	0.034	-0.026	-.072*	.102**	.246**	.251**	1	.429**
VirGr	.089*	0.006	0.062	0.016	.075*	.092**	-0.019	.083*	0.027	.095**	0.063	0.057	.252**	.125**	.429**	1

Source: Own work – generated by SPSS

Research objective 3. Focusing on the choice of study programme variables, I will examine the gender differences relative to the influencing factors in the choice of study programme: We took the following Dunn's Non-parametric method (Kruskal-Wallis test) as an example where we introduced respondent's gender as a dummy variable. The results provided here suggest p-values, which demonstrate that there is a probability of differences of the genders of respondents as presented in Figure 6.

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of **QP** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.439	Retain the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of **PP** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.01	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of **DisP** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.196	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of **SP** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.087	Retain the null hypothesis.
5	The distribution of **AP** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.283	Retain the null hypothesis.
6	The distribution of **Qp** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.73	Retain the null hypothesis.
7	The distribution of **Pp** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.031	Reject the null hypothesis.
8	The distribution of **Disp** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.011	Reject the null hypothesis.
9	The distribution of **Sp** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.211	Retain the null hypothesis.
10	The distribution of **Ap** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.122	Retain the null hypothesis.
11	The distribution of **Fam** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.008	Reject the null hypothesis.
12	The distribution of **RG** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.515	Retain the null hypothesis.
13	The distribution of **SC** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.887	Retain the null hypothesis.
14	The distribution of **VirFr** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.863	Retain the null hypothesis.
15	The distribution of **VirGr** is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.365	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

Figure 6. Kruskal-Wallis test
Source: Own work - generated with SPSS analysis

It is observed from Figure 6, that the price variable is one of the variables which women and men hold distinctly, that women in turn values. Students draw and appraise the uncommon characteristics of university development programmes in a different manner, the role of families does variate as well. Naturally, our research is rather in a general way to these factors, the reasons can be rather many. For example, among the respondents who expect more security covered by some factors of employment, there will be a person with more environmental effects, who would not consider those factors so important. Therefore, we accept hypothesis H3 on the existence of gender differences. A discussion of the tables indicates that these differences may be due to the presence of more females compared to males.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Respondent Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Your gender is:				
Valid	Female	618	74.6	74.6	74.6
	Male	210	25.4	25.4	100.0
	Total	828	100.0	100.0	

Source: Own work – generated with SPSS

Research objective 4. To achieve this objective, we chose to measure, using factor analysis conducted in SPSS, the communalities, i.e., the values of R^2. Within the measurement procedure, we selected the variable CA (conative attitude) as the variable of interest. We then chose each expression of it one by one, and the results can be observed in Table 5.

With an average of communalities of 0.7824, the variables from the Psychological Factors block have the greatest influence on Conative Attitude, followed by Physical Factors (0.7616), then those from Virtual Factors (0.6251), and finally, with an average of 0.5091, the variables from Social Factors. Therefore, we can confirm Hypothesis H4, which positions psychological factors above others.

Table 5. Communalities for Conative Attitude

Communalities[a]	Initial	Extraction		Communalities[a]	Initial	Extraction		Communalities[a]	Initial	Extraction
QP	1	0.882		QP	1	0.825		QP	1	0.803
PP	1	0.86		PP	1	0.818		PP	1	0.868
DisP	1	0.614		DisP	1	0.758		DisP	1	0.774
SP	1	0.743		SP	1	0.669		SP	1	0.765
AP	1	0.651		AP	1	0.59		AP	1	0.804
Qp	1	0.886		Qp	1	0.84		Qp	1	0.809
Pp	1	0.868		Pp	1	0.807		Pp	1	0.869
Disp	1	0.72		Disp	1	0.718		Disp	1	0.892
Sp	1	0.729		Sp	1	0.721		Sp	1	0.767
Ap	1	0.655		Ap	1	0.594		Ap	1	0.861
Fam	1	0.257		Fam	1	0.392		Fam	1	0.909
RG	1	0.623		RG	1	0.302		RG	1	0.528
SC	1	0.532		SC	1	0.333		SC	1	0.706
VirFr	1	0.521		VirFr	1	0.727		VirFr	1	0.719
VirGr	1	0.279		VirGr	1	0.699		VirGr	1	0.806
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.				Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.		
a. Only cases for which CA = Very determined are used in the analysis phase.				a. Only cases for which CA = Not sure are used in the analysis phase.				a. Only cases for which CA = Not determined at all are used in the analysis phase.		

Source: Own work – generated with SPSS

This hierarchy of influences can provide guidance for the development of strategies and interventions by university management, and Figure 7 provides an overview of the balance of forces among the factors that modify the conative dimension of attitude.
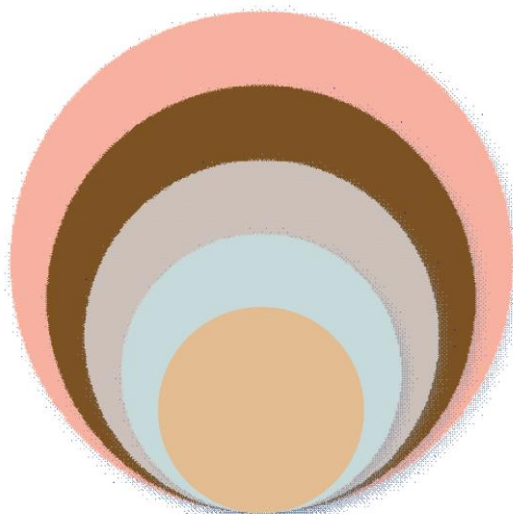

Figure 7. Model – Factors influencing attitude
Source: Own work - generated with Microsoft Visio

5. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study show that students take into account several factors when choosing a university rather than considering one factor as the most crucial, although they may rank them. But social stimuli when it has been observed are social class (SC), family (FAM) and a reference group (RG), are found to be less of a concern as compared to psychological, physical and virtual stimuli. Academic programmes, research opportunities, and university reputation emerged as some of the economic characteristics influencing student preference. In the end, factors such as the availability of social support, social gatherings, and the presence of a social community were among the least influencing factors in the choice of university for contemporary generation students.

Therefore, to the extent that outsourcing activities such as course ware development and faculty and administrative manpower constitutes management initiatives that have certain effects on student retention, this area will be examined in the remaining chapters. Strategies have been developed and continue to be applied, to the context of education, proper inquiry will be instituted whose outcomes may depend heavily on the variables and the hypotheses outlined in this thesis.

However, it is now evident that low performing schools are incapable of maintaining the same pace with the rest of the world, and therefore all nations, including the United States, face constant changes and challenges from globalisation and the economy. What actions could the educational institutions take to develop courses, infrastructures, and other elements related to the educational experience, keeping in perspective the powerful connections among the factors influencing learner life satisfaction within the learning process.

Moving to the conclusions regarding weaker correlations, emphasis indications that such services require people to be eluded, changes, or learnt such as changing services in place to comply with the pacific conditions of the students. On a positive note some insights into the effectiveness of changes that have been made are also provided.

Implications of the findings pertaining to gender difference design a novel channel in this case, that out of the findings will go outside marketing involved in promotional communications. In parallel, this may involve changing marketing strategies for higher education institutions and corresponding adjustments in how prospective students' expectations are met.

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