

# FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION OF STUDENTS' CHOICE TO THAI NGUYEN UNIVERSITY

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## Abstract

*Choosing a university is an important decision for everyone's life. This paper aims to determine factors affecting students' choice to Thai Nguyen University. With a sample of 189 students, the research shows that six factors affecting students choice to Thai Nguyen University: the individual students themselves, opinions of their families, friends, teachers; factors of media, characteristics of the university, opportunities for higher study in the future and factors of job opportunities in the future. In which, factors of job opportunities in the future, characteristics of universities and media, factors are the most important factors affecting the decision of the students' choice to Thai Nguyen University. These are also factors that Thai Nguyen University needs to pay more attention to in attracting learners.*

*Keywords: Decision to choose a university, influencing factor, Thai Nguyen University*

## INTRODUCTION

After 12 years of schooling, many young people stand on the threshold of life and force each of them to find a direction, a path that is most suitable for them. Some choose to go to university, some choose to go to vocational training, some choose to work as well. Up to now, no one dares to affirm which path is better, which is suitable for each person's maturity.

As a regional university, Thai Nguyen University plays an important role in training human resources and transferring technology to the northern mountainous and midland provinces. However, in recent years, Thai Nguyen University often does not enroll enough students according to the quota [9] The main reason is that Thai Nguyen University is fiercely competitive by universities in Hanoi as well as Northern provinces. So, what are the factors affecting the decision to choose a university? Why did students of Thai Nguyen University choose to study here but not in another school? Answering these questions will help Thai Nguyen University to find solutions to overcome the poor enrollment in the past period.

## THEORETICAL BASIS AND RESEARCH MODEL

The decision to choose a university is an important decision in every person's life. Because it will affect the learners' future career orientation. The lack of orientation has resulted in many university graduates are unable to find jobs or have to be retrained when recruited.

D.W.Chapman (1981) [2] proposed a general model of student university choice. Based on descriptive statistics, he showed that there are two groups of factors that influence a student's decision to choose a university. Firstly, the characteristics of the family and the individual student. Secondly, some external factors influence specifically such as the university's constant characteristics and the university's communication efforts with students.

Following the research results of D.W. Chapman, Cabera and La Nasa (2000) [1] studied a 3-stage model of students' university selection, Cabera and La Nasa emphasized that future job expectations of students are also an important group of factors that influence a student's decision to choose a college.

MJ Burn (2006) [5] who applied the results from Chapman's studies to a specific university in the US, confirmed that the relationship between groups of factors influencing the student's decision to choose a university, these are: geographical location, facilities, fees and policies, reputation, industry attractiveness, media, personal characteristics.

In Vietnam, Tran Van Qui, Cao Hao Thi (2009) [8] - Polytechnic University, VNU - Ho Chi Minh City researched the topic: "Factors affecting the students' decision to choose a university ". The results showed that 6 factors positively affect a student's decision to take the college entrance exam: (1) The orientation of a student's relatives; (2) Characteristics of the university; (3) The relevance of the majors to the student's ability; (4) A student's future learning opportunities at a university; (5) Employment rate; (6) The communication endeavor of a university.

Luu Ngoc Liem (2010) [6] - Lac Hong University - also conducted a study to "Identify factors affecting the decision of students choice to Lac Hong university" through 2 basic groups of factors which are the factor of the individual students themselves and the factor of the university's characteristics.

From the above studies, the author summarizes the research results of factors affecting the decision to choose a university:

**Table 1. Synthesize factors influencing the decision to choose a university**

Authors	Group of Factors
David W. Chapman (1981); Van Pelt, Allison (2007)	Parent / student demographics.
Hossler và Gallagher (1987) [4]	Student character (active, passive).
David W. Chapman (1981); Hossler và Gallagher (1987)	Group of external influencers: counselors/instructors, teachers, parents. The school environment, facilities, operations, brands.
David W. Chapman (1981); Hidayat, R., Sinuhaji, E., & Widyaningrum, M. (2018); Chang, H. (2016)	Tuition fees, scholarships, study costs.
David W. Chapman (1981), M. J. Burn (2006)	Geographical location, facilities, fees and policies, reputation, industry attractiveness, media, personal characteristics.
Hossler và Gallagher (1987), Cabrera và La Nasa (2000)	Socio-economic status, positive attitude toward education, academic achievement, parents' attitude. Information of universities, parental education status. Characteristics and quality of the university.
Trần Văn Quý, Cao Hào Thi (2009)	The orientation of students' relatives on entrance exams to a university; Characteristics of the university; Relevance of the majors to the student's ability; A student's future learning opportunities at a university; Employment rate; The communication endeavor of a university.
Luu Ngoc Liem (2010)	the individual students themselves and the factor of the university's characteristics.

*Source: Synthesis of the author*

From researching the university selection models, also referring to some previous studies along with in-depth interviews with 20 students of Thai Nguyen University, the research model is built as follows:

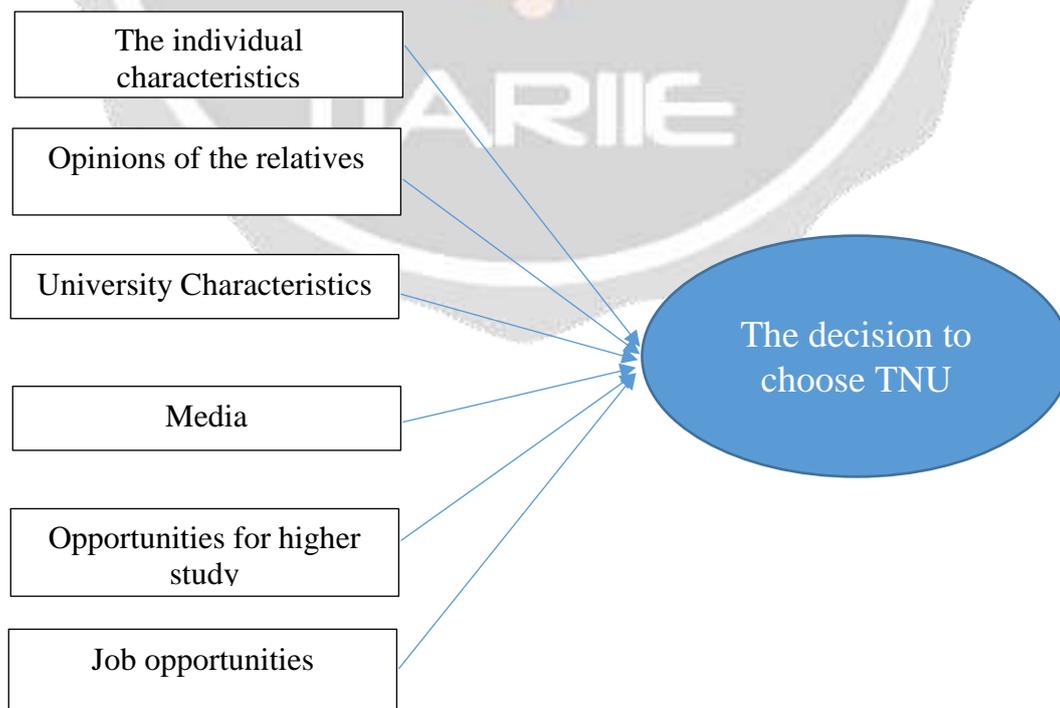


Figure 1. Research model

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Sample description

In September 2020, the authors' team used a convenient method that directly interviewed and emailed Thai Nguyen University students. The survey process collected 189 [3] satisfactory questionnaires used as data for the content to be studied in this analysis.

**Table 2. Sample description statistics**

Sample size (N = 189)		Number	Percentage (%)
Geographical location	Thái Nguyên	104	55
	Other Province	85	45
Thai Nguyen University students	TUEBA	39	21
	TUMP	15	8
	TNUS	22	12
	ICTU	32	17
	TNUT	35	19
	TNUE	15	8
	TUAF	17	9
	Others	14	7
Year	First year	148	78
	Second-year	12	6
	Third-year	14	7
	Fourth-year	15	8
Average family income/month (VND)	Under 10 million	128	68
	From 10 to 20 million	44	23
	From 20 to 40 million	13	7
	Over 40 million	4	2

*Source: Summary of the authors*

**Research Procedures**

Based on the research model of Nguyen Dinh Tho and Nguyen Thi Mai Trang (2007) [7], the authors propose the following research model:

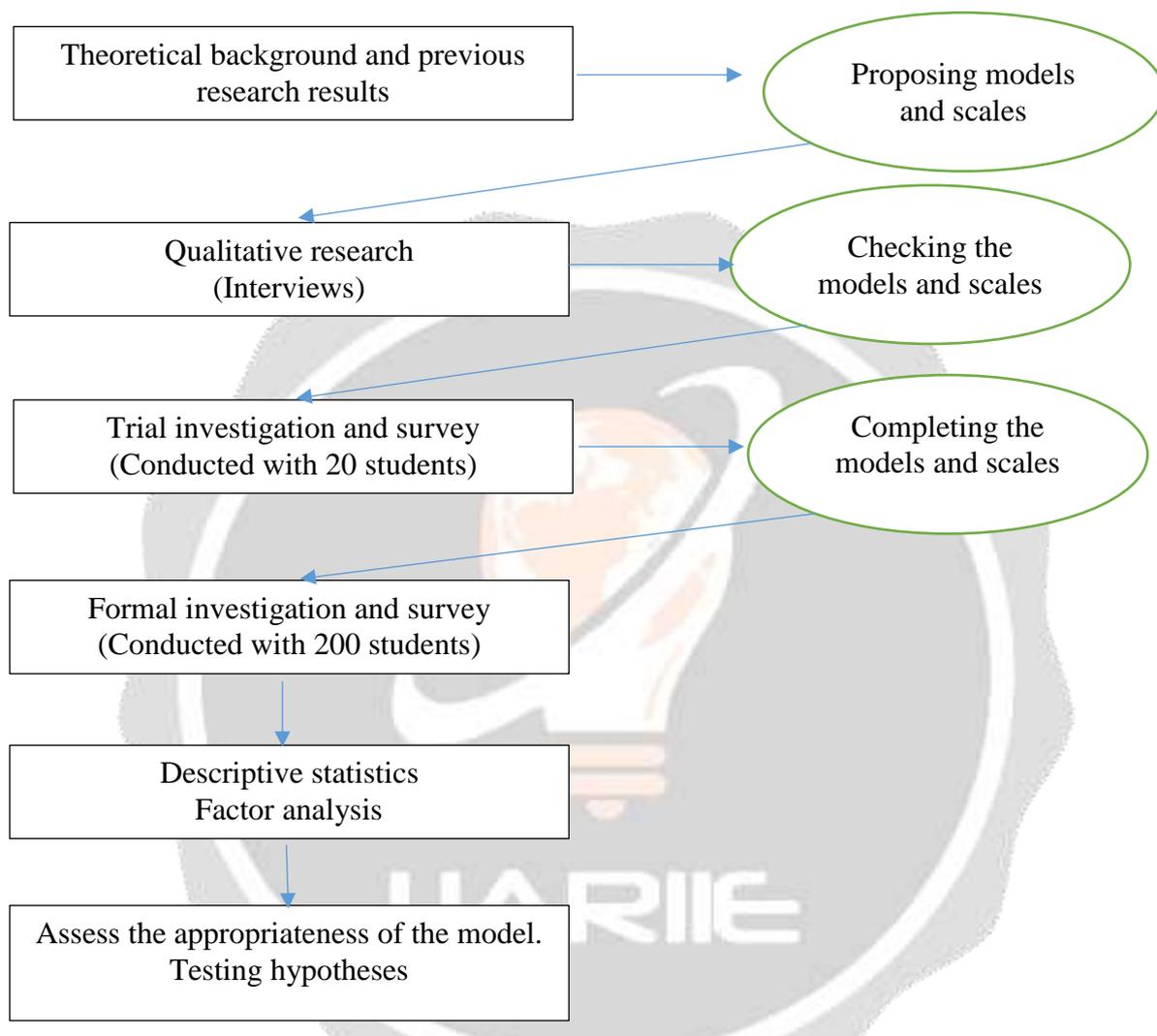


Figure 2. Research process  
 Source: Nguyen Dinh Tho, Nguyen Thi Mai Trang, 2007

**RESEARCH RESULTS**

**Table 3. The significance level of the scale**

Score	Level of significance
1 – 1.8	Disagree
1.8 – 2.6	Disagree
2.6 – 3.4	Neutral
3.4 – 4.2	Agree
4.2 – 5	Agree

Source: Authors

**Table 4. Factors affecting students' decision to choose Thai Nguyen University**

No	Các nhân tố	Điểm TB
<b>1</b>	<b>The learners themselves</b>	<b>3.65</b>
1.1	Personal capacity	3.55
1.2	Personal preference	3.75
<b>2</b>	<b>Opinions of the relatives</b>	<b>3.20</b>
2.1	Family	3.5
2.2	Friends	2.9
2.3	Teachers	3.2
<b>3</b>	<b>University Characteristics</b>	<b>3.90</b>
3.1	The scholarships and supportive policies	3.6
3.2	Good facilities	3.6
3.3	The school's popularity and prestige	3.5
3.4	Enrollment rate	3.4
3.5	Admission score	3.6
3.6	Priority score	3.5
3.7	Diverse disciplines	4.6
3.8	The major is being interested in society	4.5
3.9	Location	4.4
3.10	Study cost	4.3
<b>4</b>	<b>Media</b>	<b>3.70</b>
4.1	Always organize cultural and sport activities	3.7
4.2	The attractive enrollment counseling program	3.6
4.3	Introduction on the mass media	3.7
4.4	Provide information completely	3.8
<b>5</b>	<b>Study opportunities</b>	<b>3.68</b>
5.1	Opportunity to exchange students and study higher	4.03
5.2	Research environment	3.33
<b>6</b>	<b>Job opportunities</b>	<b>4.53</b>

6.1	Employment rate	4.82
6.2	Rate of high income	4.24

*Source: Calculations of the authors*

According to the survey results, the research team found that there are many issues that Thai Nguyen University students are interested in choosing their university.

### CONCLUSION

6 factors are affecting the decision of students to choose schools with decreasing influence: (1) Future job opportunities, (2) University characteristics, (3) Media, (4) Study opportunities, (5) Learners themselves, and (6) Opinions of relatives.

In which, factors: job opportunities, university characteristics, and media factors are considered to be the factors that have the greatest influence on students' decisions to choose universities, especially employment factor. Thus, whether the quality of university gradulators meets the needs of society or not is a key issue affecting the enrollment results of universities. Therefore, improving the quality of training is vital to all universities.

University characteristics are a factor that significantly affects students' decisions to choose schools. Most of the students studying in Thai Nguyen live around Thai Nguyen province as well as children of low-income families. This is an important feature that helps determine exactly who needs to be attracted or the university's communication activities should focus on these people. Among the components of university character factors, diverse disciplines, social interests, location, and cost are the most influential factors. Thus, it can be said that, with the characteristics of a multi-disciplinary university, Thai Nguyen University has very advantages in attracting learners. However, learners quickly grasp the trends of the society, so only the fields that are interested in society are more likely to be chosen by more people.

The media factor is also a factor that influences students' decisions to choose a university. Besides, the university provides complete and attractive information for high school students, it also needs to regularly organize cultural and artistic activities to attract the attention of the majority of people as well as students. These activities help promote more clearly the image of the university to interested audiences.

Also, there are influential factors at a not too large level such as the opinion of family, friends, teachers, or factors belonging to the individual student. However, it does not mean that the school should ignore these factors because each factor will have certain effects. Thai Nguyen University needs to come up with suitable policies, coordinate all available resources to attract maximum students to participate in studying and researching at the university.

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