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PRICE, LOCATION, AND SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING IN STUDENTS' CHOICE OF PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN BANDUNG

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the associations of price, location, and social media marketing with students' decision to choose private universities with "Very Good" accreditation in Bandung City. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted using a structured four-point Likert questionnaire and purposive sampling. The analytical sample comprised 132 students from four universities: Universitas Islam Nusantara (30), Universitas Bale Bandung (31), Universitas Informatika dan Bisnis Indonesia (37), and Universitas Langlangbuana (34). The final regression model included 19 retained questionnaire items across the four constructs Price ($B = 0.314$, $\beta = 0.389$, $p < 0.001$), Location ($B = 0.260$, $\beta = 0.291$, $p < 0.001$), and Social Media Marketing ($B = 0.145$, $\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.049$) were positively associated with the decision-to-choose construct. The regression model was significant, $F(3, 128) = 34.398$, $p < 0.001$, with $R^2 = 0.446$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$. The three predictors explained 44.6% of the observed variance ($R^2 = 0.446$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$), with a large overall model effect size ($f^2 = 0.806$). Because the study uses cross-sectional data and purposive sampling, the findings are interpreted as associations rather than causal effects. The study contributes empirical evidence by integrating financial, accessibility, and digital-communication dimensions within a single model of university-choice evaluation in the studied institutional context.

Keywords: price; location; social media marketing; students' choice; higher education

INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions play an important role in developing human resources and supporting economic and social development. At the same time, the expansion of private higher education has intensified competition for prospective students, making student recruitment an important managerial challenge (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023). Universities therefore need to understand the factors that students consider when comparing alternative institutions.

University choice can be viewed as a decision process in which students evaluate alternatives according to perceived benefits, costs, accessibility, and institutional characteristics (Pujianto et al., 2024). Price represents the financial sacrifice associated with tuition and other educational costs, while location represents the practical accessibility of the campus. Social media marketing adds

a digital communication dimension through which universities provide information, interact with prospective students, and present institutional attributes.

Price may matter because students and families compare educational costs with expected academic and career benefits. Previous studies reported positive relationships between tuition affordability, pricing strategies, and students' decisions when selecting private higher education institutions (Asri & Susanto, 2023; Karamang et al., 2024). Location may also shape evaluation because accessibility affects travel time, transportation costs, and convenience, and previous research has linked campus location with university-selection decisions (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023; Pardiyono & Puspita, 2022).

Social media marketing extends university communication beyond conventional promotional channels. Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube enable institutions to disseminate information, interact with audiences, and display academic programs, facilities, student activities, and achievements. Recent studies reported positive relationships between social media marketing and students' interest or intention to choose higher education institutions (Adam et al., 2025; Dwivedi, 2024; Harun & Widjaja, 2025; Sriyanto et al., 2024).

Although prior studies have examined tuition, campus accessibility, and digital communication in higher-education choice, they have often emphasized these dimensions separately or used different outcome constructs. The present study addresses this empirical integration gap by examining financial evaluation (price), physical accessibility (location), and digital communication (social media marketing) simultaneously within a single regression model. The rationale is that university choice is a multi-attribute evaluation: students may assess the financial sacrifice associated with an institution, the practical convenience of attending it, and the information and reassurance obtained through digital channels. Examining the three dimensions jointly therefore provides a more integrated empirical test of university-choice evaluation than considering each attribute in isolation. The study is intentionally framed as an association test rather than a causal test because the data are cross-sectional.

The outcome construct is defined consistently as students' decision to

choose a higher education institution. The study does not treat interest, intention, enrollment, and decision as interchangeable outcomes. Given the cross-sectional design, the study uses association-oriented language and does not infer that the predictors cause university choice.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Price

Price refers to tuition fees and other educational costs perceived by students. Educational costs are often considered together with expected benefits such as academic quality, facilities, and future career opportunities. Students may therefore compare the financial burden of alternative universities with the value they expect to receive (Asri & Susanto, 2023; Karamang et al., 2024).

Karamang et al. (2024) reported that price was related to students' decisions when selecting private universities, while Pujianto et al. (2024) identified pricing as an important marketing consideration in higher education selection. These findings support the expectation that more favorable perceptions of educational costs are associated with stronger decision-to-choose evaluations.

H1: Price is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.

Location

Location represents the accessibility and physical characteristics of a university campus. Relevant considerations include transportation access, travel convenience, the surrounding environment, and other physical attributes that can affect the practical experience of attending a university. Accessibility may reduce travel time and transportation costs and can therefore influence students' evaluation of alternatives (Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023).

Previous research reported positive relationships between campus location and university-selection decisions. Pardiyono and Puspita (2022) found that location was associated with students' decisions to enroll in private universities, while Karamang et al. (2024) identified location as one of the factors considered during comparison among higher education institutions.

H2: Location is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.

Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing concerns the use of digital platforms to provide information, communicate with audiences, and promote an institution. University social-media content can present academic programs, campus facilities, scholarships, student activities, and achievements while allowing prospective students to interact with institutional accounts.

Recent studies suggest that social media marketing can be associated with students' interest or intention to choose higher education institutions by increasing institutional visibility, facilitating communication, and supporting perceptions of credibility (Adam et al., 2025; Dwivedi, 2024; Harun & Widjaja, 2025; Sriyanto et al., 2024). These findings provide the basis for expecting a positive association between social media marketing and the decision-to-choose construct.

H3: Social media marketing is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.

Decision To Choose Higher Education

The decision to choose a university represents students' evaluation of available alternatives and their confidence in selecting an institution that meets their educational needs. In this study, the construct is measured through items concerning students' evaluation of their university choice, including perceived fit with educational needs, information seeking, comparison of alternatives, and confidence in the choice.

The three predictors represent complementary dimensions of the choice pr. Price captures financial evaluation, location captures accessibility and convenience, and social media marketing captures digital information and communication. Examining them together provides a more integrated view of the factors associated with students' university-choice decisions within the setting studied.

Research Framework

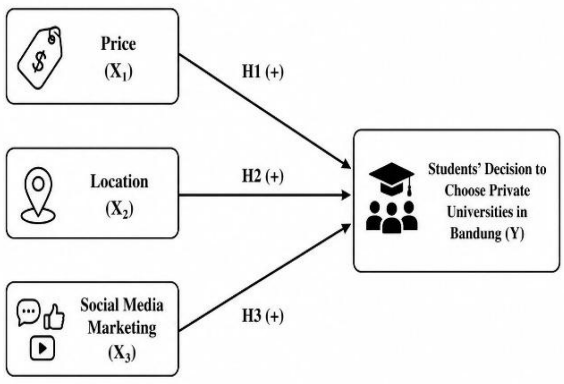

Figure 1. Research Framework

Price (X_1), Location (X_2), and Social Media Marketing (X_3) are specified as independent variables associated with

Students' Decision to Choose Higher Education (Y).

Figure 1 shows the proposed research framework linking Price (X_1), Location (X_2), and Social Media Marketing (X_3) to Students' Decision to Choose Private Universities in Bandung (Y). Price represents students' perceptions of tuition affordability and the educational value associated with the costs. Location represents campus accessibility, transportation convenience, travel considerations, and the surrounding environment. Social Media Marketing represents the effectiveness of university social media in providing information, communicating with prospective students, and presenting institutional activities and achievements. The framework proposes three positive relationships: H1 between Price and the decision to choose, H2 between Location and the decision to choose, and H3 between Social Media Marketing and the decision to choose.

Research Hypotheses

The hypotheses are formulated from the preceding literature review and are tested individually using partial t-tests. No separate hypothesis is formulated for the simultaneous F-test because that test evaluates the regression model as a whole; it is not a fourth predictor hypothesis.

H1: Price is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.
H2: Location is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.
H3: Social media marketing is positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design to examine associations among price, location, social media marketing, and students' decision to choose a higher education institution. Multiple linear regression was selected because the model contains three predictors and one outcome construct and permits estimation of each predictor's conditional association while the other predictors are held statistically constant. Because the design is observational and cross-sectional, the regression results are interpreted as associations rather than causal effects.

The analytical sample comprised 132 respondents: 30 students from Universitas Islam Nusantara (UNINUS), 31 from Universitas Bale Bandung

(UNIBBA), 37 from Universitas Informatika dan Bisnis Indonesia (UNIBI), and 34 from Universitas Langlangbuana (UNLA). Purposive sampling was used to recruit currently enrolled students who belonged to the study population and had made a university-choice decision for their present institution. Recruitment was conducted through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The sample of 132 exceeds the commonly cited Green (1991) regression heuristic of $N \geq 50 + 8m$; with three predictors, that heuristic gives a minimum of 74 observations. This comparison is presented only as a post-collection adequacy check, not as a substitute for a priori power analysis. The supplied study materials do not document a prospective power calculation, so the absence of such a calculation is retained as a methodological limitation.

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. Respondents evaluated statements on a four-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree. The instrument initially contained four Price items, six Location items, five Social Media Marketing items, and five Decision to Choose items, plus three non-modeled Reputation/Quality/Image items. During data preparation, one raw response recorded as "Option 4" was coded as the fourth Likert category (4 = strongly agree) because the questionnaire uses four response categories. Corrected item-total analysis showed that Location item X2.2 did not meet the prespecified criterion ($r = 0.170$, $p = 0.051$); it was therefore excluded from the Location composite. The final modeled dataset contained 19 retained items across the four constructs.

Table 1. Construct Operationalization and Literature Basis

Construct	Operational focus in this study	Literature basis used in the manuscript
Price (X_1)	Affordability and perceived fit between educational cost and educational value.	Asri & Susanto (2023); Karamang et al. (2024); Pujianto et al. (2024)
Location (X_2)	Accessibility, transportation convenience, campus environment and related physical convenience; five items retained after excluding X2.2.	Masnawati & Darmawan (2023); Pardiyono & Puspita (2022); Karamang et al. (2024)
Social Media Marke	Information delivery, communicatio	Adam et al. (2025); Dwivedi

ting (X_3)	n, promotion, visibility and digital engagement.	(2024); Harun & Widjaja (2025)
Decision to Choose (Y)	Evaluation and confidence in selecting the current higher-education institution.	Pujianto et al. (2024); conceptual synthesis in the present study

Price measures perceived affordability and the fit between educational cost and perceived educational value. Location measures transportation access, ease of reaching the campus, parking adequacy, campus space and facilities, the surrounding environment, and the presence of other campuses in the area. Social Media Marketing measures the perceived effectiveness of university social-media activity in delivering information, communicating with audiences, and promoting institutional offerings. Decision to Choose measures respondents' reported evaluation and confidence regarding their choice of the current institution. These operational definitions are aligned with the conceptual dimensions discussed in the cited higher-education marketing literature, while the available source file does not provide sufficient documentation to attribute individual questionnaire items to particular publications.

Item-level validity was assessed using corrected Pearson product–moment item-total correlations, and internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The corrected item-total criterion used in the source analysis was $r > 0.171$ with $p < 0.05$. Location item X2.2 yielded $r = 0.170$ ($p = 0.051$), so it was excluded from the Location composite. The remaining retained items met the stated criterion.

The hypotheses were tested using multiple linear regression reconstructed directly from the 132-response questionnaire dataset after the documented data-cleaning step. The final construct scores used four Price items, five retained Location items, five Social Media Marketing items, and five Decision to Choose items.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The analytical sample consisted of 132 students from four private universities in Bandung City that met the study's accreditation criterion. The distribution was 30 respondents from UNINUS, 31 from UNIBBA, 37 from UNIBI, and 34 from UNLA.

The respondents were already enrolled students who evaluated their university choice retrospectively. This unit of analysis is appropriate for describing students' reported decision evaluations, but it also creates a potential retrospective-bias concern because the original choice occurred before the survey. The four-university clustering should likewise be considered when interpreting generalizability.

Validity Test

Pearson product–moment correlations were used for the reported item-validity assessment. With 132 observations, the manuscript reports an r-table value of 0.171, and an item was treated as valid when its r-count exceeded 0.171 and its significance value was below 0.05.

Table 2. Validity Test Results for Price Variable (X_1)

Item	r-value	r-table	Sig.	Result
X1.1	0.610	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X1.2	0.615	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X1.3	0.651	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X1.4	0.371	0.171	<0.001	Valid

All four Price items exceeded the reported r-table criterion and had significance values below 0.05. They therefore met the item-validity criterion used in the source analysis.

Table 3. Validity Test Results for Location Variable (X_2)

Item	r-count	r-table	Sig.	Result
X2.1	0.264	0.171	0.002	Valid
X2.2	0.170	0.171	0.051	Excluded
X2.3	0.609	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X2.4	0.568	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X2.5	0.572	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X2.6	0.199	0.171	0.022	Valid

Five of the six Location items exceeded the reported r-table criterion and had significance values below 0.05. Location item X2.2 fell slightly below the criterion ($r = 0.170$, $p = 0.051$) and was excluded from the Location composite.

Table 4. Validity Test Results for Social Media Marketing Variable (X_3)

Item	r-count	r-table	Sig.	Result
X3.1	0.772	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X3.2	0.748	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X3.3	0.716	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X3.4	0.687	0.171	<0.001	Valid
X3.5	0.740	0.171	<0.001	Valid

All five Social Media Marketing items exceeded the reported r-table criterion and had significance values below 0.05. They therefore met the item-validity criterion used in the source analysis.

Table 5. Validity Test Results for Decision to Choose Higher Education Variable (Y)

Item	r-count	r-table	Sig.	Result
Y1	0.413	0.171	<0.001	Valid
Y2	0.471	0.171	<0.001	Valid
Y3	0.302	0.171	<0.001	Valid
Y4	0.600	0.171	<0.001	Valid
Y5	0.561	0.171	<0.001	Valid

All five Decision to Choose items exceeded the reported r-table criterion

and had significance values below 0.05. They therefore met the item-validity criterion used in the source analysis.

Validity Interpretation

Overall, 19 of the 20 modeled questionnaire items met the stated corrected item-total criterion. Location item X2.2 was the only exception and was excluded from the composite score. Item-total correlations provide evidence of item-level performance rather than a complete assessment of construct validity. The KMO and Bartlett diagnostics support factorability, but no original EFA/CFA output, average-variance-extracted measure, or discriminant-validity statistic is available; this limitation is therefore reported explicitly. The validity results were checked against the 132-response questionnaire dataset.

Reliability Test

Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The source analysis used 0.60 as the minimum criterion for reliability. Although higher thresholds are commonly preferred for established scales, the 0.60 criterion was retained because it was the threshold specified in the original analysis. All four modeled constructs exceeded this threshold.

Table 6. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard	Result
Price (X_1)	0.753	>0.60	Reliable
Location (X_2)	0.681	>0.60	Reliable
Social Media Marketing (X_3)	0.887	>0.60	Reliable
Decision to Choose (Y)	0.699	>0.60	Reliable

Cronbach's alpha was 0.699 for Decision to Choose, 0.753 for Price, 0.681 for the five-item retained Location scale, and 0.887 for Social Media Marketing. The three-item Reputation/Quality/Image block, which was not included in the regression model, had $\alpha = 0.852$. The retained scales therefore showed acceptable internal consistency under the criterion used in the source analysis, although the Location scale remains comparatively lower than the Social Media Marketing scale.

Classical Assumption Test

The regression diagnostics assessed residual normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. These checks were used to evaluate whether the reported multiple linear regression model met the assumptions examined in the study.

Normality Test

Residual normality was assessed using the Shapiro–Wilk test. The test did not indicate a statistically significant departure from normality (W = 0.990, p = 0.444).

Multicollinearity Test

Multicollinearity was assessed using tolerance and variance inflation (VIF). The decision criteria were tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10.

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Result
Price (X_1)	0.740	1.352	No Serious Multicollinearity
Location (X_2)	0.763	1.311	No Serious Multicollinearity
Social Media Marketing (X_3)	0.656	1.524	No Serious Multicollinearity

Tolerance values were 0.740 for Price, 0.763 for Location, and 0.656 for Social Media Marketing; corresponding VIF values were 1.352, 1.311, and 1.524. All values met the stated criteria, indicating no problematic multicollinearity among the three predictors.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Heteroscedasticity was assessed using the Breusch–Pagan test. The test did not indicate statistically significant heteroscedasticity (LM = 5.185, p = 0.159; F = 1.745, p = 0.161).

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to estimate the conditional associations of Price (X_1), Location (X_2), and Social Media Marketing (X_3) with the Decision to Choose construct (Y). The estimated model was $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + e$. Unstandardized B coefficients are interpreted on the original measurement scale, while standardized β coefficients are used to compare predictor magnitudes within the fitted sample.

Table 8. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Predictor	B (95% CI)	β
Constant	1.017 [0.593, 1.441]	—
Price	0.314 [0.192, 0.436]	0.389
Location	0.260 [0.127, 0.393]	0.291
Social Media Marketing	0.145 [0.000, 0.289]	0.161

Using the 132 questionnaire responses and the retained five-item Location composite, the estimated regression equation was $Y = 1.017 + 0.314X_1 + 0.260X_2 + 0.145X_3$. Price had B = 0.314 (t = 5.091, p < 0.001), Location had B = 0.260 (t = 3.863, p < 0.001), and Social Media Marketing had B = 0.145 (t = 1.984, p = 0.049). The 95% confidence intervals were 0.192–0.436 for Price, 0.127–0.393 for Location, and 0.000–

0.289 for Social Media Marketing. Standardized coefficients calculated from the same dataset were β = 0.389 for Price, β = 0.291 for Location, and β = 0.161 for Social Media Marketing.

The standardized coefficients provide the appropriate common-scale comparison of predictor magnitudes. Price had the largest standardized coefficient (β = 0.389), followed by Location (β = 0.291) and Social Media Marketing (β = 0.161). This ranking is descriptive of the fitted sample and is not interpreted as causal importance.

Hypothesis Testing: Partial Test (T-Test)

The partial t-tests assessed whether each predictor was statistically associated with the Decision to Choose construct after controlling for the other predictors. A significance level of 0.05 was used.

Price was positively associated with Decision to Choose, supporting H1 (B = 0.314, β = 0.389, t = 5.091, p < 0.001; 95% CI [0.192, 0.436]). This is consistent with studies indicating that students evaluate tuition and educational value when comparing private universities (Asri & Susanto, 2023; Karamang et al., 2024; Pujianto et al., 2024). A plausible mechanism is the evaluation of financial sacrifice relative to perceived educational benefits.

Location was positively associated with Decision to Choose, supporting H2 (B = 0.260, β = 0.291, t = 3.863, p < 0.001; 95% CI [0.127, 0.393]). This is consistent with research emphasizing accessibility and campus convenience in private-university selection (Karamang et al., 2024; Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023; Pardiyono & Puspita, 2022). The finding is based on the five-item retained Location composite after exclusion of X2.2.

Social Media Marketing was positively associated with Decision to Choose, supporting H3 (B = 0.145, β = 0.161, t = 1.984, p = 0.049; 95% CI [0.000, 0.289]). This is consistent with recent higher-education marketing research linking social-media activity with institutional visibility, communication, credibility, and student consideration (Adam et al., 2025; Dwivedi, 2024; Harun & Widjaja, 2025).

Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

The simultaneous F-test assessed whether the regression model containing Price, Location, and Social Media Marketing was statistically significant as a whole. It is a model-level test and is not

treated as a separate hypothesis because the study formulates only H1–H3.

Table 9. Simultaneous Test (F-test) Results

F-value	Sig.	Result
34.398	<0.001	Significant

The model produced F(3, 128) = 34.398, $p < 0.001$, indicating that Price, Location, and Social Media Marketing were jointly associated with Decision to Choose. This is a model-level test and is not treated as a separate hypothesis.

Coefficient Of Determination (R^2)

Table 10. Coefficient of Determination Results

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.668	0.446	0.433

The model had $R^2 = 0.446$ and adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$. Thus, the three predictors accounted for 44.6% of observed variance in Decision to Choose. The model-level f^2 was 0.806. These statistics describe explanatory performance in the observed sample and do not establish causality. Under conventional Cohen-style benchmarks, the model-level f^2 represents a large effect size.

Discussion

Price was positively associated with students' decision to choose a higher education institution, supporting H1. The standardized coefficient was the largest among the three predictors ($\beta = 0.389$). Indicating the largest standardized coefficient among the three predictors in the fitted sample. This finding is consistent with prior work suggesting that students evaluate tuition and other educational costs together with perceived educational benefits when comparing private universities (Asri & Susanto, 2023; Karamang et al., 2024; Pujianto et al., 2024). A plausible mechanism is an evaluative trade-off between financial sacrifice and perceived educational value. Importantly, the cross-sectional design supports an association interpretation rather than evidence that changing tuition would necessarily cause a change in university choice.

Location was positively associated with Decision to Choose, supporting H2 ($B = 0.260$, $\beta = 0.291$, $t = 3.863$, $p < 0.001$). This result is consistent with research emphasizing accessibility and campus convenience in private-university selection (Karamang et al., 2024; Masnawati & Darmawan, 2023; Pardiyono & Puspita, 2022). The finding suggests that students' evaluations may incorporate practical considerations such as transportation access, travel

convenience, parking, campus environment, and other location-related attributes. Because one Location item did not meet the corrected item-total criterion, the interpretation is based on the five-item retained composite.

Social Media Marketing was positively associated with the decision-to-choose construct, supporting H3. The association was statistically significant but comparatively modest ($\beta = 0.161$, $p = 0.049$). This is consistent with recent higher-education marketing research linking social-media activity with institutional visibility, communication, credibility, and student consideration (Adam et al., 2025; Dwivedi, 2024; Harun & Widjaja, 2025). The mechanism is plausibly informational and relational: digital channels allow students to inspect programs, facilities, student activities, scholarships, and institutional achievements. Its smaller standardized coefficient indicates a weaker relative association than Price and Location in this fit sample, not that digital communication is unimportant.

The joint model explained 44.6% of observed variance, with $f^2 = 0.806$. The remaining 55.4% was outside the model, indicating that university choice may also reflect institutional reputation, service quality, accreditation, brand image, scholarships, family influence, academic program fit, and career expectations.

The standardized coefficients permit an evidence-based comparison: Price had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.389$), followed by Location ($\beta = 0.291$) and Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.161$). This ranking is descriptive of the fitted sample and does not imply causal influence.

CONCLUSION

This study found positive and statistically significant associations between Price, Location, Social Media Marketing, and students' decision to choose private higher education institutions within the studied Bandung context. The partial tests supported H1, H2, and H3, while the overall regression model was statistically significant, $F(3, 128) = 34.398$, $p < 0.001$. The model explained 44.6% of observed variance in the decision-to-choose construct ($R^2 = 0.446$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.433$). Price had the largest standardized coefficient ($\beta = 0.389$), followed by Location ($\beta = 0.291$) and Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.161$). This ordering describes the relative standardized coefficients observed in the fitted sample and should not be

interpreted as evidence of causal importance.

The study contributes by integrating three different dimensions of higher-education choice evaluation—financial, physical, and digital—within a single empirical model. Rather than treating the Bandung setting itself as the main novelty, the contribution is the joint examination of these complementary dimensions and the demonstration that each retains a statistically significant positive association when the other two are considered simultaneously. The contribution remains context-specific and should not be generalized beyond comparable populations without further evidence.

Several methodological limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample was purposively recruited and the supplied study materials do not document a priori power analysis; the Green (1991) heuristic is therefore reported only as a post-collection adequacy check. Second, the data are cross-sectional and self-reported, so causal inference is not warranted. Third, respondents were already enrolled and consequently assessed a past university-choice process retrospectively, creating possible recall and retrospective-consistency bias. Fourth, respondents were distributed across four institutions, but the available analysis does not model institutional clustering or test institution-specific effects. Fifth, the available research file contains item-total correlations but no factor-analysis output or item-level source map, limiting the evidence for construct dimensionality and discriminant validity. Finally, the supplied materials do not document a separate pilot test or a formal ethics-approval record; these reporting gaps should be addressed from the original study records if such documentation exists.

Future research should address these limitations directly. Prospective studies should determine sample size before data collection using an explicit power analysis and should report the population frame and recruitment flow. Where feasible, researchers should recruit prospective applicants before enrollment or use longitudinal designs to reduce retrospective bias. Larger samples should permit multi-group or multilevel analysis across institutions and should test whether the observed associations vary by university type or institutional characteristics. Measurement development should include item-level

source mapping, pilot testing, exploratory or confirmatory factor analysis, and explicit convergent and discriminant-validity assessment. Future models can then examine theoretically justified extensions such as institutional reputation, service quality, accreditation, brand image, scholarships, family influence, academic program fit, and career expectations.

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