Factors Influencing High School Students' Enrollment Intention In National Universities

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Abstract: This paper examines the factors influencing high school students' enrollment intention in National Universities. A conceptual model was constructed and tested using a quantitative research technique. The data was collected using an online questionnaire from 230 high school students in Egypt aware of the National Universities and analyzed using SPSS software. This research's findings proved a positive weak relationship between Student-related factors and students' enrollment intention in National Universities. It was also found that there is a positive moderate relationship between University-related factors and students' enrollment intention in Egyptian National Universities. There is a positive relationship between Student Social Surroundings factors and students' enrollment intention in National Universities. Accordingly, various recommendations are proposed by the authors for the policymakers and the managers of National Universities to increase their efforts in spreading awareness about this new type of university.

Introduction

As the youth population in Egypt is largely increasing thus naming Egypt as one of the young countries of Africa as compared to Europe, which is getting to be an old continent, the demand on higher education institutions increases rapidly. Egypt has 3 types of universities which are Public/Governmental universities, Private universities (established by the private sector), and National universities also sometimes called (Community Universities). Previously, the Egyptian education market only included public universities as a source of higher education facilities (Buckner, 2013).

Due to the overcapacity and the limited places available in public universities in Egypt, the government launched private universities by a presidential decree in the 1990s. The issue still remained as the existing universities were not capable of holding the excess demand for higher education. Thus, Egypt had set a plan that illustrates its future vision and strategic plan for 2030. Accordingly, the education sector had taken a part in this vision which is launching new universities to offer higher education to more students and demanders. Thus, the government launched a new type of university which is national universities. National Universities are nonprofit universities that are funded by the government and foreign investors (Egypt 2030, 2022).

Recently, El Baradei (2020) mentioned that Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah El-Sisi implemented four new National (non-profit) universities but for fees in different areas across the governorates of Egypt such as Galala, Ras Sedr, Sharm El Sheikh, New Mansoura, and Alamein. According to the website of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (2023), these universities are non-profit universities that are self-funded as the government does not have sufficient funds to educate all the students for minimal fees. The aim of these new universities is to offer high-quality education for reasonable fees. Accordingly, in these universities, students will pay tuition fees that will be reinvested to cover the university's expenses and the required resource, along with generating funds for other educational projects.

According to Weerasinghe & Fernando (2018), it is important for all universities to identify the factors that influence students' satisfaction in order to compete in the marketplace. The government together with foreign investors had spent a huge budget on these new universities that were founded in the new cities of Egypt as El Alamein, New Mansoura, El-Galala and in Sainai as well as King Salman International University in Sharm El Sheikh and Ras Sedr. Yet the enrollment rate in these new universities is not high as expected. So, there remains the question "What are the factors that attract students to these new national universities in Egypt so that they serve the purpose that they were founded for?" The factors that students look for in these universities to develop the intention to enroll are still unexamined to this day. Thus, the purpose of this research is to examine the factors that affect potential students' intention to enroll in Egyptian National universities.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Through the survey of the literature, the authors came upon papers that handled different influencing factors on students' choice of university. Some of these papers handled internal human factors such as students' abilities and aptitudes or the student's interests, ambitions, and desires. Other papers dealt with peer influences from friends or parental influences from family members who have dreams for their sons and daughters. Moreover, some papers concentrated on University-related factors such as the location and proximity of the university from their residence, the reputation of the university, the university facilities, staff members, or the various programs offered by the university that help students achieve their dream jobs. As such the authors have gone through a multitude of factors that could impact the student's choice of university.

Factors that Influence University Enrolment Intentions

Students are influenced by a lot of factors that affect their enrollment decision into the universities. According to Mehboob *et al*., (2012) and Mustafa et al.,(2018), these factors are categorized in terms of how the student is influenced by them internally within themselves and externally. Hence, the authors have grouped these various factors under 3 major categories which are student-related factors, university-related factors, and student social surroundings. These factors impact the students' decision of which university to enroll in. The student-related factors are relevant to the individual's thoughts, desires, and aptitudes; the university-related factors are concerned with the university itself and the students' social surroundings factors, it consists of the reference groups affecting the students' enrolment choices. Thus, the factors that will be under investigation in this research are student-related factors which involve; the attitude and aspiration of the students, and university-related factors which include cost, programs and courses, academic staff, university administrative staff, facilities, location, reputation and image, and advertising. And finally, students' social surroundings factors which include parents, friends, and teachers.

Student-Related Factors

Higher education has gained the importance in the current time compared to the past. People now perceive that involving in the whole education process will guarantee a bright future. Marks and Al Ali (2018); and Ali and Jalal (2018), stated that education now is an essential requirement to get well employed. It is seen as a gate to a white-collar job and belonging to at least a middle class living. Therefore, student related factors that influence students' choices to reach the success they desire, and this factor is derived from the self-concept theory.

According to Gest *et al*. (2008), self-concept theory refers to the beliefs of a person about their own self. These beliefs of who they are can be in the physical, emotional, or spiritual states. The self-concept is built around the knowledge a person collects about themselves from who they are and what they want for themselves. It is made up of one's self-esteem, self-image, self-efficacy, and self-awareness (McLeod, 2008). Self-esteem is the attitude the person holds towards themselves that can be either positive or negative. Bong & Clark, (1999) stated that self-image is how a person views themselves, but it does not have to be the reality of how the person is. Self-efficacy is the person's judgment of their own abilities. Self-awareness reflects one's conscious awareness of their behaviors, feelings, and traits (Cherry, 2018).

Self-concept among students includes social interaction. An example of this social interaction is the new group of close friends that they will form

during their university experience which could trigger many positive sensations in the student's emotional being such as increased confidence, feeling of acceptance, or reaching one's full potential. Another social aspect would include feeling honored to be a part of a given entity; or being proud to graduate from the university and carry its ethics and morals along with the students that go through life acknowledging where they graduated from (Eldegwy *et al*., 2018).

Student-related factors are factors that affect the students' motive to engage in higher education learning. They reflect the internal student goals and objectives for going to a university. Mehboob *et al*., (2012) and Jafari & Aliesmaili (2013), agreed that the student-related factors include 3 sub-factors which are aspiration, aptitude, and career.

The first factor is aspiration, according to Wagner & Fard (2009) aspiration is the passion of wanting to know more about a certain field. It is an important factor that affects the student in choosing the institution that will lead them to reach their goal. It also concentrates on the hopes and desires that students aspire to reach in their future as a result of attending certain universities and majors. Hussin *et al*., (2019), Nazidin *et al*., (2013), and Wagner & Fard (2009) stated that passion is one of the main influences that drive students to choose the field of study they want in the university. They also emphasized that it highly impacts the achievement and success of the student's learning process. Mehboob *et al.,* (2012), mentioned that the academic aspirations of students in the field they want to pursue affect the students' choice of attending the entity. Moreover, Ilgan *et al*. (2018), discussed that students who do not choose their field of study based on their passion feel as if they are not satisfied with what they will study and become pessimistic through the educational process.

The second factor is the students' aptitude which is defined as the students' capabilities of learning and acquiring the information studied at the university. So, it is linked with the difficulties of the learning process at the university and whether the student is capable of handling it. Jain (2014) and Mehboob *et al* (2012), stated that aptitude is one of the main factors that affect the students' choice of the university as they are aware of their capabilities will match the institution's or not.

Lastly, career is considered a very important factor that students look for when they are looking for a university to enroll in. This aspect has to do with any motivation that is related to the student's future career prospects.

Career is mainly the employment opportunities that the students will gain due to enrolling in a certain university. According to Mehboob *et al.*, (2012), employment opportunities are a significant factor that students look for when developing the intention to enroll in any university. They look at this factor because they want to pursue a certain job level that will lead them to live in the middle- or high-class level and achieve their goals in life.

According to Hussin *et al.* (2019), there is a relationship between the student-related factors and the student's enrollment intention. Each of the factors has an impact on the student to either intend to enroll in the university or not. Firstly, it was stated that aspiration has a strong influence on the student's choice of the university. This is because of how the passion for a certain field attracts them to the university. As the students look for a specific field that they are passionate about and they find it in a specific university, their enrollment intention increases. Secondly, aptitude also influences the enrollment intention of the students. Jain (2014) stated that the students are highly affected by their own educational abilities. The students tend to enroll in universities that match their own educational capabilities along with their high school grades that are required. In addition, Kurlaender (2006), interpreted that prior academic achievement is a significant factor in choosing the type of institution. Lastly, Mehboob *et al.* (2012), mentioned that careers significantly affect the enrollment intention of the students. This is because of how the students are concerned about their future job after graduating from the university. They evaluate whether this university will guarantee them a better future and salary or not. The enrollment intention of students increases when the university's graduates' employment rate increases. Accordingly, the authors hypothesized that there is a relationship between student-related factors and high school students' intention to enroll in universities.

H1: Student-related factors influence high school students' intention to enroll in National Universities.

University-Related Factors

There are various factors that universities apply to influence the students' choice to which institution to enroll in. This is because higher education entities now face very high competition since the education market is increasing. Hence, universities boost their competitive advantage to attract more enrollment by using and highlighting these factors. Managers try to

understand their customers (students) perspective of what are the main elements that are important for them in the university they want to enroll in and accentuate it to increase their likability (Krezel & Krezel, 2017). Thus, these requirements are grouped under university-related factors.

The university-related factors are associated with the university itself and under its control. According to Mehboob *et al*., (2012), these factors contribute to the marketing efforts that the university does to attract students. These factors include the characteristics of the university itself. University-related factors include 10 sub-factors which are customer perceived value, programs/courses, entrance exams, facilities, student life programs, location, reputation/image, promotions through advertisements, perceived quality of academic staff, and university administrative staff.

Customer (Student) Perceived Value (CPV)

Customer perceived value is the judgment of benefits compared to the cost that will be endured to obtain the service/ product (Chang & Dibb, 2012). The CPV differs across students according to the weights of the benefits from their own perspective. Rudhumbu *et al*. (2017) stated that students look at the tuition fees of the university and compare it with the value they will acquire in return. According to Alves (2010), students look for the benefits they will be rewarded with compared to what they will sacrifice in return and influence their decision based on their perceived value. As costs are considered and evaluated by students along with their parents because many of these students take their funds from them, it is a strong factor that influences their enrollment intention in the entity (Mehboob *et al.*, 2012).

According to Mehboob *et al.* (2012), the household income level impacts the intention to enroll in the university too. It determines whether these households will be able to cover the cost of the university that the student wants to enroll in or face financial difficulties because of it.

Programs & Courses

When it comes to choosing which university to enroll in, it could depend on the majors they offer and whether they excel in the majors a student is interested in (Marginson, 2016). Thus, Students always look for universities that have a wide range of faculties and courses offered. Lien *et al*., (2015), said that universities should provide students with highly qualified faculties and majors to meet their areas of interest. Moreover, students search for a university that has faculties that give them a greater added value compared to other universities. Not only the faculties but also the courses that will be given

to the students must contain content that will be beneficial for them and add to their knowledge (Hussin *et al*., 2019).

Entrance Exams

According to Gulluce *et al*. (2016) Students' approval in universities can be in different ways of evaluations. In some universities, the acceptance of students in their institution is based on passing certain exams and success in these university exams. These exams are known as entrance exams; they are provided by the university to the students before their enrollment to test if their capabilities will match the requirements of the university or not. According to Ilgan *et al*. (2018), the university's entrance exam reflects the university's education level and the student's educational abilities. Hence, these exams were found to be one of the main bases upon which students form their enrollment intention. They usually take the entrance exam and then decide which program actually fits the score that they achieved in it.

Facilities

Facilities is a major factor that universities and students take into consideration. Agrey & Lampadan (2014); James-MacEachern & Yun, (2017), agreed that the facilities of the university are considered as the university's infrastructure that students put into account and evaluate. Moreover, it helps in facilitating the operations of the organization. It also reflects the quality of university facilities. Students judge the facilities of the university in means of the availability and the quality of classrooms, library, cafeterias, laboratories, computer labs, counseling office, and transportation, in addition to the social areas and hostel facilities.

Student Life Program

Universities offer students an enjoyable social lifestyle along with a qualified education. Student life programs should be in any university since it provides them with the feeling of safety and comfort too. According to Agrey & Lampadan (2014), student life programs include health care services and dorms. Universities should provide dorms in their campus to increase the level of enrollment in the university. This will increase the level of enrollment as it will provide them with places to stay if their homes are far. Students will also experience a different social life that the university offers such as giving them the chance to move out from their parents' home into dorms just to experience their independency (Kember & Hong, 2010). These dorms should have a high cleanliness level and representable furniture. Health care services should be offered too to make these students feel safe that if any emergency

happened there is a doctor available for them to help in the situation. This also will make parents feel secure and that students are safe in the university.

Location

According to Migin *et al*. (2015), it's proven that the location is a factor that has a huge effect on students, especially in a country like Egypt. Location is the geographical aspect of a university. This could be viewed from different perspectives; the first aspect is, how far it is from one's home. In Egypt students live with their parents until they finish their university education and get married thus, they are dependent on their parents who prefer them to live with them rather than being independent and live alone in hostels or in flats next to the university that they enroll in. Moreover, independent living will cost the family more than staying with the parents. The second aspect, however, considers the environmental changes that alter with the change from one geographical place to the other. Both combined, have resulted in enrolment decisions based on how far a person is willing to travel every day to receive education and if the community in that location matches what they are used to.

Reputation/Image

Matherly, (2012); Petruzzellis & Romanazzi, (2010), agreed that image is related to the reputation of the university, and are used interchangeably with associating several diminutions such as academic quality, availability, program, and teaching quality. Moreover, it has an influence in reducing the risk in students' university choices. Moreover, Ming, (2010), stated that the image and reputation of the university are one of the factors that are significantly persuasive and can direct the students' decision to a certain university. Ilgan *et al*., (2018), mentioned that a university that has a very good reputation indicates that it offers high academic quality to the students.

Moreover, Mehboob *et al*., (2012), stated that a university's reputation can either be positive or negative. As the university has a good reputation in the market the students will enroll more. It is seen that when a university has a good reputation its graduates will work immediately. Ilgan *et al*., (2018), added that universities that have good images provide a certificate that the students can rely on. Jain, (2014), and Agrey & Lampaden, (2014), agreed that students value the university reputation and base their enrollment decision accordingly. Therefore, the reputation of the university is an important factor, as students are more likely attracted to enroll in a university that has a good reputation. Students see that the university's reputation must be highly

positive because when it comes to getting a job, organizations look first at the university that this student has attended as it reflects the quality of education the student received (Dunnett *et al*., 2012). Furthermore, Simiyu *et al*., (2019), stated that students search for information about the universities before making any enrollment decisions. A university with a good reputation will have good public relations, high ratings, and will always attract the top performers. A university with a good reputation will always aim not only to influence students' enrollment intentions but also pave the way for graduates to get a better job in big and known companies.

Promotions through Advertisements

As studied by Constantinides & Zinck Stagno, (2011), marketing in general, as a concept, was not openly discussed in the past research when it came to education. It was frowned upon to suggest marketing and promoting educational organization. The viewpoint back then was the fear of promotional activities lowering the perception about the university's quality or authenticity. However, with time, as competition increased, it became rather necessary for universities to promote themselves both nationally and internationally in order to highlight their different competitive advantages.

Universities can use several marketing techniques, tools, and forms of advertisements in order to provide enough sources of information that supports the students' decision-making process such as websites, social media, brochures, media relation, TV and radio advertisements, university fairs, networks, and campus visits. However, it's important for the institution to know how to use these tools for their target segment, in order to fill the gap between the information provided by the university and the information that students need (James-MacEachern & Yun, 2017).

Perceived Quality of Academic Staff

The quality of academic staff refers to the lecturer's ability or knowledge of how to deliver the information in an effective way. It also reflects how to support the students in their academic progress and how to evaluate them. Previous studies have found that the student's perception of the quality of academic staff has a positive influence on students' satisfaction (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2018). Therefore, most of the private universities started to undertake the quality of teaching, as it's a main challenge that they face in competing the public universities (Nazidin *et al*., 2013).

University Administrative Staff

Weerasinghe & Fernando, (2018), showed that studies have found that the administrative staff attitude with students has a significant impact on their satisfaction. Moreover, they referred to the quality of university administrative

staff as the non-academic staff and how they treat or help the students during their study, and their degree of caring, responsiveness, cooperation, and respect to the students.

According to the findings of previous studies, there is a relationship between university related factors and students' enrollment intention in universities. Each of the factor has a different influence on the students' intention. The first factor is the cost, students' enrollment intention depends on whether the costs of this university are affordable and matches the quality it offers to the students. The enrollment intention of students increases when the opportunity cost of enrolling in that university matches the benefits in the eyes of the students (Agrey & lampadan, 2014). Therefore, Hemlet and Marcotte, (2011), stated that there is a negative relationship between the increase of tuition fees and the choice of enrollment. Petruzzellis & Romanazzi, (2010), indicated that "value for money" is an important factor in students' decision-making process. Value is tradeoff benefits students will gain from the university and sacrifices which is the money they will pay. In determining the value, the sacrifice of price, effort, time, risk and trust are considered. There is a relationship between service quality and price. The second factor is programs and courses, Lien *et al*., (2015) concluded that programs and courses affect the students' enrollment intention in the universities. This is because of how the students are concerned with the programs and courses that they will be taking in the university that will increase their knowledge in their desired field. The better the programs and courses offered by the university the more the students intend to enroll in that university. As for the third factor entrance exam, Ilgan *et al.,* (2018), stated that entrance exams affect the students' intention to enroll in a specific university. This is because of the score they acquire after undertaking the university's entrance exam. If the score they got fits the faculty, they desire the intention to enroll increases. The fourth factor is facilities, several researchers found that facilities affect the intention to enroll in the university. The more the facilities of the university the more the students intend to enroll in the university since all their educational equipment is offered (Agrey & Lampadan, 2014). Moreover, James-MacEachern & Yun, (2017), have found that educational facilities are considered the most important pull motive factor, and it has the most significant influence on students' university choice. Others found an insignificant relationship between the quality of facilities and satisfaction (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2018). The fifth factor is student life programs, Agrey & Lampadan, (2014), also found that the student life programs that are offered by the university mildly affect their enrollment intention. As there are dorms and health care services offered by the university the students are motivated more to attend the university since they will have a

place to stay in and an emergency service to go to if they have any medical condition. As for the sixth factor, Ming, (2010), mentioned that location highly impacts the student's intention to enroll. Most students dislike attending a university that is far from their homes and workplaces if they are employed. The seventh factor is the university's reputation, here, the authors have stated that university reputation significantly affects students' enrollment intention. Students want to enroll in a university that has a very positive reputation as this will make them trust and rely on the certificate more after graduation. The more positive the reputation is the higher the students intend to enroll in the university (Ilgan *et al*., 2018; Mehboob *et al*., 2012; Ming, 2010). Lastly, the eighth factor is advertisements, according to Spearman *et al*., (2016), the advertisements and promotional efforts done by the university highly affect the students' enrollment intention. As the students become more aware of information about the university the more, they become more knowledgeable about it; thus, they intend to attend this university even more.

Hence the authors have hypothesized that the university related factors have an influence on the student's enrollment intention in universities.

H2: University-related factors affect the high school students' enrollment intention in National Universities.

Student Social Surrounding Factors

Student social surrounding influence is an important influence that the students face while making the enrollment intention decision. For example, in schools, students influence each other to enroll in universities and study excessively to be accepted. Thus, this is referred to as social motivation. Social motivation in enrollment in universities comes from three important sources which are classmates, teachers, and family members (Kember & Hong, 2010). This influence is explained by the social influence theory.

Social influence theory discusses that people are influenced by the social group that surrounds them. In one's life, there are influences made on oneself through the thoughts and behaviors of other people. An individual takes such influence into consideration while making their decisions to comply and confirm with those who are important to them. These people have a set of influences on the person such as informational influence, normative influence, and identification influence (Goldsmith & Goldsmith, 2011; James-MacEachern & Yun, (2017); Zain *et al*.,2013; Nazidin *et al*., 2013). Accordingly, the reference groups can include parents, peers, and teachers in school.

Parents

According to Lien *et al*., (2015), parents highly influence their children because they provide them with advice and motivation. Not only spiritually, but parents influence their children because they support them financially too. The advice given by parents varies depending on their educational level. Students are affected by the parents who completed their educations more than those who did not. They tend to motivate their children to engage in the higher education process but do not interfere with which field they should study. Krezel & Krezel, (2017) stated that students rely on the parents who finished their education as a reliable source of information as they see them as knowledgeable and will benefit them the most. Therefore, parents affect the enrollment intentions of their children.

According to Eldegwy *et al*. (2023), occupational following theory occurs when students start to follow their parent's footsteps in terms of education and occupation, as we know some children consider their parents' role models. Especially students that graduate to be lawyers, architects, accountants, or physiatrists are more likely to follow their parent's occupational footsteps.

The social influence theory suggests that parents are involved in their children's life choices, and they pass on all the skills, knowledge, and values they have to their children to allow them to reproduce their own social status that their parents transferred to them. When parents have already worked or are familiar with certain careers this helps them to influence their children's choice of programs. Past work experiences and familiar choices are safer and more secure according to the parents (Eldegwy *et al*.,2022).

Eldegwy *et al*., (2023) mentioned that there are two main interrelated mechanisms that parents use to influence their children's career path decisions. The first one is related to the "gene theory" which means that parents transmit their genes to their children affecting a wide range of innate abilities. These abilities which help children to develop personal characteristics that are important in the occupational fields of their parents. The second mechanism that is used in developing the children's personal characteristics is the 10,000-hour rule, which states that children need 10,000 hours of practicing and learning in order to gain a high level of expertise. Parents also transfer job skills to their children by providing them with related job training so they can be more equipped for occupational following in the future.

Peers

According to Krezel & Krezel, (2017), peers highly influence the students' decisions. This is because students listen to the opinion of these peers

about the university and view them as highly credible and reliable to them. These peers can either spread positive or negative word of mouth about the entity. Therefore, it will highly affect their decisions. Ilgan *et al*., (2018), stated that students also tend to even join the university where their friends are to be with them. These students base their decisions based on their friends' decisions.

High School Teachers

According to Lien *et al*., (2015), high school teachers are seen as a source of motivation for students to enroll in a certain university. They tend to influence their decisions because students see them as experts in the field of education, so they consult them (Johnston, 2010). Jafari & Aliesnaili, (2013) stated that these teachers are considered beneficial for universities because they recommend the institutions to the students to enroll in. Therefore, high school teachers affect the students' enrollment decisions.

Referring to previous studies, the authors concluded that there is a relationship between student social surrounding factors and high school students' enrollment intention in universities. Nazidin *et al*., (2013) stated, that parents highly impact the student's intention to enroll in a specific university. This is because students rely financially on them, and they are the source of financial support and university funds. Also, they take their parents' opinions about the university they will apply to especially if that parent is educated. Therefore, parents influence the enrollment decisions of the students (Krezel & Krezel, 2017). As for peers, according to Ilgan *et al.,* (2018), peer influence does not influence the students' enrollment intention. As the students finish high school, they tend to look more for what will benefit their future not where their friends are. As for high school teachers, Jafari & Aliesnaili, (2013), mentioned that high school teachers mildly affect the students' enrollment intention. The students get back to their teachers to take their opinions about the universities since they consider them an expert in the educational field and will highlight to them the most suitable university for them.

Therefore, the authors have concluded that there is a relationship between student social surrounding factors and high school students' enrollment intention in universities. This is due that some students take their university decision based on the influence they are experiencing from their social group.

H3: Social surroundings factors impact the high school students' intention to enroll in National Universities.

High School Student's Enrollment Intention

When the students reach the stage where they transfer from the school to the university, they face complicated decisions in terms of looking for the appropriate university that meets their criteria and preferences. It is concerned as a life-influencing decision since it will impact their whole future. According to Ilgan *et al.*, (2018), students need to choose the right university, faculty, and major as it affects their passion and engagement in the learning process. Those who do not precisely choose their area of study and institution, will fail in achieving success in the university and will fail in gaining the desired future path. According to Nazidin *et al.*, (2013), intention to enroll is defined as the willingness to enroll and attend in a specific university. Students build the intention to enroll in the universities based on their own evaluation of it. The percentage of the intention and willingness to enroll in the university increases due to their acceptance and liking of the overall environment of the university. The intention is affected by several factors as regarded by the students. Accordingly, the importance of these factors in the evaluation process depends on how much attention the student gives to it when they are gathering information about the university and experiencing it before enrolling.

For a student to build their intention to enroll in a university, they go through the decision-making process to reach the decision of enrollment. This process contains several stages which the student passes through to narrow down their choice. Hence, it is important for universities to understand the student's decision-making process, and what influences them in choosing the university. According to Jafari & Aliesmaili, (2013); James-MacEachern & Yun, (2017), the first stage is the need recognition stage or awareness. In this stage, the students realize that they need to enroll in a university or a higher education institution. Then, the second stage is the information search, where the students start gathering information about different universities. The third stage is that these students identify the alternatives of universities and rank them to conduct the enrollment intention. Then, they weigh the universities they saw based on the information they have. After that, they choose the optimal university they find to suit their requirements and conditions. Lastly, they enroll in the university. The decision-making process differs from one student to another according to the influences they face and the situations they go through in that phase.

Methodology

The authors adopted a descriptive conclusive research design to investigate the factors that influence high school students' enrollment intention. The authors started with a thorough review of relevant literature. Then went on to the quantitative part of the research. Next, they concluded their thought in following conceptual model as shown in figure 1.
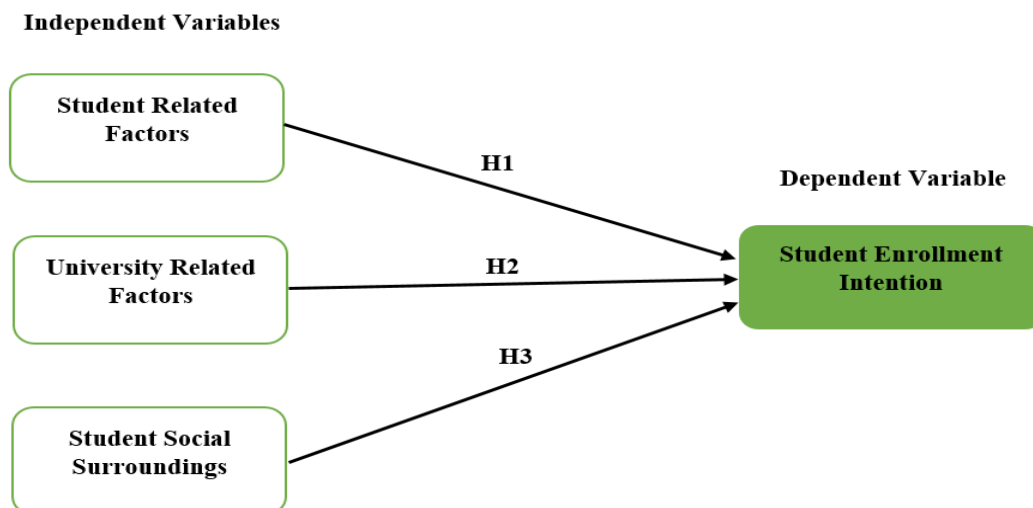
Independent Variables

| Student Related Factors | | | | Dependent Variable |

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Data Collection Tool

As for the quantitative part of the study, the authors prepared a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The authors adapted the statements from previous research. The student-related factors statements were adapted from Lai *et al*., (2012). As for the university-related factors, the statements were extracted from Simiyu *et al*., (2019), Alves (2010), and Bers & Smith (1991). The student social surroundings statements were generated by Insch & Sun (2013) and Lai *et al*., (2012). Meanwhile, the dependent variable enrollment intention statements were adapted from Presley *et al.* (2010) and Padlee & Reimers (2015). The authors yielded 230 questionnaire responses.

Population and sample of the study

The research population targeted are high school students (who are in the 11th or 12th grade of school) and in any school system available in Egypt,

that include the national system Thanaweya Amma or international systems as IGCSE, American High School Diploma, International Bachaloria, German Abitour, and other. Students in the 11th and 12th grade are the targeted population as they are the only individuals currently in the situation of having to assess future universities, they might be attending in the upcoming years to finish their higher education process. The authors had put a filtering question to ensure that all those who answered the questionnaire are part of the targeted population. The authors applied a non-probability judgmental sampling technique as there is no defined population frame. The authors set the questionnaire on line on various WhatsApp groups of high school students in Thanaweya Amma and grades 11 and 12 aiming to collect a sample of 384 answered questionnaires but the number of completed questionnaires collected were 230 as there were several incomplete questionnaires that were disregarded with a response rate of almost 60%, which is sufficient for the statistics that will be undertaken, Spearman test.

Data collection process

The questionnaire was pilot tested to ensure that all questions were clear to the respondents.

After altering any unclear questions based on the results of pilot testing, the researchers then set the questionnaire on various social media platforms as it was the most accessible and convenient to reach high school students. The authors have set the questionnaires on various national and international schools whatsApp groups of Thanaweya Amma and of grade 11 and 12 along with publishing the questionnaire form on high school students Facebook groups and communities. The data collection process time frame was 2 months; and accordingly, 230 questionnaires were collected by the researchers.

The responses were then statistically analyzed by using Statistical Software Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The authors will discuss in depth the statistical outcomes that were obtained after processing it on the SPSS through applying spearman correlation test. For the descriptive analysis of the sample, the authors had collected 230 questionnaires, in which 59.1% were females and 40.9% males. Moreover, 67.8% of the students that have filled the questionnaire were in grade 12 and 32.2% were in grade 11. Accordingly, the majority of the respondents were 12 graders which shows that these students are more concerned with the university they will enroll in as it is a near life changing choice they will make in their educational journey. The data were obtained from students in various school systems, which are 23.5% from national languages section, 20% from national Arabic section,

16.1% from the American system, 30% are IGCSE students, and 10.4% of the students are from other school systems. These percentages ensure that the authors had reached a sample that well represents the target population. Next, the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables of the 3 hypotheses are tested through Spearman Correlation.

Data Analysis

H1: Student related factors influence the intention to enroll in National Universities.

Table 1: Statements Measuring Student Related Factors Influence on High School Student's Enrollment Intentions in a National University

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total	Mean
1.1. My choice of university will depend on whether my preferred majors are available.	2 ≈ (0.9%)	5 ≈ (2.2%)	28 ≈(12.2%)	61 ≈(26.5%)	134 ≈(58.3%)	230	4.394
1.2. Course contents influence the value of my education.	2 ≈ (0.9%)	5 ≈ (2.2%)	54 ≈(23.5%)	78 ≈(33.9%)	91 ≈(39.6%)	230	4.094
1.3. I will choose my major based on my interests.	2 ≈ (0.9%)	2 ≈ (0.9%)	20 ≈ (8.7%)	46 ≈(20.0%)	160 ≈(69.6%)	230	4.568
1.4. Scoring high grades in university is important to me.	4 ≈ (1.7%)	5 ≈ (2.2%)	33 ≈(14.3%)	79 ≈(34.3%)	109 ≈(47.4%)	230	4.232
1.5. The academic experience I will gain throughout the university stage will help me find a job.	3 ≈ (1.3%)	9 ≈ (3.9%)	30 ≈ (13%)	71 ≈(30.9%)	117 ≈(50.9%)	230	4.262

In table 1, The highest mean among the 5 statements that measure the influence of the student related factors on the high school students' enrollment intention is 4.568. This statement with the highest mean emphasizes that the high school students will choose their major based on their interests. On the other hand, the lowest mean is 4.094. this statement indicates that the course contents in the university will affect the value of the student's education, and the minority strongly disagree with such a statement.

Dependent: High School Students' enrollment intention toward National Universities

Table 2: Enrollment Intention: Statements Measuring High School Student's Enrollment Intentions in a National University

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total	Mean
4.1. National universities are the best choice.	12 ≈ (5.2%)	37 ≈ (16.1%)	98 ≈(42.6 %)	48 ≈(20.9 %)	35 ≈(15.2 %)	230	3.248
4.2. I would recommend National universities to other people I know.	8 ≈ (3.5%)	25 ≈ (10.9%)	78 ≈(33.9 %)	62 ≈ (27%)	57 ≈(24.8 %)	230	3.59
4.3. I see a national university as my future university.	32 ≈(13.9 %)	38 ≈ (16.5%)	69 ≈ (30%)	48 ≈(20.9 %)	43 ≈(18.7 %)	230	3.14
4.4. I plan to enroll in a national university.	31 ≈(13.5 %)	33 ≈ (14.3%)	66 ≈(28.7 %)	54 ≈(23.5 %)	46 ≈ (20%)	230	3.222

In Table 2, The highest mean among the 4 statements that measure the high school students' enrollment intention in National Universities is 3.59. This statement shows that the high school students would recommend to other high school students to go and continue their higher education process in a National University. Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 3.14 which shows that students don't see national universities in their future choices.

The grand mean of the dependent is 3.3 which indicates that the majority of the high school students agreed that there are factors that influence their enrollment intention in National Universities in Egypt.

H2: University-related factors affect the high school students' enrollment intention in national universities.

Table 3: University-Related Factors Statements Measuring University Related factors and High School Student's Enrollment Intentions in a National University

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total	Mean
2.1. National Universities offer scholarships.	4 ≈ (1.7%)	16 ≈ (7%)	89 ≈(38.7%)	65 ≈(28.3%)	56 ≈(24.3%)	230	3.665
2.2. When considering the tuition fees of a national university, I believe that the price to quality ratio is reasonable.	8 ≈ (3.5%)	25 ≈ (10.9%)	68 ≈(29.6%)	73 ≈(31.7%)	56 ≈(24.3%)	230	3.624
2.3. I believe that national universities offer sufficient services that are equivalent to the fees I pay.	3 ≈ (1.3%)	15 ≈ (6.5%)	74 ≈(32.2%)	90 ≈(39.1%)	48 ≈(20.9%)	230	3.718
2.4. National universities offer a variety of majors	2 ≈ (0.9%)	12 ≈ (5.2%)	49 ≈(21.3%)	93 ≈(40.4%)	74 ≈(32.2%)	230	3.978
2.5. National universities' entrance exams are not stressful for me.	20 ≈ (8.7%)	42 ≈ (18.3%)	82 ≈(35.7%)	52 ≈(23.5%)	32 ≈(13.9%)	230	3.159
2.6. National universities have advanced facilities (computer labs, classrooms, etc...)	2 ≈ (0.9%)	9 ≈ (3.9%)	57 ≈(24.8%)	87 ≈(37.8%)	75 ≈(32.6%)	230	3.973
2.7. Student activities at national universities will make me perform better.	5 ≈ (2.2%)	6 ≈ (2.6%)	42 ≈(18.3%)	79 ≈(34.3%)	98 ≈(42.6%)	230	4.125

(social, sports, academic, & non-academic activities)						
2.8. I don't mind moving near a National University to finish my studies.	24 ≈(10.4%)	33 ≈(14.3%)	43 ≈(18.7%)	64 ≈(27.8%)	66 ≈(28.7%)	230	3.498
2.9. National universities' location makes me excited to study there.	11 ≈ (4.8%)	34 ≈ (14.8%)	54 ≈(23.5%)	54 ≈(23.5%)	77 ≈(33.5%)	230	3.664
2.10. The reputation of national universities in my chosen major, influences the value of my degree.	6 ≈ (2.6%)	1 ≈ (4.3%)	44 ≈(19.1%)	72 ≈(31.3%)	98 ≈(42.6%)	230	4.0673
2.11. Government support gives national universities more credibility.	2 ≈ (0.9%)	20 ≈ (8.7%)	52 ≈(22.6%)	84 ≈(36.5%)	72 ≈(31.3%)	230	3.886
2.12. The image projected by national universities has an influence on the value of its degree.	6 ≈ (2.6%)	15 ≈ (6.5%)	46 ≈ (20%)	88 ≈(38.3%)	75 ≈(32.6%)	230	3.918
2.13. Media coverage about national universities is very positive.	5 ≈ (2.2%)	18 ≈ (7.8%)	65 ≈(28.3%)	80 ≈(34.8%)	62 ≈(27%)	230	3.769
2.14. Academic staff in national universities are professional.	4 ≈ (1.7%)	7 ≈ (3%)	70 ≈(30.4%)	82 ≈(35.7%)	67 ≈(29.1%)	230	3.872
2.15. I believe the administration staff of national universities are willing to help students.	5 ≈ (2.2%)	7 ≈ (3%)	64 ≈(27.8%)	85 ≈ (37%)	69 ≈ (30%)	230	3.896
2.16. National universities take students' feedback into consideration.	9 ≈ (3.9%)	18 ≈ (7.8%)	83 ≈(36.1%)	63 ≈(27.4%)	57 ≈(24.8%)	230	3.614

In table 3, The statement that got the highest mean was student's activities will make the students perform better, the mean is 4.1125. meanwhile, lowest mean was regarding the entrance exams 3.159.

The grand mean is 3.777 in the university related factors. This shows that the high school students agreed that the university related actors influence their enrollment intention in National Universities in Egypt.

H3: Social surroundings factors impact the high school students' intention to enroll in national universities.

Table 4: Student Social Surroundings Statements Measuring Student Social Surrounding Factors and High School Student's Enrollment Intentions in a National University

Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)	Total	Mean
3.1. My family and acquaintances think highly of national universities.	12 ≈ (5.2%)	30 ≈ (13%)	58 ≈(25.2%)	75 ≈(32.6%)	55 ≈(23.9%)	230	3.567
3.2. I am happy when I have common classes with my friends.	5 ≈ (2.2%)	4 ≈ (1.7%)	21 ≈ (9.1%)	57 ≈(24.8%)	143 ≈ (62.2%)	230	4.311
3.3. The social life in national universities would make it easy to make a lot of friends.	3 ≈ (1.3%)	16 ≈ (7%)	34 ≈(14.8%)	70 ≈(30.4%)	107 ≈ (46.5%)	230	4.138
3.4. National universities are regarded as prestigious institutions by my high school teachers.	11 ≈ (4.8%)	15 ≈ (6.5%)	74 ≈(32.2%)	75 ≈(32.6%)	55 ≈ (23.9%)	230	3.643

The above table indicates that the highest mean among the other statements is 4.311. which indicates that the high school students strongly agreed that they are happy when they have common classes with their friends. Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 3.567 which states that high school students agree that their family and acquaintances think highly of national universities. The Grand mean was (3.9), which indicates that the high school students agreed that the students' social surrounding factors influence their Enrollment Intention in National Universities in Egypt.

Table 5: Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha
Student-Related Factors	.692
High School Student's Enrollment Intentions	.886
University Related Factors	.864
Student Social Surroundings Factor	0.749

Cronbach's Alpha measures the internal consistency of the variable. Therefore, it's used by the authors to test the reliability of the statements. The reliability of the test shows that there is strong reliability. This means that the data collection tool is reliable and consistent. The Cronbach Alpha of the statements that measure the student-related factors is (0.692) approximately (0.7), university-related factors (0.864), and social surrounding factors (0.749). This indicates that all the statements which are used to measure the three variables were reliable. Moreover, the Cronbach Alpha of the statements measuring the dependent variable is (0.886) which indicates that the statements are reliable.

Table 6: Hypotheses Testing Results through Spearman Test

Relationships	Correlation Coefficient	P-value	Decision Supported
H1: Student-related factors influence the intention to enroll in National Universities.	.329	.040	Supported
H2: University-related factors affect the high school students' enrollment intention in National universities.	.579***	.000	Supported
H3: Social surroundings factors impact the high school students'	.569***	.000	Supported

intention to enroll in National universities.

The table shows that there is a positive weak relationship between the independent variable which is the student-related factors and the dependent which is the enrollment intention of high school students. This is seen as the p-value is .040. therefore, H1 is accepted.

Regarding the relationship between the universities' related factors and the high school students' enrollment intention in a National University. The table shows that the p-value is .000. therefore, H2 is supported. The table also shows that there is a positive relationship between the variables. The strength of the relationship is 57.9% which is a moderate relationship indicating that the university-related factor affects the high school students' enrollment intention by 57.9%.

For the relationship between the student social surrounding factors and high school students' enrollment intentions in National universities in Egypt, since the p-value is .000, H3 is accepted. And since it's less than 0.05 this indicates that there is a positive moderate relationship between the independent and dependent variable. While the correlation coefficient is equal to (0.569) which means that the strength of this relationship is moderate, and the students' social surrounding factors influence high school students' enrollment intention in National universities in Egypt.

Conclusion

After reviewing previous research about the factors that influence student enrollment intention, the authors applied our research to National universities in Egypt. The authors classified our research into three variables: student-related factors, university-related factors, and social surrounding factors. The next step was to conduct the questionnaires from high school students to examine how these factors affect their enrollment intention in National universities. The research findings were consistent with the previous research. The data collected for this research was through online questionnaires, the sample size was (230) respondents. It included high school students who only lived in Cairo and are from different school systems like national and international schools.

Therefore, the authors' results show that the student-related factors have a positive weak relationship with student enrollment intention, it's also found that there is a positive moderate relationship between universities-related factors and students' enrollment intention. In the social surrounding factors, the parents and high school teachers positively influence student enrollment intention.

Research Recommendations and Contribution

After analyzing the research findings, the authors would recommend several required actions for National university managers to attract more students to apply there. National University heads should try to include some of the fields of study (programs/majors) that are new in the education sector around the world. Thus, serving student's unique interests.

At the end of the questionnaire there was an open ended question asking respondents to add any opinion or comment about National Universities, many students commented that they have not heard about National universities. And many others commented on the financial incentives would certainly attract them. As such, it is recommended that the university's administration should add financial incentives to further attract higher enrollment and encourage high scores to motivate and appreciate the students who put major efforts into their studies.

Moreover, National universities should focus more on promoting their strength which is that these universities are owned by the government thus making parents and students trust the university more due to the government endorsement, yet they have the advantages of a private university with its smaller numbers of student per class allowing more care and attention to the student. Just like other Higher Education Institutions each tries to develop a competitive advantage so as to differentiate their offer from other higher education institutions (El Sheikh, 2019). Moreover, such universities should adopt the latest technology and teaching techniques to attract students who are after a quality education. Lastly, National universities should conduct awareness campaigns and promote that it is a non-profit private university.

As for students' social surroundings, it is suggested that National Universities should start hosting models and advanced activities that engage students as the Model of United Nations, TEDx, World Health Organization Model, and other student activities and conferences or visit schools and start giving information about themselves like where they are located, what majors do they offer, how they are different from public and private universities, and at the end they can distribute brochures that includes all the information about the university including the website and pictures showing how the university looks like from the outside and inside. Thus, this will attract the students due to the experience they had with these events along with their peers.

Following up with the research contribution, the authors applied different concepts and techniques compared to the previous studies. The authors conducted their study in a developing country and also, in this study the enrollment intention of high school students is tested on a new type of universities that were launched in Egypt in 2020. This new type of university usually exists as a community college but not as a university which

differentiates this paper. Another contribution is that this paper grouped all factors together in specific categorizations. After conducting the questionnaires and taking the responses of these high school students authors found the proposed factors actually do affect the high school students' enrolment intention. Therefore, the authors succeeded in grouping these factors under the 3 categories of student-related factors, university-related factors, and social factors thus giving a comprehensive analysis of various factors that impact students' selection of universities.

Research Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

In this research, the data was collected using an online questionnaire that was set on school WhatsApp groups of schools in Cairo, with a sample size of (230) respondents. It included high school students who only lived in Cairo and are from different school systems like national and international schools. A suggestion for further research would be to apply the model to high school students living in other governorates not only in Cairo especially since the National Universities are not located in Cairo. This may yield different results.

Also, further analysis could investigate if there is a difference between national and international schools in the factors influencing their choice of university. Furthermore, the moderation effect of gender can be measured and investigated. Another suggestion for further research is to investigate the outcome of such universities and to investigate the graduates' opinion of their student experience in National universities.

Furthermore, it is suggested for future studies to handle each of these groups of variables separately in order to investigate the sub factors as to which of them highly impacts students' intention to join a university.

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