

REASONS FOR STUDYING MANAGEMENT: EXPLORING DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GROUPS

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Received: May, 2024

1st Revision: June, 2024

Accepted: June, 2024

ABSTRACT. Background: Comprehending the reasons driving students' choices of study programs is crucial for academic institutions in customizing their offerings and for the broader education sector to synchronize with industry needs and student ambitions. The pursuit of management studies enjoys global popularity and is recognized for its ability to confer a competitive edge across diverse professional domains. **Aims:** This paper aims to identify differences in the reasons to study the study program Management at the Faculty of Management and Business (FMB) at the University of Presov (UP) considering the different characteristics of the students. **Methods:** We use the Mann-Whitney U test to test four hypotheses. We consider gender, nationality, form of the study, and level of the study as group characteristics. **Sample:** The research sample consists of 416 students of the study program Management at the FMB at the UP. **Results:** Results showed the most differences considering the form of study and nationality. **Conclusions:** The differences between the analyzed groups were predominantly confirmed through the rationale considering low travel expenses, the recommendation from family, the recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school, and the modern teaching methods. **Implications:** Understanding these differences can also help educational institutions in designing targeted recruitment strategies and support services for students.

Keywords: management, business, reasons for studying, study choice, university

JEL Classification: A22

DOI: 10.54933/jmbrp-2024-16-1-5

Vašaničová, P., Bukrieiev, I., Kuchárová, S., Chomová, K., & Vagaský, R. (2024). Differences in the Reasons to Study the Study Program of Management. *Journal of Management and Business: Research and Practice*, 12(2). doi: 10.54933/jmbrp-2024-16-1-5

Introduction

Understanding the factors that motivate students to choose specific study programs is essential for academic institutions when tailoring their offerings and for the broader education sector to align with industry demands and student aspirations.

Motivation is a central concern in all sectors of human functioning, including education and career choices. Theoretical constructs explaining human motivation vary significantly across different cultural and contextual backgrounds, affecting students' choices in education and career paths (Sahoo, Sahoo, & Jena, 2019).

According to Kucharcikova et al. (2019), the students themselves are an essential component of the educational process. While many aspects impact students during their academic journey, the most critical one is their drive to learn and develop into competent experts within particular practical demands (Jenčová & Petruška, 2023). To accomplish the desired outcomes during the educational process and to ensure the process's sustainability, students must be motivated to study.

This paper aims to identify differences in the reasons to study the study program Management at the Faculty of Management and Business (FMB) at the University of Presov (UP), considering the different characteristics of the students.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. In the next section, we provide a theoretical background. Next, we present methodology, i.e., research intent, methods and material. The presentation of the results and a discussion follows. The final section summarizes our findings, the limitations of our research, and possibilities for future research.

Theoretical background

There is a wealth of research dedicated to understanding the myriad factors influencing students' choices when selecting a university, shedding light on the complex interplay of personal, academic, and socio-economic considerations. In this theoretical background, we primarily focus on the decision-making processes of management students, while also extending our analysis to include students from various other academic programs.

According to research by Kucharcikova et al. (2019), the desire to improve their chances in the labor market and the potential to earn more money in the future are the two main reasons why people start university studies. The desire only to obtain a university degree, in contrast to the effort to improve one's qualifications, indicates only a cursory interest in the study itself, which means less attention is paid to the taught subject matter and less interest is paid to active participation in the educational process.

Price et al. (2003) carried out quantitative research in England in which they tried to find out what most influences students when choosing a university. The results showed six main factors that influence their choice of university. The first two were the study program and the university's teaching reputation. Other four factors related to infrastructure are computer classrooms, the quality of library infrastructure (books, academic journals, CDs, IT), "quiet learning zones" and "common learning zones" (for group work).

In similar research by Maringe (2006) in collaboration with the Southampton University Partnership Scheme, the highest importance was given to the factors such as study programs, tuition fees, distance from home, transport, living costs, and the ability to combine work with study.

Brown, Varley, and Pal (2009) found that the admission requirement (minimum grades and subject tests) is also a determining factor for students when choosing a university. Participation in well-organized open days and communication with the university are also important.

Al-Rfou (2013) investigated what factors influenced the students of the Technical University of Tafilah when choosing a study program. The study found that parents have a significant influence on their choice, siblings, and friends are also considered to be important, while the teachers and media are the least important among the analyzed factors. The respondents give more importance to future job factors. They agreed that future earnings, career options, occupational prestige, and type of work are the most important factors affecting the decision process.

Studying management is popular worldwide and is known to provide a competitive advantage in a variety of fields. Sahoo, Sahoo, and Jena (2019) examined the motivations associated with management students. They suggest that, in addition to a competitive advantage, studying management may also encourage career switching due to having gained knowledge in this field. The Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) in India surveyed to learn more about the motivation of recent

management graduates. The study was focused on both barriers and motivators. There were 1,078 males and 219 females. There were no significant differences across gender groups. Results showed the important motivational factors were challenging (interesting) content, a personal sense of satisfaction and achievement, planned career development, professional credentials, confidence, occupational transition, international employment opportunity, the prospect of a good job, remaining marketable, financial stability (Sahoo, Sahoo, & Jena, 2019).

A Master of Business Administration (MBA) is an internationally recognized business degree that provides practical preparation for individuals in business and management. An MBA can complement the professional experience. Also, an MBA graduate can earn a better income than his (her) colleague without a degree. The motivators driving students to pursue an MBA are professional development and career and employment opportunities (Turgumbayeva et al., 2023). Currently, there are a variety of professional and personal motivations that drive students to pursue an MBA. When discussing personal motivations for pursuing an MBA degree, common reasons include personal growth and the desire to reach a higher level of achievement. Additionally, reasons like wanting to step outside one's comfort zone and seeking increased self-esteem were also frequently mentioned.

AL-Mutairi and Saeid (2016) investigated the motives and reasons of students who enrolled in an MBA program offered by universities operating in Kuwait. According to the study, students choose the MBA program primarily to address their own needs and advance their knowledge and abilities. In addition, the student's primary information sources were university websites, recommendations from friends, and program alumni and campus visits. The students considered international accreditation as their most important criterion for assessing the MBA programs, followed by faculty reputation, institution reputation, and admission requirements.

Thompson and Gui (2000) argue that the need for advanced skills, knowledge, and career development are among the key factors of students to choose an MBA study. In addition, personal and social benefits, such as the desire to improve social status or to develop personally, may also be considered as motivating factors.

Marks and Edgington (2006) found no difference between men and women related to their motives that are the same, specifically career improvement, career change, and personal development. However, they found that women are more motivated by the desire to improve their careers. Men are more motivated by the desire to change careers and start their businesses. Ng, Burke, and Fiksenbaum (2008) also found that males and females had similar motivators affecting their career choices and both groups placed emphasis on self-development. Most students aspire to careers reflecting a desire for career benefits and becoming wealthy.

Blackburn (2011) indicates literature gives reputation as an important motivating factor. Moreover, job prospects and salary after graduation are given high weightage in MBA evaluation systems. On the contrary, graduate salary is not key for bachelor's degree graduates. Flexible modes of study were ranked as unimportant by bachelor students, but MBA students ranked them among the three most important factors. Another factor is sources of information. Future graduate students were more likely to get advice from faculty members, the Internet, and newspapers. Family or friends did not seem to influence the decision-making process of bachelor students. Researchers have agreed that not all students make fully informed choices when selecting a bachelor's or master's degree.

Ronnie and Wakeling (2015) surveyed 312 students in both full-time and part-time MBA programs to explore their motivation in pursuing an MBA. Findings show that common reasons for undertaking an MBA are business skills acquisition and enhancement, career progression and change, personal development, networking potential, and the prospect of academic stimulation.

Research by Kurmanov, Zhumanova, and Kirichok (2013) suggests that students in Kazakhstan are more interested in pursuing an MBA. According to Kirichok (2013), most students in Kazakhstan choose an MBA because they want to advance in their careers. According to Ryzdewski, Eastman, and Bocchi (2010), when students are choosing an MBA program, availability, quality, program length, cost, and courses are the main factors. Results of the study among students at business schools in Pakistan realized by Saeed and Ehsan (2010) show that the university name is the most valued factor.

Table 1 presents a synthesized overview of the main factors influencing students' decisions to pursue studies related to management and business, derived from multiple research studies.

Table 1. Factors affecting students' decision-making for studying management and business field of studies

Authors	Research sample	Country	Field of study	Factors	Short summary
Blackburn (2011)	76 current MBA students	Australia	MBA Program	Repute, syllabus, quality, facilities, career	The reputation of the university is a key factor. Other important aspects include syllabus, quality of education, facilities, and career prospects.
Alonderiene & Klimaviciene (2013)	224 first-year students	Lithuania	Management and Economics	Personal characteristics, study-related factors, university reputation, city infrastructure, social life, costs	Personal characteristics and study-related factors like career possibilities and study prestige have the biggest influence.
Sabir et al. (2013)	226 undergraduate students	Pakistan	Engineering and Business	University ranking, institutional reputation, employment, career prospects	The career-focused approach leads students to prioritize prominence, price, and program factors.
Abdullah & Saeid (2016)	137 MBA students	Kuwait	MBA Program	Personal satisfaction, improving knowledge and skills, career opportunities, income prospects, enhancing promotional opportunities	Personal satisfaction and skill improvement are the main reasons for selecting an MBA.
Fuller & Delorey (2016)	456 first-year millennial undergraduate students	Canada	Business Programs	Various selection factors including support, sport & recreation, advice, reputation, residence, financial feasibility, student recreation, academic resources	Differences in selection factors between female and male students, and between in-province and out-of-province students.
Kucharcikova et al. (2019)	306 students	Slovakia	Informatics and Management	Better chances in labor market, higher salary, higher qualification	Motivation stems from future job expectations; gender differences in motivation are observed.
Sahoo, Sahoo, & Jena (2019)	273 students	India	Management and Engineering	Need saliency; study motivation; indigenous model	Indian management students are motivated by the prospect of better chances in the labor market, higher salaries, and higher qualifications.

Source: *own processing*.

Methodology

Research Intent

This paper aims to identify differences in the reasons to study the study program Management at the Faculty of Management and Business (FMB) at the University of Presov (UP), considering the different characteristics of the students.

Based on the aim, we formulate four research hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1: There is a statistically significant difference between men and women in at least one reason for studying the study program Management at the FMB UP.
- Hypothesis 2: There is a statistically significant difference between Slovak students and Ukrainian students in at least one reason for studying the study program Management at the FMB UP.
- Hypothesis 3: There is a statistically significant difference between full-time students and part-time students in at least one reason for studying the study program Management at the FMB UP.

- Hypothesis 4: There is a statistically significant difference between students of the first level of the study and students of the second level of the study in at least one reason for studying the study program Management at the FMB UP.

Method

We test the hypotheses using the Mann-Whitney U test. The statistical software Statistica 14 is used to perform the mentioned test and other calculations.

The data were obtained by the questionnaire method of data collection from November 2023 to April 2024. The questionnaire was distributed in printed and electronic form to students of the study program Management at the FMB UP. In addition to the items related to the social and demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, age, nationality, form of the study, level of the study), the main task of the questionnaire was to obtain answers related to the selected statements, while the item in the questionnaire was “For the following items, please indicate your level of agreement with the statement “I decided to study at FMB UP because...”. Specifically, we asked about 22 different items (see Table 3) to which students could answer with the options 1 – I completely disagree, 2 – I rather disagree, 3 – I don’t know, 4 – I rather agree, and 5 – I completely agree.

Material

The research sample consists of 416 students. The distribution of respondents according to the investigated characteristics is in Table 2. Their mean and median age is 22, the standard deviation is 4.719, the youngest student is 17 and the oldest student is 50 years old.

Table 2. Distribution of research sample

Characteristic	Values	Absolute count	Relative count (%)
Gender	Men	134	32.21
	Women	282	67.79
Nationality	Slovak	316	75.96
	Ukrainian	100	24.04
Form of the study	Full time	372	89.42
	Part time	44	10.58
Level of the study	First (Bachelor)	249	59.86
	Second (Master)	167	40.14

Source: *own calculations.*

Results

First, we present descriptive statistics for each item from the questionnaire related to the reasons for studying at FMB UP (see Table 3). According to the mean value of the answers, results show that the most important reasons why students decided to study at FMB UP are that they “want to have a better application on the labor market“ (mean = 4.20), “FMB is in Presov” (mean = 4.16), they “wanted to gain new theoretical knowledge” (mean = 4.06). On the other hand, the least important reasons why students decided to study at FMB UP are that they “received a recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school”, they “received a recommendation from FMB graduates”, and they “received a recommendation from the family”. Considering the variability of the answers, the items “I have low travel expenses”, “I received a recommendation from friends”, and “I received a recommendation from FMB graduates” have the highest variability. On the contrary, items “FMB teachers are highly qualified”, “I want to have a better application in the labor market”, and “FMB has the designation of an excellent research workplace” have the lowest standard deviation.

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of reasons to study at FMB

ID	Item “I decided to study at FMB UP because ...“	Mean	Median	S.D.
1	FMB has a good reputation.	3.50	4	1.062
2	FMB teachers are highly qualified.	3.78	4	0.974
3	FMB teachers have practical experience.	3.68	4	1.025
4	Modern teaching methods are used at FMB.	3.36	4	1.149
5	FMB has modern study spaces.	3.72	4	1.087
6	FMB has engaging promotional materials.	3.35	3	1.056
7	FMB has an interesting presence on social networks.	3.57	4	1.119
8	FMB has the appropriate information on the faculty website.	3.59	4	1.103
9	FMB has the designation of an excellent research workplace.	3.22	3	1.009
10	I wanted to develop my communication skills.	3.71	4	1.152
11	I wanted to develop my critical thinking.	3.83	4	1.109
12	I wanted to get an overview.	3.93	4	1.071
13	I wanted to gain new theoretical knowledge.	4.06	4	1.058
14	I wanted to get new contacts.	3.87	4	1.176
15	I want to have a better application in the labor market.	4.20	4	0.991
16	FMB is located in the city center.	3.93	4	1.164
17	FMB is in Presov.	4.16	5	1.235
18	I have low travel expenses.	2.97	3	1.454
19	I received a recommendation from the family.	2.39	2	1.374
20	I received a recommendation from friends.	2.54	2	1.414
21	I received a recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school.	2.04	2	1.237
22	I received a recommendation from FMB graduates.	2.31	2	1.403

Source: *own calculations.*

Note: *S.D. denotes standard deviation.*

Next, tables 4, 6, 8, and 10 present the results of testing formulated hypotheses conducted through the Mann-Whitney U test.

Results in Table 4 show that differences between men and women were found for five items of the questionnaire (p-values lower than 0.05 are highlighted in bold). We can assess the specific differences considering the mean in Table 5. It follows that the significant items are:

- FMB has an interesting presence on social networks (women agreed more).
- I have low travel expenses (men agreed more).
- I received a recommendation from the family (men agreed more).
- I received a recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school (men agreed more).
- I received a recommendation from FMB graduates (men agreed more).

We confirm hypothesis 1.

Results in Table 6 show that differences between Slovak and Ukrainian students were found for ten items of the questionnaire (p-values lower than 0.05 are highlighted in bold). We can assess the specific differences considering the mean in Table 7. Ukrainian students agreed more considering all of the following significant items:

- FMB has a good reputation.
- FMB teachers are highly qualified.
- Modern teaching methods are used at FMB.
- FMB has modern study spaces.
- FMB has an interesting presence on social networks.
- FMB has the appropriate information on the faculty website.
- FMB has the designation of an excellent research workplace.
- I wanted to develop my communication skills.
- I have low travel expenses.
- I received a recommendation from the family.

We confirm hypothesis 2.

Table 4. Hypothesis 1 testing (Gender)

ID	Rank Sum Women	Rank Sum Men	U	Z-adjusted	p-value
1	28730.0	58006.0	18103.0	0.7173	0.4732
2	27895.5	58840.5	18850.5	-0.0398	0.9682
3	26474.5	60261.5	17429.5	-1.3479	0.1777
4	27516.5	59219.5	18471.5	-0.3834	0.7014
5	27058.5	59677.5	18013.5	-0.8068	0.4198
6	27538.0	59198.0	18493.0	-0.3649	0.7152
7	24572.0	62164.0	15527.0	-3.0543	0.0023
8	27355.0	59381.0	18310.0	-0.5348	0.5928
9	28683.5	58052.5	18149.5	0.6856	0.4930
10	27058.5	59677.5	18013.5	-0.8018	0.4226
11	28463.5	58272.5	18369.5	0.4779	0.6327
12	27849.5	58886.5	18804.5	-0.0819	0.9347
13	27622.0	59114.0	18577.0	-0.2953	0.7678
14	29412.0	57324.0	17421.0	1.3482	0.1776
15	27075.5	59660.5	18030.5	-0.8165	0.4142
16	27622.0	59114.0	18577.0	-0.2910	0.7710
17	28761.0	57975.0	18072.0	0.8057	0.4204
18	30454.5	56281.5	16378.5	2.2426	0.0249
19	31447.5	55288.5	15385.5	3.1827	0.0015
20	28478.0	58258.0	18355.0	0.4851	0.6276
21	31089.0	55647.0	15744.0	2.9369	0.0033
22	30991.0	55745.0	15842.0	2.7891	0.0053

Source: own calculations.

Table 5. Significant differences related to gender

Gender	ID 7		ID 18		ID 19		ID 21		ID 22	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Mean	3.36	3.67	3.20	2.86	2.71	2.24	2.29	1.92	2.57	2.19
Median	3	4	3	3	3	2	2	1	2	2

Source: own calculations.

Table 6. Hypothesis 2 testing (Nationality)

ID	Rank Sum Slovak	Rank Sum Ukrainian	U	Z-adjusted	p-value
1	60329.0	26407.0	10243.0	-5.5134	0.0000
2	62573.5	24162.5	12487.5	-3.3563	0.0008
3	64133.0	22603.0	14047.0	-1.7645	0.0777
4	62529.0	24207.0	12443.0	-3.3346	0.0009
5	62580.0	24156.0	12494.0	-3.3140	0.0009
6	64549.0	22187.0	14463.0	-1.3317	0.1830
7	63035.0	23701.0	12949.0	-2.8281	0.0047
8	63750.0	22986.0	13664.0	-2.1402	0.0323
9	63229.5	23506.5	13143.5	-2.6764	0.0074
10	63428.5	23307.5	13342.5	-2.4482	0.0144
11	63988.5	22747.5	13902.5	-1.8921	0.0585
12	67488.0	19248.0	14198.0	1.6114	0.1071
13	65817.0	20919.0	15731.0	-0.0699	0.9443
14	64214.0	22522.0	14128.0	-1.6735	0.0942
15	67108.0	19628.0	14578.0	1.2637	0.2063
16	65935.5	20800.5	15750.5	0.0493	0.9607
17	66264.0	20472.0	15422.0	0.4049	0.6856
18	62651.5	24084.5	12565.5	-3.1535	0.0016
19	63020.0	23716.0	12934.0	-2.8430	0.0045
20	66084.5	20651.5	15601.5	0.1951	0.8453
21	66376.0	20360.0	15310.0	0.4991	0.6177
22	65560.0	21176.0	15474.0	-0.3253	0.7449

Source: own calculations.

Table 7. Significant differences related to nationality

Nationality	ID 1		ID 2		ID 4		ID 5		ID 7	
	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR
Mean	3.34	3.99	3.69	4.05	3.26	3.69	3.62	4.03	3.48	3.85
Median	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4

Nationality	ID 8		ID 9		ID 10		ID 18		ID 19	
	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR	SVK	UKR
Mean	3.52	3.80	3.15	3.45	3.64	3.95	2.84	3.38	2.28	2.73
Median	4	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	2	2

Source: *own calculations.*

Note: *SVK denotes Slovak nationality, UKR denotes Ukrainian nationality.*

Results in Table 8 show that differences between full-time students and part-time students were found for fourteen items of the questionnaire (p-values lower than 0.05 are highlighted in bold). We can assess the specific differences considering the mean in Table 9. Full-time students agreed more considering all the following significant items (except for the last one):

- FMB has a good reputation.
- FMB teachers are highly qualified.
- FMB teachers have practical experience.
- Modern teaching methods are used at FMB.
- FMB has modern study spaces.
- FMB has the appropriate information on the faculty website.
- FMB has the designation of an excellent research workplace.
- I wanted to develop my critical thinking.
- I wanted to get an overview.
- I wanted to gain new theoretical knowledge.
- I want to have a better application in the labor market.
- I have low travel expenses.
- I received a recommendation from the family.
- I received a recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school.

We confirm hypothesis 3.

Table 8. Hypothesis 3 testing (Form of the study)

ID	Rank Sum Full-time	Rank Sum Part-time	U	Z-adjusted	p-value
1	75050.5	11685.5	5672.5	-3.4619	0.0005
2	75358.5	11377.5	5980.5	-3.1019	0.0019
3	75376.5	11359.5	5998.5	-3.0567	0.0022
4	74706.0	12030.0	5328.0	-3.9417	0.0001
5	76067.0	10669.0	6689.0	-2.0819	0.0374
6	76234.5	10501.5	6856.5	-1.8372	0.0662
7	77253.5	9482.5	7875.5	-0.4246	0.6711
8	75343.0	11393.0	5965.0	-3.0892	0.0020
9	75698.5	11037.5	6320.5	-2.6084	0.0091
10	76193.0	10543.0	6815.0	-1.8947	0.0581
11	75927.0	10809.0	6549.0	-2.2652	0.0235
12	75146.0	11590.0	5768.0	-3.3769	0.0007
13	74394.0	12342.0	5016.0	-4.4901	0.0000
14	77172.5	9563.5	7794.5	-0.5412	0.5884
15	75847.0	10889.0	6469.0	-2.4646	0.0137
16	77295.5	9440.5	7917.5	-0.3716	0.7102
17	77587.5	9148.5	8158.5	0.0373	0.9703
18	79807.0	6929.0	5939.0	3.0410	0.0024
19	80542.0	6194.0	5204.0	4.1074	0.0000
20	78968.5	7767.5	6777.5	1.9245	0.0543
21	80049.5	6686.5	5696.5	3.5237	0.0004
22	78660.0	8076.0	7086.0	1.5242	0.1275

Source: *own calculations.*

Table 9. Significant differences related to form of the study

Form	ID 1		ID 2		ID 3		ID 4		ID 5	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Mean	3.56	3.40	3.83	3.70	3.76	3.56	3.47	3.20	3.78	3.63
Median	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	4
Form	ID 8		ID 9		ID 11		ID 12		ID 13	
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part
Mean	3.64	3.52	3.26	3.17	3.88	3.74	3.96	3.90	4.08	4.04
Median	4	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	4
Form	ID 15		ID 18		ID 19		ID 21			
	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part	Full	Part		
Mean	4.26	4.10	3.02	2.90	2.45	2.31	1.95	2.17		
Median	4	4	3	3	2	2	1	2		

Source: *own calculations.*

Note: *Full denotes full-time study, Part denotes part-time study.*

Results in Table 10 show that differences between students of the first level of the study and students of the second level was found only for two items of the questionnaire (p-values lower than 0.05 are highlighted in bold). We can assess the specific differences considering the mean in Table 11. It follows that the significant items are:

- Modern teaching methods are used at FMB (students of the first level agreed more).
- I received a recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school (students of the second level agreed more).

We confirm hypothesis 4.

Table 10. Hypothesis 4 testing (Level of the study)

ID	Rank Sum First	Rank Sum Second	U	Z-adjusted	p-value
1	53443.5	33292.5	19264.5	1.3204	0.1867
2	53606.0	33130.0	19102.0	1.4920	0.1357
3	54032.0	32704.0	18676.0	1.8563	0.0634
4	54592.5	32143.5	18115.5	2.3171	0.0205
5	53567.0	33169.0	19141.0	1.4421	0.1493
6	51028.0	35708.0	19903.0	-0.7713	0.4405
7	50515.0	36221.0	19390.0	-1.2117	0.2256
8	53142.5	33593.5	19565.5	1.0706	0.2843
9	52614.5	34121.5	20093.5	0.6127	0.5401
10	52280.0	34456.0	20428.0	0.3153	0.7525
11	53440.5	33295.5	19267.5	1.3247	0.1853
12	52516.5	34219.5	20191.5	0.5258	0.5990
13	52356.5	34379.5	20351.5	0.3909	0.6959
14	54037.5	32698.5	18670.5	1.8508	0.0642
15	53259.0	33477.0	19449.0	1.2103	0.2262
16	52665.0	34071.0	20043.0	0.6557	0.5120
17	53000.0	33736.0	19708.0	1.0126	0.3113
18	52806.5	33929.5	19901.5	0.7561	0.4496
19	52917.0	33819.0	19791.0	0.8649	0.3871
20	52136.5	34599.5	20571.5	0.1885	0.8505
21	49689.0	37047.0	18564.0	-1.9796	0.0477
22	50872.5	35863.5	19747.5	-0.9092	0.3632

Source: *own calculations.*

Table 11. Significant differences related to level of the study

Level	ID 4		ID 21	
	First	Second	First	Second
Mean	3.47	3.20	1.95	2.17
Median	4	3	1	2

Source: *own calculations.*

Discussion

The differences between the analyzed groups were predominantly confirmed through the rationale considering low travel expenses (gender, nationality, field of study), the recommendation from family (gender, nationality, field of study), the recommendation from teachers (counselors) from high school (gender, field of study, level of study), modern teaching methods used at FMB (nationality, field of study, level of study). The differences between groups were occasionally validated by considering other rationales as well, i.e., good reputation (nationality, field of study), highly qualified teachers (nationality, field of study), modern study spaces (nationality, field of study), interesting presence on social networks (gender, nationality).

On the other hand, differences were not confirmed within reasons related to engaging promotional materials, getting new contacts, location of the faculty in the city center, location of the faculty in Prešov, and recommendation from friends. According to descriptive statistics in Table 3, the most important reasons are connected to having a better application on the labor market (mean = 4.20) or the location of FMB, i.e., in Prešov (mean = 4.16) and in the city center (mean = 3.93). The reason for getting new contacts is in sixth place (mean = 3.87). In addition, the key aspects are related to new theoretical knowledge (mean = 4.06), getting the overview (mean = 3.93), and developing critical thinking (mean = 3.83). The reason related to eye-catching promotional materials was considered as a moderate level (mean = 3.35, median = 3). Among the unimportant reasons is the recommendation from friends, family, FMB graduates, and teachers from high school (mean = from 2.04 to 2.54).

Our findings related to career options and good jobs in the future agree with those of Turgumbayeva et al. (2023), Sahoo, Sahoo and Jena (2019), Al-Rfou (2013), Kirchok (2013), and Thompson and Gui (2000). This reason may be important because many professions require a university degree as a basic qualification. In addition, employers often prefer or require candidates (managers) with higher education qualifications. Our results differ from AL-Mutairi and Saeid (2016), as students did not consider recommendations from friends or family as essential when deciding on the choice of study. In this respect, our results agree with the research by Blackburn (2011). The study by AL-Mutairi and Saeid (2016) was more about the sources of information than recommendations. Ultimately, while recommendations from family and friends can be valuable, the decision of which university to attend is highly personal and influenced by many factors specific to the individual. Individuals have unique interests, career goals, and preferences that may not align with the recommendations of family and friends. They might choose a university that better matches their personal aspirations and academic interests.

Consistent with the results of Thompson and Gui (2000) and Abdullah and Saeid (2016), our study shows that gaining new theoretical knowledge and overview are among the key factors of students choosing management study. University education promotes critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, and other soft skills essential in the workplace. It also fosters personal growth and intellectual development. Our results align with the research conducted by Ronnie and Wakeling (2015), demonstrating that getting new contacts (networking potential) is relevant. These networks can be invaluable for career advice, job opportunities, and professional growth.

Conclusion

Comprehending the factors driving students' choices of specific study programs holds paramount importance for academic institutions in tailoring their offerings and for the wider education sector to align with industry demands and student aspirations.

In this study, we identified differences in the reasons to study the study program Management at the FMB at the UP, considering the different characteristics of the students. Results showed the most differences between groups concerning two aspects, i.e., their form of study (14 reasons) and nationality (10 reasons).

Differences between full-time and part-time students in their decision to study management may arise due to a variety of aspects. Full-time students might prioritize a more immersive and structured educational experience, to complete their studies more quickly and enter the job market sooner. On the other hand, part-time students might be balancing their studies with work or other responsibilities, leading them to prioritize flexibility in their educational pursuits. Moreover, motivations and career goals might differ between full-time and part-time students, impacting their preferences for specific study programs like management.

Differences between Ukrainian and Slovak students in their choice to study management could stem from various aspects. These might include cultural influences, economic conditions in their respective countries, perceived opportunities in the field of management, access to quality education, language preferences, career aspirations, and personal interests. Additionally, societal expectations, educational systems, and employment prospects could also play significant roles in shaping their decisions.

Future research endeavors could delve deeper into this subject by employing factor analysis to offer a more nuanced understanding of the underlying factors shaping students' decisions in selecting management-related fields of study. In addition, in future research focused on the FMB, it would be valuable to compare the resulting factors influencing students' decisions among all offered study programs (i.e., Management; Business Management and Marketing; Tourism, Hotel and Spa Industry), providing insights into the unique considerations of different academic disciplines within the same institutional context. To enhance the generalizability and applicability of the outcomes, future research should aim to involve multiple universities. Additionally, it would be beneficial to conduct comparative studies involving at least one other Slovak university. Such comparisons would allow for an analysis of potential differences and similarities in student experiences and outcomes across different educational environments within Slovakia.

One of the limitations of this study is that the student sample was drawn exclusively from a single institution. This may limit the generalizability of the results to other contexts and populations. A limitation of the study is also the relatively low representation of part-time students, which may constrain the breadth of insights gathered and potentially overlook the distinctive perspectives and decision-making criteria of this demographic.

Acknowledgement

This paper was supported by the research grant KEGA no. 001PU-4/2022 “Application of Modern Trends in Quantitative Methods in the Teaching of Financial and Managerial Subjects”.

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