

The Role of Marketing-mix Elements in International Students' Enrolment Decision to Study in Jordan

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ABSTRACT

The current research investigates the impact of marketing-mix elements in higher-education on the decision of international students to study in Jordan, a developing country, while also examining the moderating influence of their demographic characteristics. A conceptual framework was developed to measure the marketing-mix factors that are expected to affect the decision of international students to study abroad. The data was collected through a survey research design, using a self-developed questionnaire, from a convenient sample of 2000 international students from six public and private universities in Jordan, with a response rate of 61%. The results of the study indicate that all higher-education marketing-mix factors, with the exception of the physical environmental factor, significantly influenced the decision of international students to study in Jordan. Moreover, some of the respondents' demographic variables, including gender, nationality, and program level, significantly moderated the impact of marketing-mix elements on their decision to study in Jordan, while other variables, such as type of university and source of funds, were found to be insignificant. Finally, the study presents implications for policy makers, researchers, and practitioners.

Overall, this study offers valuable insights into the impact of marketing-mix elements on international students' decision to study in a developing country like Jordan, while also highlighting the importance of demographic factors as moderating variables. The findings can be useful for policy makers and practitioners in higher-education institutions in Jordan and other developing countries, as well as for researchers in the field of international education.

Keywords: Marketing mix, Higher education, International students, Decision choice, Jordan.

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دور عناصر المزيج التسويقي في قرار التحاق الطلاب الدوليين بالدراسة في الأردن

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ملخص

يبحث البحث الحالي في تأثير عناصر المزيج التسويقي في التعليم العالي في قرار الطلاب الدوليين الدراسة في الأردن كدولة نامية، مع دراسة التأثير المعتدل لخصائصهم الديموغرافية. تم تطوير إطار مفاهيمي لقياس عوامل المزيج التسويقي التي من المتوقع أن تؤثر على قرار الطلاب الدوليين الدراسة في الخارج، حيث تم جمع البيانات من خلال تصميم بحث مسح ميداني، باستخدام استبانة تم تطويرها ذاتيًا، من عينة ملائمة من 2000 طالب دولي في ست جامعات عامة وخاصة في الأردن، بمعدل استجابة 61%. تشير نتائج الدراسة إلى أن جميع عوامل المزيج التسويقي للتعليم العالي، باستثناء العامل البيئي المادي، أثرت بشكل كبير في قرار الطلاب الدوليين الدراسة في الأردن. علاوة على ذلك، فإن بعض المتغيرات الديموغرافية للمستجيبين، بما في ذلك الجنس والجنسية ومستوى البرنامج، خففت بشكل كبير من تأثير عناصر المزيج التسويقي على قرارهم الدراسة في الأردن، في حين أن المتغيرات الأخرى، مثل نوع الجامعة ومصدر التمويل لم يكن لها أي تأثير. بشكل عام، تقدم هذه الدراسة رؤية قيمة حول تأثير عناصر المزيج التسويقي على قرار الطلاب الدوليين الدراسة في دولة نامية مثل الأردن، مع إبراز أهمية العوامل الديموغرافية كمتغيرات معدلة. ويمكن أن تكون النتائج مفيدة لوضع السياسات والممارسين في مؤسسات التعليم العالي في الأردن والبلدان النامية الأخرى، وكذلك للباحثين في مجال التعليم الدولي.

الكلمات الدالة: المزيج التسويقي، التعليم العالي، الطالب الدولي، اتخاذ قرار الدراسة في الخارج، الأردن.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Higher-education has demonstrated an increasing interest in marketing-related topics in a global setting, as institutions worldwide have implemented a variety of strategies and marketing techniques to draw in international students (Connie et al., 2022). Governments and educational institutions around the world are now placing more emphasis on international students, defined as "students who have crossed a national boundary to study or to engage in other study-related activities, for at least a particular unit of a study program or for a particular period, in the country to which they have migrated" (Connie et al., 2022: 210). The advantages of studying abroad include financial support for universities, strong scientific relationships between institutions, access to cutting-edge research, and cultural variety. According to Teichler (2017), international student mobility has ramifications for subsequent aspirations and jobs as well as the lifestyles of students themselves, in addition to helping internationalize educational institutions.

Higher-education is essential for the progress of every country, enhancing social, political, and cultural awareness and providing qualified human resources. Highly educated people significantly raise the level of living and increase society's overall output, leading many nations throughout the world to invest heavily in introducing and improving their educational systems to attain the desired social and economic growth (Beneke & Human, 2010). Developed nations like the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada have become more rational in recruiting international students due to the growing reductions in government support and rising costs of delivering higher-education to the local population. To compensate for the lack of higher-education expenditures, international students who pay their full tuition are viewed as a lucrative source of support by schools (Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017). One of the key drivers and catalysts for every nation's economic success and future growth is the trend towards international education. The US Department

of Commerce estimated in 2015 that international students contribute more than \$30 billion yearly to the US economy (James-MacEachern, 2018). The significance of the expansion of the international trend in universities is shown by the high proportion of foreign students attending universities in many different countries of the world (James, 2018, 2022).

There is growing competition among students in emerging countries that provide more reasonably priced, culturally relevant programs, despite increased competition among higher-education institutions in the developed world to draw in international students. International students who want to study abroad now find it much simpler to learn about educational services, understand the prerequisites of studying at other universities, and then enroll in them due to the growth of telecommunication and transportation-technology systems (Sá & Sabzalieva, 2018). The Ministry of Higher-education and Scientific Research (MHESR), established in 1985, oversees and regulates higher-education in Jordan. Currently, Jordan is home to 10 state institutions, 21 private universities, over 35,000 faculty and staff, 267,000 undergraduate students, 18,000 graduate students, and 14% of all students are Arabs or from other countries. A new directorate has been established by the Ministry of Higher-education and Scientific Research with the goal of promoting Jordan as a destination for higher-education and enhancing the quality of life in the Kingdom to draw 100,000 international students to Jordanian universities by the year 2025. The Ministry recently launched a marketing plan for recruiting international students in cooperation with Jordanian universities (Al-Fattal, 2010). Given all the changes that higher-education institutions have experienced; these institutions need to focus more on marketing. This research seeks to answer the question: What marketing-mix element has the most significant impact on the international students' choice of selecting

higher-education institutions in Jordan, whether private or public?

Despite the growing competition among higher-education institutions worldwide to attract international students and the increasing importance of international education to national economies, there is limited research on how to effectively market and recruit international students in developing nations like Jordan. This research gap contributes to ongoing discussions in the marketing literature by highlighting the need for more empirical research on the effectiveness of marketing strategies in attracting international students to higher-education institutions, particularly in developing countries. Furthermore, this study contributes to the existing literature by investigating the specific marketing-mix elements that are most influential in the context of Jordanian universities, which can inform marketing strategies for other universities in developing nations facing similar challenges in attracting international students. Overall, this study aims to address this research gap by examining the impact of marketing-mix elements on the choice of international students in selecting higher-education institutions in Jordan, with the goal of providing insights that can inform more effective marketing strategies for universities in developing nations.

2. The Importance of Recruiting International Students

Higher-education is seen as a means for individuals and governments to gain a better understanding of other countries' languages and cultures (OECD, 2008; Teichle, 2017). Studying abroad is considered the most effective way for students to learn about different international cultures and languages beyond their own country (Maharaja, 2018). Furthermore, studying abroad can alleviate the burden on foreign countries with limited educational resources by easing registration bottlenecks and increasing the likelihood of more students visiting their campuses. As a result of tuition costs and domestic spending by international students, the internationalization of education is expected to continue to grow and impact countries' balance of payments

(De Witte & Soncin, 2021). The increasing growth of higher-education has addressed the financial demands on education systems, leading more nations to focus on attracting international students (Yonezawa, 2020). Institutions and governments rely heavily on tuition fees collected from international students as a source of revenue (Golovic & Berger, 2020). Moreover, higher-education institutions offer scholarships and financial aid to international students as incentives to enroll more students.

The internationalization of education has become a significant component of world commerce and merits ongoing and in-depth study (De Wit, 2013). Many countries view the recruitment of overseas students as an economic engine that generates income and profit, similar to other sectors like lumber, electronics, or aerospace industries (De Wit, 2015). The fees and expenses paid by international students are the primary contributors to these economic gains, and they have assumed increasing significance since several countries adopted fee schedules (Koh, 2015; Geddie, 2015; Muchate & Larson, 2022). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in student mobility, with governments' roles shifting from direct sponsors to regulators and facilitators. Market forces are increasingly balancing demand and supply, and many students travel abroad independently rather than with government or institutional assistance. Consequently, countries are now more focused on economic incentives rather than cultural interaction, viewing the movement of students as a transaction rather than an aid. This has led to increased competition for international students, with countries using innovative tactics to attract talented students through tuition laws, immigration policies, branding, and marketing (Warwick, 2014; Wu & Naido, 2016; Findlay et al., 2017; Lomer et al., 2018; Moody, 2020; Ho et al., 2020; Hung, 2021). In summary, the internationalization of education is a crucial aspect of

world commerce and has many economic benefits for both governments and institutions. However, it also raises concerns about the commodification of education and the erosion of cultural exchange. Therefore, ongoing research is necessary to ensure that the internationalization of education benefits all stakeholders involved.

3. Theoretical Background

Marketing Mix in Higher Education

Many scholars acknowledge the expanding significance of marketing's role in student recruitment (Helgesen et al., 2008; Ivy, 2008; Enache, 2011; Onk & Joseph, 2017; Lukić & Lukić, 2016; Kusumawati, 2019; Hieu et al., 2020; Ho & Law, 2020). Decisions were made regarding: 1. the institution's current programs and markets, including whether to keep, expand, or drop them, is a part of developing an institutional marketing plan for higher education, 2. possibilities for upcoming new programs and markets, 3. a review of the competition, 4. the institution's position in reference to rivals, and 5. target market selection and marketing-mix creation (Kotler et al., 2017). The coordination and blending of the elements of the marketing-mix go into developing a marketing strategy (Ivey, 2008; Kotler et al., 2017). Organizations may satisfy customers' needs and offer them value thanks to the combination and coordination of the marketing-mix elements. The marketing mix, according to Kotler et al. (2017), is "a mixture of variables or activities as the heart of the marketing system, variables that the corporation can control to impact the reactions of buyers or consumers." Positive impressions created when a favorable image is built can raise the likelihood that the educational institution will be selected (Kusumawati, 2013). Applying a marketing strategy promotes quality improvement in the higher-education system through the coordinated use of the marketing-mix to produce a service that meets target market expectations and offers superior value. Using various marketing-mix element combinations might help businesses get a competitive edge in the education industry.

The marketing mix is a set of controllable marketing tools that an institution uses to produce the response that it wants from its various target markets. It consists of everything that the university can do to influence the demand for its services. A traditional marketing-mix consists of the following elements: Product, Price, Promotion, and Place (Kotler et al., 2017).

The following describes higher-education as a service industry:

- Customers do not acquire ownership. Most of the time, customers receive value from service without acquiring any physical assets.
- Intangible performances are service products. Things that are experienced but cannot be touched or retained are referred to as intangibles.
- Customer participation in the production process. Customers frequently actively contribute to the creation of the service product by assisting themselves or working with the service staff.
- The human component of the service product. It is challenging to achieve uniformity in service delivery, since several service people may provide the service to customers.
- The significance of time. For services to be provided, customers must be present in person.
- Services cannot be stored like physical goods, since they are perishable.

Higher-education marketing should have a separate marketing mix, since it is sufficiently different from marketing of items as a service. A marketing-mix specifically constraints imposed by the marketing-mix for products (Enache, 2011). The marketing-mix serves both operational and communicative purposes. The necessity to convey to users how relevant services are to their wants or preferences is known as the communicative function. The operative function seeks to eliminate barriers to transactions or exchange, so that users who have chosen that service can easily

engage in the exchange process. Numerous international research investigations have proven that using a combination of instruments is a challenging process (Maniu & Maniu, 2014; Kwang & Sone, 2019). They highlighted the application of marketing, the significance of specific marketing tools, and strategic concepts through a series of empirical research studies on the target group of students/freshmen (504 first-year and 305 second-year) carried out at the Singidunum University of Belgrade in 2008 and 2009. The teaching process (41%), university image (23%), class quality/professor attitudes (16%), good employment prospects (13%), Belgrade as a study location (2%), the height of tuition fees (2%), and instalment payment of tuition fee in several months (1%) were the alternatives that students listed when evaluating which faculty to choose (Gaji, 2012).

According to Johnston (2010), higher-education marketing is both a lucrative industry and a legitimate academic discipline. The study by Johnston (2010) looked at the phenomenon surrounding students' choice of universities and was based on survey data from students and university staff. It revealed that institutions encounter difficulties each year in luring devout students due to rivalry with other universities. It also highlighted potential ramifications for communicating with potential students. Many studies acknowledged the importance of strategic marketing planning while advertising educational services (Alhakimi & Qasem, 2014). To pinpoint important elements influencing enrolment in higher education, the effects of various marketing variables were also researched. Additionally, efforts were undertaken to find a new marketing strategy that is better suited to promoting educational services. Since HE marketing is different from those physical things, the marketing-mix must also be adjusted (James, 2018; Hung, 2021). According to the outcomes of previous studies, most students liked instructors who were qualified. Students valued educational amenities and employment chances more than others while choosing a college. In the education industry, several marketing-mix instrument combinations

offer a comparative advantage. According to Kotler and Fox (1995), the marketing-mix can be explained as follows:

Product/Program: Product is the most fundamental choice that higher-education institutions must make. In higher education, it is most referred to as educational programs or services. For educational institutions, creating programs that cater to consumers' interests and requirements is an essential marketing activity (Soedijati & Pratminingsih, 2011). The program aspect of the marketing-mix is centered on the degree's design. The curriculum needs to be established and modified adequately to fit the demands of the students. The length of the program is also anticipated to have an impact on students' program selection (Mahajan & Golahit, 2019). All the programs and services that the institution offers together comprise the institutional program/service mix. For instance, many universities provide educational programming (classes, libraries and information services, computer labs, campus lectures, ... etc.), recreational programming (athletic facilities and clubs, film series, dances, ... etc.), personal-growth programming and services (counselling center, advisors), curative programming (health center), and future-planning programming and services (career counselling, placement services, ... etc.) (Haron et al., 2017).

The quality of higher-education institutions' services becomes crucial as a factor in determining customer satisfaction (Dzimiska et al., 2018). However, based on his/her unique needs, each stakeholder in higher-education has a different understanding of what excellence is. Prospective students will assess the programs' suitability by contrasting them with those promoted by rival universities. The factors that affect the program evaluation are the availability of a wide range of courses, their quality, the degree's international recognition, the entry requirement, the cost, and the

availability of financial help. For instance, Khan et al. (2009) discovered that after teaching quality, the reputation or image of higher-education institutions is the second most significant factor. Similar to Munisamy et al. (2014), they concluded that reputation is more important than graduates' employability as a deciding factor when selecting a certain HEI. In addition, academic prestige and recognition came in the third place when compared to the cost and fee structures and the effectiveness of teaching and learning (Garwe, 2016).

Pricing/Tuition Fees: All expenses that students pay to use educational services provided by a college are included in the price of education services. Tuition fees (Educational Development Donations or SPP, construction charges, laboratory fees), scholarships, and flexible payment plans are all included in the cost of education services. This cost factor frequently correlates with the calibre of educational items. Pricing influences both student impressions of the quality as well as the profits that a university receives (Alecke et al., 2013; Bohara & Diksha Panwar, 2022). Tuition costs can affect a student's capacity to pay for registration, because most colleges charge them for education with some researchers discovering a direct connection between tuition costs and demand for graduate degrees (Harahap et al., 2021). Price for students, according to Kotler and Fox (1995), includes a monetary cost as well as other costs, like effort cost, psychological cost, and time cost. Prospective students and their families are interested in the effective price (the amount that they will actually pay for the educational benefit) and the value gained, regardless of the university's tuition cost (the official tuition and fees printed in the catalogue). The effective price is the net amount actually paid after financial assistance, and other discounts are subtracted (Kotler et al., 2017).

Place: Place or distribution makes up the third component of the marketing-mix in higher education. Distribution, according to Kotler et al. (2017), is the availability of education or a program to potential students in the most practical and approachable manner. The school

often presents courses in one place, with students congregating there for classroom instruction, as a traditional delivery mode for educational services (Kotler & Fox, 1995). However, the position of the element is not limited by a physical location because of the advancements in information technology. Virtual learning tools like Moodle and Blackboard are increasingly being used to access lectures and supporting materials. Additionally, opportunities for distance learning have emerged *via* mail, e-mail, the internet, video and teleconferencing, block release choices, and more recently, podcasts. Enache (2011) and Shamsudin et al. (2018) also emphasized the importance of place in relation to things like class locations, instructional techniques and styles, and IT characteristics. Sia (2013) sought to understand what matters most to students when choosing a college and to offer marketing recommendations for decision-makers in the educational sector. The findings indicated that prospective students should give program, cost (financial assistance), location, high-school staff, peers, and friends—as well as campus visits—consideration while choosing a college.

Promotion: Advertising, publicity, public relations, and sales promotion are all forms of promotion that universities might employ to inform the public about their programs. It seems improbable that using either the prospectus or the university's website will be successful when one considers the wide range of publics with which a university needs to communicate (Soedijati & Pratminingsih, 2011; Camilleri, 2020). Marketing for higher-education may very well revolve around promotion. Promotion can increase brand recognition and give the university visibility (Rudd & Mills, 2008). When promoting their services, higher-education institutions might employ both pull and push strategies (Soedijati & Pratminingsih, 2011; Let et al., 2019). Direct marketing, sales promotion, advertising, the internet,

and sponsorships make up the promotional mix for higher-education (Rudd & Mills, 2008; Vrontis et al., 2018). The most critical matter for higher-education institutions in developing promotion strategies is understanding the students as their primary consumers. For different publics, different elements are used. In fact, some publics, like potential students, are so significant that several marketing initiatives are directed towards them. The universities use a variety of strategies to enlighten, reaffirm, and influence prospective students to choose their institution, including open days, international higher-education exhibits, conferences, direct mail, and advertising. Pokhrel et al. (2016) investigated the contribution of marketing communications to student enrollment in Ghana's private universities. Private colleges were found to have a good possibility of placing themselves successfully and gaining a durable competitive advantage in the market if they handle their advertising campaigns effectively and efficiently.

Print media, including newspapers, brochures, and alumni networks, were rated highly as the most effective marketing communication channels to enlighten potential students, according to Messah and Immaculate's (2011) study on student enrollment in private colleges in Kenya. Pokhrel et al. (2016) investigated the effects of various educational marketing initiatives carried out by a few private management institutions located in the Kathmandu valley. The study examined the behavior of BBA and MBA students who had been accepted and were chosen by the private management colleges. According to the report, recommendations from friends had the most significant impact on admission decisions at the BBA and MBA levels. However, words of mouth; i.e., family and relatives' recommendations, colleges' websites and newspapers' advertisements were also found to be effective.

People: The staff at the institution are referred to as the "people" component of the higher-education marketing mix. Thus, the term "people" refers to all of the instructional, administrative, and support personnel who work to provide services and foster client relationships (Kotler & Fox, 1995;

Qazi et al., 2021). People are important, because employees are the most important component of good service delivery. People also comprise both present and previous students of the institution. Therefore, they can inquire about and confirm with, present and previous pupils about their opinions. However, graduate students' impressions of teaching-staff reputations can play a significant role in the selection process. It is debatable what role academic-staff image and status have in recruiting undergraduate students (Ivy, 2008).

Students' impressions of service quality are influenced by the administrative and academic support offered to the delivery of higher-education services, both on the front lines and in what can be viewed as the background. According to Ivy (2008), "the selection of employees for positions at a college or university is the only factor that matters more than any other." Relevant to Wirtz and Lovelock (2016), direct involvement in service marketing implies that customers assess personnel looks, social, and technical skills and that this affects how the offer is considered. It is advised for an institution to focus on staff development while creating a marketing plan. Customers' perceptions of the service are influenced by appearance, attitudes, and behavior (Du Plessis & Rousseau, 2005; Raimo et al., 2021). First impressions of higher-education institutions are frequently formed through students' interactions with staff members. Sarwar and Sarwar (2012) looked at the variables that affect students' decisions regarding the higher-education programs that they enroll in at different Malaysian institutes of higher learning. The outcomes demonstrated that university teaching quality, followed by university facilities, program structure and accreditation, and campus facilities, are the most significant elements influencing students in choosing their higher-learning institution.

Process: The term "process" refers to how an

organization conducts its operations. It relates to the entire administrative system (Kotler et al., 2017). The key components of the marketing-mix are the processes, mechanisms, and activity flow by which services are consumed (Palmer, 2011; Starck & Zadeh, 2013; Ho & Law, 2020). The formal and administrative duties of the university are contained in the process. This relates to the enrollment process, which includes registration requests, course exams, and evaluations in addition to the distribution of exam results and graduation (Ivy, 2008). Institutions of higher learning must make sure that students are aware of how to use a service. In higher education, the term "process" refers to all administrative and bureaucratic duties performed by the institution, such as answering inquiries, enrolling students, grading students, evaluating courses, and administering exams. Processes must be implemented during the students' registration period to guarantee that the students enrol in the appropriate courses, where marks or grades are accurately calculated and entered against the student's name, and the student ultimately receives the appropriate qualification. The finance system, accommodations, timetabling, and library all need to be implemented simultaneously even though this might seem to be a very simple procedure to do. This is necessary to maintain the highest degree of student satisfaction.

Physical Facilities and Evidence: The term "physical facilities" or "evidence" refers to all the actual material goods that a business makes available to clients, from instructional materials to the physical appearance of the university's buildings and lecture halls. Due to the intangible nature of the services provided by higher-education institutions, physical documentation is crucial. The setting in which the service is provided, both physical and intangible, aids in conveying to potential customers how satisfied the customers are (Ivy & Fattal, 2010). According to Kotler et al. (2017), physical evidence would likely give people their initial impression of the university, because they typically notice the structure and facilities. Gibbs and Knapp (2002) go on to say that the physical location's condition has a

significant impact on the institution's reputation. The technology used, room cleanliness, library, etc. are a few examples. According to Price et al. (2003), high-quality facilities are thought to be an important element when students are choosing the institution where they will continue their education. They examined the extent to which facilities and geographical considerations affect a set of customers' decisions. The social life of the university and its surroundings is the most significant component in terms of facilities. Also, other studies indicated that the green marketing-mix elements like safety, green landscape, security, and sporting facilities are viewed as being less important (Al-Majali & Tarabieh, 2020). Other factors affecting the institution's reputation through auxiliary services include the library's capabilities, the accessibility of computers, the standard of the library's resources, the availability of quiet spaces (such as study rooms), and the availability of spaces for independent study (Price et al., 2003; Shah et al., 2013).

4. Literature Review

Previous studies confirmed that various factors, including the likelihood of finding employment after graduation, the quality of education and the standard of living in the country of destination, can impact the decision to pursue higher education. Other studies discovered that reputation, resources, coalition tactics, and integration across higher-education institutions were the most crucial elements for success in attracting international students. Higher-education marketing is not a recent development. To counteract the consequences of declining government financing and rising competition, higher-education must use marketing (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017; Hung, 2021). Higher-education institutions should employ a marketing framework to thrive and gain a lasting competitive advantage (Hoyt & Brown, 2003; James, 2018; Camilleri, 2020).

Recruiting international students should be a well-planned marketing strategy in such a competitive industry, as the education sector is becoming more and more of both a demand and supply market. According to the literature, the higher-education sector is evolving quickly, and universities and other educational institutions are finding it more challenging to attract students (Helgesen, 2008; Asaad et al., 2015; Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017). As a result, higher-education marketing is becoming more and more popular all around the world (Asaad et al., 2015; Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017; James, 2022). By that point, academics and researchers had also begun concentrating on higher-education marketing (Johnston, 2010). There were six proposed elements, according to Lau (2009): cost of education, content and structure, people, characteristics of physical facilities and resource availability, the value of educations, and institutional data. Basically, the cost of education, human resources, and physical infrastructure were some of the most crucial elements. Relying on a different survey by Ho and Hung (2008), employability, curriculum, academic reputation, faculty, and research environment were the five most crucial elements for students to consider when choosing a school. Similarly, Shah et al. (2013) suggested that learning environments, access to opportunities, and student perceptions are the more important decision determinants. Fosu (2014) tried to pinpoint the crucial elements that affect students' decision regarding which university to attend. The study indicated that the most significant elements influencing students' choice of institution were the courses provided, high caliber professors, a well-stocked library and internet, flexible lecture schedules, and employer recognition of qualifications. Frlich and Stensaker (2010) noted that placing the university and its classification within the national universities and showing this within the university file are necessary for reminding students and encouraging them to submit their applications. In another study on the significance of the diversification and excellence strategy adopted by Norwegian universities in luring foreign

students, it was emphasized that when selecting the university that will impart knowledge to them, many students are concerned with the calibre of the academic programs and the faculty members. But this is not enough to attract students. In the case of many universities, where differentiation and strategic diversification are similar, this must be accompanied by initiatives that encourage students to enroll in classes. For example, some universities focus on the social and geographical aspects of recruiting students from diverse backgrounds.

Another study investigated the institutional and programmatic factors that affect the recruitment of overseas students and their decision to enroll in American educational institutions and programs. It was discovered that the ratio of faculty members to students is the most important factor, regardless of the type of program and degree that the international student enrolls in. Prior to choosing a school, consider how crucial the admissions process and length of the academic degree are. In choosing an educational school, the significance of receiving assistance and complementarity were considered (McFadden et al., 2012). Haur (2009) identified the elements impacting students' intentions to continue their education at higher-educational institutions. Accordingly, there are many important elements that affect a student's decision to attend a higher-education institution, including the cost of education, the degree's content and structure, people (family, friends, peers, and teachers), gender, and educational history. The majority of earlier research studies focused on identifying the elements that significantly influence international students' choice of nation and university. Several authors from around the world conducted studies about marketing in higher-education institutions, including Beneke and Human (2010), Enache (2011), and Mitić and Mojić (2020). In a study by Maringe (2006), students were asked to score 30

variables according to how significantly they affected their judgments about which professors to choose. Seven groups were created by combining these characteristics. The Program, Price, Promotion, People, Prospects, Prominence, and Place were the names of the categories. The findings indicated that Program, Pricing, and Place were the three elements of the marketing-mix that higher-education institutions should pay the most attention to.

In contrast to Maringe (2006), Ivy (2008) used 25 characteristics that were associated with various marketing strategies employed by higher-education institutions. By applying factor analysis, variables were combined into seven components, which were then ordered by importance. These variables were: program, pricing, promotion, people, prospects, prominence, and premium. Based on the findings, program, prominence, and pricing were the three most crucial variables. Lukit and Luki (2016) examined whether the typical marketing-mix may affect a student's decision regarding which faculty to enroll in at the University of Novi Sad. The findings showed that there are 7 marketing aspects that should be considered when choosing a location for an educational institution. These factors include people, tangible proof, promotion, image, resources, supplementary services, and price. The 7 Ps of the service-marketing mix are present in the education service industry, according to Chawla (2013), and they are important for students to consider when choosing an institution. Odio (2014) investigated the variables that affect students' enrollment in social studies classes and discovered that employment opportunities, gender, and environmental factors all affect this decision.

Most studies acknowledged the necessity of using strategic marketing planning to promote educational services (e.g. James, 2018). In order to pinpoint important elements influencing enrollment in higher education, the effects of various marketing variables were also researched. Additionally, efforts were undertaken to find a new marketing strategy that is better suited to promoting educational services. It was found that many students liked

instructors who were qualified. Students valued educational amenities and employment chances higher than other considerations while choosing a college. It should be mentioned, however, that student behavior varies depending on the student's geographic, cultural, economic, and educational demands. The 7P variables chosen for the study are also chosen based on their application in marketing campaigns. As a result, this study aims to assess the marketing initiatives taken by Jordanian institutions considering the recruitment strategies that they employed.

5. Conceptual Framework

To develop a conceptual framework for this study, we reviewed the relevant theoretical literature and integrated theories, such as consumer behavior and buying decisions, with empirical studies on the factors that influence international students' decision to study abroad. Previous studies have classified these factors into different groups, including push and pull factors, institutional factors, individuals' factors, marketing factors, and motivational factors (Rembielak et al., 2020; Haron et al., 2017; Al-Nsour, 2023). The model presented in this study is limited to examining the role of the marketing factors (marketing-mix elements) in the decision of prospective international students to study in Jordan as a developing country. This is because studies on such topics are rarely available in higher-education contexts. A student's decision to choose a university is a component of consumer behavior, which refers to how people or groups choose, purchase, and use products or services (Kotler & Fox, 1995). The student decision-making process involves five steps: needs and motives, information gathering, evaluating alternatives, decision making, and post-choice evaluation. It's important to note that the student decision-making process is a complex series of activities in which different people participate and act in different ways. According to Kotler and Fox (1995),

the importance of each marketing-mix element and the importance of various sub-components within those elements are expected to vary among different educational settings. They claimed that the marketing-mix elements play a significant role in students' decision to attend a particular institution. International education is not a frequent purchase and demands a high level of involvement from customers (Starck & Zadeh, 2013).

The conceptual framework presented in this study consists of three major groups of variables. The first group is the independent variable, which is the marketing-mix elements, and is specially designed for educational institutions. The elements were developed and adopted from

several authors, including Kotler and Fox (1995), Helgesen et al. (2008), Ivy (2008), Enache (2011), Onk and Joseph (2017), Lukić and Lukić (2016), Kusumawati (2019), and Hieu et al. (2020). The second group of variables is the demographic variables, such as gender, age, nationality, program level, type of university, and source of funding. The third group of variables is the dependent variable, which is the international students' decision to choose to study in Jordanian universities. Figure (1) clearly presents the research model, which shows the relationships among these variables.

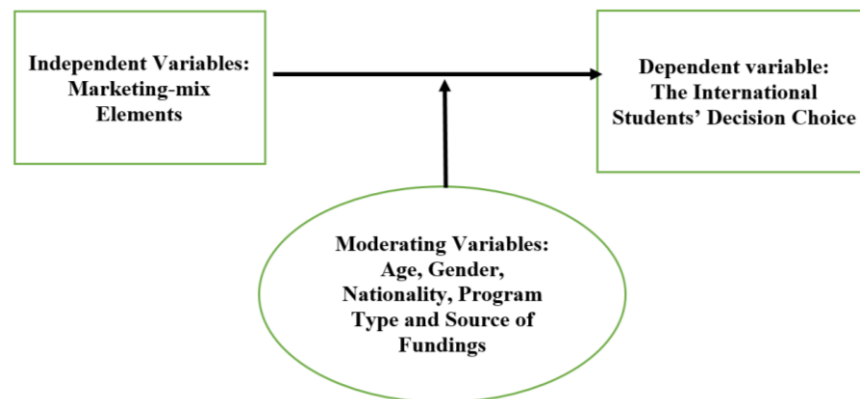


Figure (1)
The research model

Based upon this conceptual framework, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1:** The marketing-mix elements are significantly influencing the international students' decision choice to study in Jordanian universities.
- H2:** The marketing-mix elements are significantly influencing the international students' decision choice to study in Jordanian universities due to their demographic characteristics (gender, nationality, type of the university, program level, and source of funding).

6. Research Methodology

This research employed a quantitative approach with an exploratory and descriptive design. To validate the study's conceptual model and to examine the research hypotheses, a questionnaire was used to collect the required data. The target respondents were international students recently enrolled in Jordanian universities (private and public universities). According to the Jordan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research report in 2022, the total number of international students was 44124 students (18608 in public universities and 26126 in private

universities). A convenient sample of 2000 international students were selected to represent six major public and private universities in the country with a response rate of 61%. For the present study, quantitative data was generated from structured closed-ended questions. The questions were administered to a sample of selected international higher-education students. The questionnaire covered two main sections: section one contained seven questions pertaining to respondents' backgrounds and profiles. It covered issues relating to age, gender, nationality, level of study, choice of the university, type of program, and source of funding. Section two required the respondents to indicate their opinion about the importance of each marketing-mix element using a five-point Likert scale. The questions represented eight main evaluation factors; namely, product (program), location (place), price (fees), promotion, physical evidence, process, people, and corporate image. All the study questions and measures were developed using previous studies, such as (Asaad et al., 2015; Chapleo & O'Sullivan, 2017; Hung, 2021; Le, 2020; James, 2022). Initial testing of the draft questionnaire took place in Jordanian universities, and modifications were made in response to feedback. The questionnaire was piloted among

30 international students from different universities, and 25 of them completed it. This was carried out as a test run for the questionnaire and an investigation of the field circumstances (Naoum, 2003). A complete questionnaire was eventually created as the tool for data collection in this study after the recommendations and responses of the respondents were validated using the pilot questionnaire.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents' Profile

Table 1 shows the profile of respondents by age, gender, nationality, level of study, choice of the university, type of program, and source of funding. Out of 1223 international students who responded to the questionnaire, 798 were males (65.4%), and 422 were females (34.6%). Most of the respondents were from Arab Gulf countries (32%), followed by other Arab countries (29.6%), and other non-Arab countries (36.4%). Also, 67% of them were enrolled in humanities faculties, 66% were undergraduates, 35.4% of them were funded by their governments, and 61% of them chose the public universities.

Table 1
Description of the respondents' demographic profile

Trait	Category	Frequency	Percentage%
Gender	Male	798	65.4
	Female	422	34.6
	Total	1220	100.0
Age	18-26 years old	871	71.4
	27-35 years old	257	21.1
	36 and above	92	7.5
	Total	1220	100.0
Nationality (region)	Gulf Arab countries	268	32.0
	Other Arab countries	361	29.6
	Other non-Western countries	306	25.1
	Western countries	284	11.3
	Total	1220	100.0

Type of Program	Humanities studies	826	67.7
	Scientific studies	394	32.3
	Total	1220	100.0
Level of program	Undergraduate	810	66.4
	Graduate	410	33.6
	Total	1220	100.0
Source of Funding	Yourself/family	525	43.0
	Government/scholarship	432	35.4
	Other	263	21.5
	Total	1220	100.0
Type of the University	Private	476	39%
	Public	744	61%
	Total	1220	100.0

Measurement Model

Evaluation of the research measurement model is one of the essential steps to ascertain the validity and reliability of the instrument used. Besides, it enables researchers to reach the best results of hypothesis testing that contribute to

generalizing the results (Gajbe et al., 2021). Accordingly, Table 2 lists the results of evaluating the validity and reliability of the measurement model used in the current research by a set of statistical methods.

Table 2
Results of reliability and validity tests

Construct	Items	Loadings	AVE	MSV	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$	IC	CR
Program (P)	P1: Program specialization	0.767	0.646	0.314	0.804	0.901	0.904
	P2: Employment opportunities of the course/ the study program opens a range of different job opportunities	0.791					
	P3: Program suitability	0.765					
	P4: Study system	0.815					
	P5: Program suitability	0.849					
Place (L)	L1: University distance	0.754	0.737	0.185	0.858	0.918	0.928
	L2: College location and accessibility	0.876					
	L3: Access to transport	0.898					
	L4: University geographic location image	0.897					
Promotion (M)	M1: Educational exhibition	0.826	0.709	0.279	0.842	0.907	0.908
	M2: University media campaign	0.862					
	M3: University Internet/Web	0.848					
	M4: University brochures and flyers	0.831					
Price (F)	F1: Financial aid offered	0.774	0.644	0.189	0.803	0.879	0.882
	F2: Discounts and scholarships offered	0.798					

	F3: Program fee/tuition fees	0.849					
	F4: Study total cost	0.788					
Process (S)	S1: Innovative teaching methods	0.854	0.713	0.167	0.844	0.909	0.912
	S2: Provision of extra-curricular activities	0.880					
	S3: University evaluation and exam system	0.802					
	S4: University enrollment process	0.840					
People (T)	T1: Professional experience of teaching staff	0.816	0.679	0.334	0.824	0.914	0.914
	T2: Professors' accessibility	0.828					
	T3: Student-staff relationship	0.805					
	T4: Expertise of teaching staff	0.843					
	T5: Academic staff class performance	0.829					
Physical Environment (E)	E1: University safety and security	0.779	0.576	0.314	0.759	0.924	0.925
	E2: University infrastructure design	0.717					
	E3: University library	0.761					
	E4: Campus atmosphere	0.790					
	E5: Recreation and sport	0.725					
	E6: Access to medical facilities/quality of health services	0.796					
	E7: Building attractiveness and classroom layout	0.760					
	E8: University environment	0.740					
Corporate Image (U)	U1: University safety and security	0.884	0.751	0.250	0.867	0.938	0.940
	U2: University infrastructure design	0.849					
	U3: University Library	0.876					
	U4: Campus atmosphere	0.833					
	U5: Recreation and sport	0.891					
Decision (D)	D1: I'm happy that I made this university my top choice.	0.829	0.692	0.334	0.831	0.812	0.811
	D2: I'm happy that I decided to attend this university.	0.833					
	D3: I have confidence in the choice of this university.	0.824					
	D4: In general, choosing this university's program is the right decision for me.	0.835					
	D5: I recommend my friends to choose this university.	0.811					

Convergent validity was evaluated by item loadings on their latent constructs and average variance extracted (AVE). The results showed that the loadings of the items were within the range (0.717-0.898), which is higher than 0.50. Also, the

AVEs for all first-order constructs were above the minimum threshold of 0.50 (Cheah et al., 2018). Therefore, the measurement model was characterized by convergent validity. In terms of discriminate

validity, both maximum shared variance (MSV) and the square root of the average variance extracted ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) were used to evaluate it. Table 2 specifies that AVE outweighs MSV for all constructs and $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ values were greater than the correlation between the research variables. Franke and Sarstedt (2019) mentioned that the values of AVE that exceed the values of MSV and values of $\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$ that exceed the correlation coefficients between the latent constructs represent a definite proof of the discriminate validity of the measurement model. Thus, the current-research model had discriminate validity. Regarding reliability, two major techniques were employed during the evaluation process of the research measurement model. First, the internal consistency (IC) was checked using Cronbach's alpha coefficients the values of which were within the range of (0.879-0.938). Moreover, the composite reliability (CR) was evaluated using McDonald's omega coefficients. The results of this measure indicated values above the lower limit of

0.70 (Goodboy & Martin, 2020). According to Louangrath and Sutanapong (2018), the values of the internal consistency and the composite reliability that exceed the minimum threshold of 0.70 are a definite evidence that the measurement model has reached appropriate levels of reliability; hence, the research measurement model had good reliability levels.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are usually used in research to illustrate the respondents' attitudes towards variables through means and standard deviations. Besides, correlation coefficients are used to demonstrate that there are acceptable linear relationships among variables that do not cause multi-collinearity. Table 3 reports the descriptive statistics associated with the current-research data.

Table 3
Means, standard deviations, and multi-collinearity test

Construct	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Program	3.82	0.932	1								
2. Place	3.36	1.088	0.164	1							
3. Promotion	3.59	0.941	0.361	0.231	1						
4. Price	3.02	0.929	0.259	0.295	0.224	1					
5. Process	3.38	0.905	0.163	0.213	0.244	0.194	1				
6. People	3.43	0.966	0.453	0.311	0.270	0.339	0.154	1			
7. Physical Environment	3.65	0.857	0.510	0.361	0.360	0.249	0.219	0.433	1		
8. Corporate Image	3.55	0.954	0.408	0.205	0.406	0.179	0.233	0.350	0.429	1	
9. University Choice	3.54	0.822	0.511	0.400	0.486	0.389	0.371	0.533	0.504	0.468	1
Note: All correlation coefficients are significant at a level equal to or less than 0.05.											

The results of Table 3 confirm that all the constructs used to measure the marketing-mix were of a moderate level, except for the program (M= 3.82, SD= 0.932), which received a high relative importance level. Despite this, price (M= 3.02, SD= 0.929) was ranked last with a moderate relative importance level. The results indicate that the

dependent variable, the choice of Jordanian universities, was at a moderate relative importance level (M= 3.54, SD= 0.822). In terms of correlation, there was a linear relationship within the acceptable limits between the constructs of the marketing-mix and the choice of Jordanian universities, where the

correlation coefficients ranged within (0.371-0.533). Moreover, the correlation coefficients between the marketing-mix construct, as the research independent variable, were lower than the upper threshold of 0.80 (Hair et al., 2019). Accordingly, the study data is suitable for the linear-regression model and there is no multi-collinearity between the independent-variable constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Structural-equation modeling (SEM) was used to test the

research hypotheses, expressing the relationship between the constructs of the marketing-mix and the choice of Jordanian universities. Initially, the structural model was evaluated by the goodness of fit indices illustrated in Figure (2). Figure (2) indicates that the chi-squared ratio (CMIN/DF) was 1.621; therefore, it was within the appropriate level, as it did not exceed 3, the upper threshold of this indicator (Savalei, 2021).

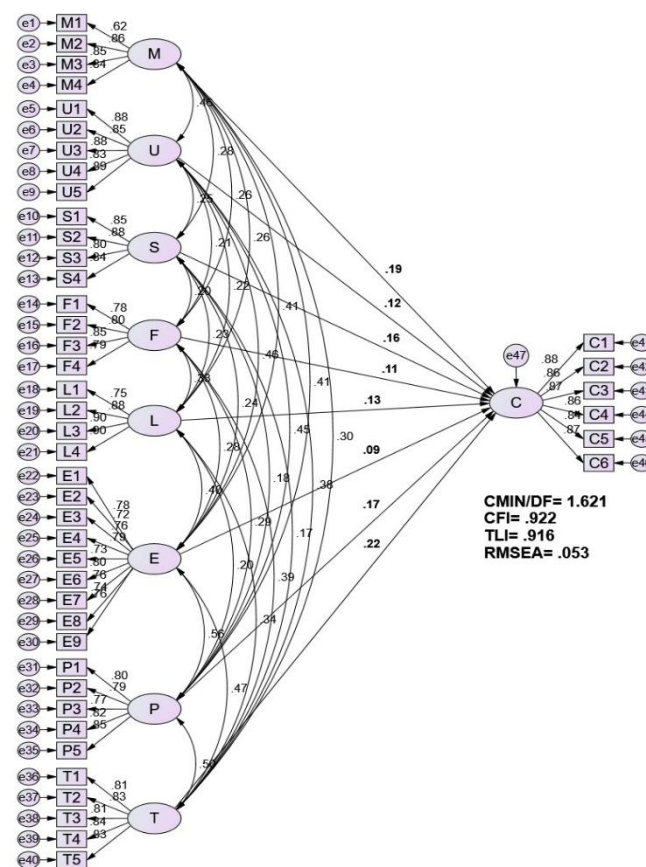


Figure (2)

SEM for testing the impact of marketing-mix constructs on the choice of Jordanian universities

The values of CFI and TLI were 0.922 and 0.916, respectively. Padgett and Morgan (2021) considered that the values of these indicators exceed the minimum of 0.90 as an argument of the comparative quality of the structural model for hypothesis testing. Moreover, RMSEA was 0.053, which

did not reach the maximum allowable value of 0.08 (Xia & Yang, 2019). Accordingly, the structural model used was suitable and the results listed in Table 4 could be relied on to determine the results of hypothesis testing.

The results in Table 5 indicated supporting all the research hypotheses that were referring to the impact of the marketing-mix constructs on the choice of Jordanian universities, except for those that indicated the impact of the physical environment, where the corresponding hypothesis was rejected based on the probabilistic value that exceeded 0.05. Moreover, people ($\beta = 0.218$, $t = 3.926$, $p = 0.000$) had the greatest impact, while price ($\beta = 0.113$, $t = 2.244$,

$p = 0.026$) had the least impact on the choice of Jordanian universities. Regarding the moderating role, hierarchical-regression analysis was applied through SPSS PROCESS v14. The results in Table 5 refer to the models used to assess the moderating role of demographic variables in the relationship between the marketing-mix and the choice of Jordanian universities.

Table 4
The standardized and unstandardized coefficients for path analysis

Path			B	S.E.	β	t-value	p-value	Result
Program	→	University Choice	0.150	0.051	0.171	2.957**	0.003	Supported
Place	→	University Choice	0.102	0.039	0.135	2.620**	0.009	Supported
Promotion	→	University Choice	0.163	0.046	0.187	3.548***	0.000	Supported
Price	→	University Choice	0.100	0.045	0.113	2.244*	0.026	Supported
Process	→	University Choice	0.150	0.044	0.165	3.417**	0.001	Supported
People	→	University Choice	0.186	0.047	0.218	3.926***	0.000	Supported
Physical Environment	→	University Choice	0.087	0.057	0.090	1.531	0.127	Rejected
Corporate Image	→	University Choice	0.104	0.047	0.121	2.218*	0.028	Supported
Note: * $P < 0.05$, ** $P < 0.01$, *** $P < 0.001$.								

Table 5
Hierarchical regression analysis results

Constructs	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	t-value	β	t-value	β	t-value
Marketing Mix	0.741	16.387***	0.701	14.242***	0.677	14.754***
Gender			0.129	2.579**	0.125	2.530***
Nationality			0.115	2.377*	0.133	3.054***
Level			0.106	1.272*	0.130	2.875***
Type			-0.039	-0.797	-0.25	-0.552
Funding			0.012	0.263	0.20	0.471
Field			0.005	0.107	0.008	0.182
Marketing-mix × Gender					0.103	2.243*
Marketing mix × Nationality					0.146	3.219**
Marketing mix × Level					0.110	2.365*
Marketing mix × Type					-0.045	-0.943

Marketing mix × Funding				0.027	0.599
Marketing mix × Field				0.010	0.216
R ²	0.549	0.564	0.644		
Δ R ²		0.029	0.087		
Δ F	268.533	2.473	9.024		
Note: * P< 0.05, ** P< 0.01, *** P< 0.001.					

Firstly, the direct impact between the marketing-mix and the choice of Jordanian universities was tested through Model 1. The results demonstrated that the marketing-mix had a statistically significant impact on the choice of Jordanian universities ($\beta = 0.741$, $t = 16.287$, $p < 0.001$). Moreover, this model produced an interpretation coefficient R^2 of 0.549 and its F value was 268.533. The demographic variables were included in the regression model to show whether they impact the choice of Jordanian universities, which was expressed by Model 2. The results confirmed the impact of gender ($\beta = 0.129$, $t = 2.579$, $p < 0.01$), nationality ($\beta = 0.115$, $t = 2.377$, $p < 0.05$), and educational level ($\beta = 0.106$, $t = 1.272$, $p < 0.05$) on the choice of Jordanian universities. On the contrary, the results showed that university type, funding method, and study field did not have a significant impact on the choice of Jordanian universities. The inclusion of demographic variables led to an improvement of 0.029 in R^2 , and F-value was enhanced by 2.473.

Model 3 was used to examine the impact of the interaction between the marketing-mix and demographic variables, as well as how this is reflected on the choice of Jordanian universities. The results indicated that the interaction between the marketing-mix and gender ($\beta = 0.103$, $t = 2.243$, $p < 0.05$) was positively reflected on the choice of Jordanian universities. Similarly, the interaction between the marketing-mix and nationality ($\beta = 0.146$, $t = 3.219$, $p < 0.01$) and the interaction between the marketing-mix and program level ($\beta = 0.110$, $t = 2.365$, $p < 0.05$) had positive reflections on the choice of Jordanian universities. However, the interaction between the marketing-mix and the rest of the demographic variables was

not statistically significant; therefore, these variables do not moderate the relationship between the marketing-mix and the choice of Jordanian universities. Moreover, the interaction test led to an increase in R^2 by 0.087, and the F-value was improved by 9.024. Figures (3, 4 and 5) show the result of the interaction between the marketing-mix and each of gender, nationality, and educational level at low and high interaction levels.

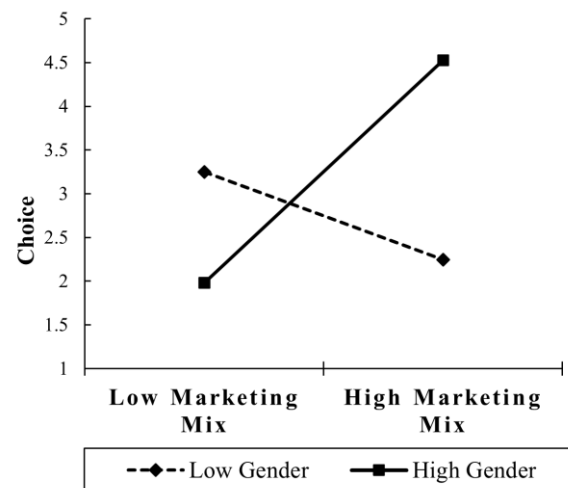


Figure (3)
The interaction between
Marketing mix and gender

Figure (3) which was expressing the result of the interaction between the marketing-mix and gender, demonstrates that the interaction at low levels of gender produces an inverse relationship with the choice of Jordanian universities. By contrast, the interaction at high levels of gender results in a marked

increase in the choice of Jordanian universities.

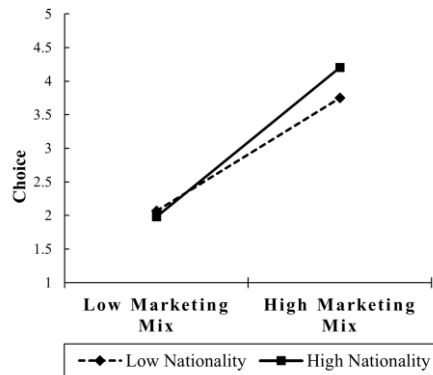


Figure (4)

The interaction between marketing mix and nationality

Figure (4) shows the result of the interaction between the marketing-mix and nationality and how it affects the choice of Jordanian universities. The simple slope confirms that the low and high levels of interaction have positive impacts on the choice of Jordanian universities. Nevertheless, the high level of interaction leads to better results on the choice of Jordanian universities, as its slope was greater than that related to the low interaction level.

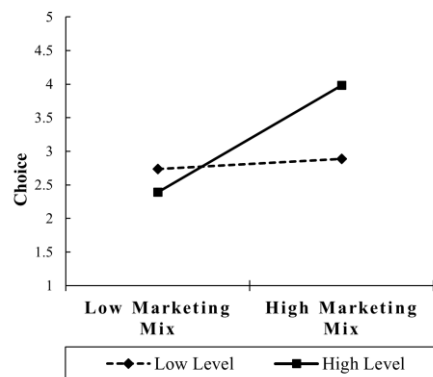


Figure (5)

The interaction between Marketing mix and program level

The result of the interaction between the marketing-mix and the program level is shown in Figure (5). This figure illustrates that the low interaction level hardly affects the choice of Jordanian universities. As for the high interaction

level, the figure demonstrates that it has a strong impact on the choice of Jordanian universities, where its slope has taken a positive value.

Contributions, Recommendations, and Future Studies

Overall, this study contributes to filling the gaps in marketing literature by presenting an empirical framework for measuring how higher-education marketing-mix elements influence international students' decision to study in a foreign country, which has not been tested before. The component factor analysis confirmed that higher-education marketing-mix elements can be divided into eight factors: physical evidence, product (program), corporate image, price (fees), location (place), promotion, process, and people (teaching staff). These eight factors were also supported by previous studies, such as Kotler and Fox (1995), Lukić and Lukić (2016), and Onk and Joseph (2017). The study found that these factors significantly influence international students' decision to study in Jordan, except for the physical environment factor. Therefore, policy makers in public and private universities in Jordan should pay more attention to these factors when developing marketing strategies for recruiting international students. These results are supported by previous studies, such as Asaad et al. (2015), Chapleo and O'Sullivan (2017), Hung (2021), Le (2020), and James (2022).

The study also found that certain demographic variables of the respondents significantly moderated the impact of marketing-mix elements on international students' decision to study in Jordan, such as gender, nationality, and program level. Other variables, such as type of university and source of funding, were found to be insignificant. Therefore, policy makers in Jordanian universities should consider these variations in marketing-mix elements when targeting any segment of international students, whether in terms of their age,

gender, nationality, or source of funding. Based on the study's findings, Jordanian institutions should consider the following managerial implications when developing higher-education marketing-mix strategies to influence international students' decision to enroll in their universities:

- (1) Product (program) strategy: This involves providing services and programs that meet the demands of the workplace and combine theory and application, enhancing or retaining the accreditation status, and expanding the amount and quality of research, among others.
- (2) People's strategy (faculty staff): This involves creating initiatives to enhance and strengthen lecturers' credentials and skills in the application of science and technology, as well as their skill and professionalism in supervising research.
- (3) Promotional strategy: International higher-education promotion media campaigns that use advertising, the internet, and social media, which can be accounted for in terms of appearance, accessibility, and the quality of information about Jordanian universities.
- (4) Process strategy: This includes creating learning standards and protocols, as well as a transparent, well-organized, and efficient registration process.
- (5) Location (place) strategy: This includes considering the university-location image, class locations, university-distance convenience, and access to logistic facilities.
- (6) Price (fees) strategy: Program fees, financial aids, discounts, and scholarships offered should be considered in terms of reliability and credibility for the purpose of recruiting international foreign students to study in Jordan. Universities can set policies and provide

different financial aids to the students.

- (7) Physical evidence strategy: This includes the university-infrastructure design, university safety and security, physical appearance, university environment, availability of IT facilities, library, medical, sport, and accommodation services.
- (8) University image and reputation: This includes university's international ranking, academic performance and quality, international recognition and accreditation, which should be highly considered to attract international foreign students.

In conclusion, the study confirms that no single marketing-mix factor influences international students' decision to study abroad, but multiple factors should be considered, and their relative importance might vary due to demographic characteristics, such as age, gender, nationality, and source of funding. Therefore, all components of the higher-education marketing mix should be considered when developing marketing-segmentation strategies due to their overall significant influence on students' decision-making. Based on the findings of the study, future research is expected to complement this analysis, employing a sample of prospective students who have already registered or are new, among other approaches. This offers a better illustration of the circumstances under which students select the higher-education services that they will use. Future study can further expand on elements that employ additional indicators or other characteristics deemed appropriate when selecting higher-education services.

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