

# FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' SELECTION

*of*

**Universiti Malaysia Sarawak**



# Factors Influencing Students Selection of Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

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	<b>Page</b>
Table of Contents	iii
Foreword	iv
List of Tables	v
Summary	vi
1.0 Introduction	1
2.0 Review of Related Literature	1
3.0 Problem Statement	2
4.0 Research Methodology	2
4.1 Research Instrument	2
4.2 Data Collection Procedures	4
4.3 Data Analyses	4
5.0 Findings and Discussions	4
5.1 Reliabilities of the Questionnaire	5
5.2 Demographics of the Respondents	5
5.2.1 Faculty	5
5.2.2 Gender	7
5.2.3 Ethnicity	7
5.2.4 Residence	8
5.3 Selection of UNIMAS	8
5.4 Sources of Information	11
5.4.1 Differences in Influence of Information Sources based on Selected Demographics	13
5.5 Factors Influencing Students' Decision to Select UNIMAS	25
5.5.1 University Choice	25
5.5.2 Institutional Reputation	25
5.5.3 Personal Fit	29
5.5.4 Academic Program Choice	32
5.5.5 Employment Prospect	34
5.5.6 Quality of Teaching and Academics	36
5.6 Difference in Influence on Students' Decision to Select UNIMAS based on Selected Demographics	38
5.6.1 Differences based on Gender	38
5.6.2 Differences based on Residence	39
5.6.3 Differences based on Ethnicity	45
5.6.4 Differences based on Faculty	54
5.7 Most Influential Factors in Selecting UNIMAS	64
5.8 Conclusion and Recommendations	65
Bibliography	67
Appendix 1	68

## Foreword

Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) was established as the eighth public universities in Malaysia on 24 December 1992. It began offering its academic program in 1993 to students registered under its two pioneering faculties, namely, the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology. That has now expanded to eight (8) faculties offering 34 undergraduate programs.

As the first full-fledged public university in Sarawak, UNIMAS aims to generate, disseminate and apply knowledge strategically and innovatively in its effort to enhance the quality of the nation's culture and prosperity of its people. Its vision is clear; to become an exemplary university of internationally acknowledged stature and a scholarly institution of choice, for both students and academics through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship.

Strategically located in the state of Sarawak, UNIMAS is in an ideal position to offer its students an enriching experience that is unrepeatable elsewhere. Here at UNIMAS, students will be able to not only benefit from a state-of-the-art research and academic facilities, but celebrate the explosion of natural and cultural diversity of the state. The environment and the diverse mix of students provide an environment conducive for interpersonal growth. The learning experience is further enhanced by an integrated learning system to provide for a well-rounded education. In addition, programs and curriculum at UNIMAS are constantly reviewed to ensure not only relevancy, but most important, to impart knowledge needed by its graduates in a real life experience.

UNIMAS will continue to explore to the fullest the potential present in this region and harness the economic, social, cultural, and environmental resources of this state for sustainable development and socioeconomic change that would benefit not only Sarawak but the nation as a whole. And in our endeavour, we will continue to place at the forefront our students' development and the economic and social development of the state and the nation. We only hope that we would be able to gather a quality pool of students to realise our aspirations and inspirations.

It is, therefore, important for UNIMAS to understand the information sources that students used to obtain information about the university and also to investigate the factors that influenced students to select UNIMAS as the place to pursue their higher education. Information obtained from these efforts will enable UNIMAS to come up with more effective ways to create awareness and interest among potential students, and to attract them to choose and study at UNIMAS.

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## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Reliabilities of the questionnaire based on pilot and actual studies	5
2	Distribution of respondents by faculties	5
3	Distribution of respondents by gender, ethnicity and residence	7
4	Distribution of respondents by their choice of UNIMAS	8
5	Distribution of respondents by gender by their choice of UNIMAS	8
6	Distribution of respondents by residence by their choice of UNIMAS	9
7	Respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence	11
8	Differences in respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence based on gender and residence	13
9	Differences in respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence based on ethnicity	15
10	Differences in respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence based on faculties	19
11	Rankings of the sic factors influencing students' decision to select UNIMAS	20
12	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: University Choice	21
13	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Institutional Reputation	23
14	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Personal Fit	25
15	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Academic Program Choice	27
16	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Employment Prospect	29
17	Influences on decision to select UNIMAS: Quality of Teaching and Academics	31
18	Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on gender and residence	34
19	Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on ethnicity	41
20	Differences in influences on decision to select UNIMAS based on faculties	49
21	Regression analyses results to determine the influential factors on students' decision to select UNIMAS	53

## Summary

When UNIMAS first began its operation, there were only eight (8) public institutions of higher learning (PIHL) in Malaysia, in which UNIMAS is included. That has now risen to 20 public universities in a period of less than 20 years. These gave the current students more choices on PIHL in Malaysia in which to further their studies. Therefore, competition among PIHL to attract students to come and study with them is becoming tougher.

UNIMAS has a clear vision to become an exemplary university of internationally acknowledged stature and a scholarly institution of choice, for both students and academics through the pursuit of excellence in teaching, research and scholarship. But to achieve its vision, UNIMAS among others, has to be able to attract quality students to enroll in its programs. However, as the number of public universities has increased dramatically in the recent years, the competition for students has increased as students have more choices to select a public university in which to study.

As tertiary education becomes more competitive, extra efforts must be made by the PIHL to attract students to study in their campuses. Two major questions that are related to students' choice of a university are: (1) how do they come to know about the university and its academic programs; and (2) what are the factors that influence their decision to select a university to further their studies?

This study was, therefore, conducted with the major aim of identifying the information sources that are available to the students to get to know UNIMAS and its academic programs, and to determine the factors that influence the students to select UNIMAS to further their studies. This study employed a cross-sectional survey as a methodology to obtain data from the respondents.

The sample of this study was obtained from a population of all first year students who were enrolled in the academic programs offered by all the eight faculties in UNIMAS for the 2007/2008 academic session. Descriptive statistics, such as percentages, means and standard deviations were used to analyze the data on selected demographic characteristics of the respondents, the information sources, and on the choice of UNIMAS as a university to further their studies. Inferential statistics, such as independent samples t-tests, One-Way ANOVAs and regression analysis were used to determine which among the information source(s) was/were more influential, and whether the factors that influenced students' preference differed among certain group of students.

This study found that the two major sources of information for students to know UNIMAS and its academic programs are "by word of mouth from friends and relatives," and "UNIMAS website." These significant sources are followed by "Unit Pusat Universiti Guides," "school teacher career talks," and "UNIMAS published materials." The two major factors that have a major influence on the students' decision to select UNIMAS are academic program choice, and the quality of teaching and academics at UNIMAS.

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that the management of UNIMAS put more emphasis on improving the quality of the information and the attractive design of the UNIMAS website so that it is able to attract more people to access it. Also, the

management of UNIMAS should focus on creating a better and conducive learning environment for the students to study and socialize, so that they can tell their friends and relatives who are potential students that UNIMAS is a wonderful place to be.

Building up strong alumni program is also useful, so that the alumnus of UNIMAS can spread the good words about UNIMAS to their friends and relatives. It is also recommended that UNIMAS maintains and enhances the current academic programs that are being offered by the faculties, because students are attracted by these contemporary and forward looking academic programs.

The management of the university should continue to focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning methodologies and approaches used in UNIMAS, and also to continuously upgrade the competence of the academics through various professional development programs to enhance their profession as quality educators.

## **1.0 Introduction**

Tertiary education in public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia has become more competitive in recent years due to the relatively sudden increase in the number of public universities in the country. When Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) first started its academic programs in 1993, there were only eight public universities in Malaysia compared to twenty-one at present (Ministry of Higher Education, n.d.). Therefore, the current pool of students is presented with more choices of public university to further their study.

As of late, UNIMAS has been faced with problem of getting enough number of students to fill up the enrollment quota for the academic programs offered by its various faculties. The worst hit faculty, which is the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology for example, was unable to get enough students to fill the quota allocated for its six academic programs. On average, the faculty was only able to attain 23.9 percent of the quota in all of its six academic programs for the 2007/08 academic session (Undergraduate Studies Division, 2008).

Concerned by this problem, UNIMAS over the years has used various means and sources to publicise itself and its academic programs to the public and to the students, in particular. Those efforts were intended to create awareness and interest among potential students and to attract them to choose and study at UNIMAS.

## **2.0 Review of Related Literature**

As tertiary education becomes more competitive, extra effort by the university to attract students to come and study in its campus becomes more significant. One of the important information that would assist a university in laying the strategies to attract more students to walk through its gate and study is the factor that determines students' selection of a university or their preference toward a university.

Many studies have been done in other countries to investigate students' choice of educational institutions. Some of the studies that are relevant to this research is reviewed and discussed. Krampf and Heinlein (1981) conducted one of the earliest studies into the marketing of universities by interviewing prospective students for a large mid-western university in the United States of America. Through factor analysis, they found that prospective students who had positive impression of a particular university rated campus attractiveness, informative campus visits, family recommendation, major's with good programs, informative university catalogue, closeness to home and friendly campus atmosphere, highly suggesting that these factors might influence preferences.

A similar study by Hooley and Lynch (1981) analysed the choice processes of prospective students of United Kingdom universities. They identified six attributes used by the students in their decision process. The attributes were course suitability, university location, academic reputation, distance from home, type of university (modern/old), and advice from parents and teachers.

While the above studies look at local students', Mazzarol, Soutar and Tien (1996) studied the factors that influenced international students' choice of study destination, using the students in Australia as their samples. Students were asked to rate, in term of importance, 17 factors that influenced their decision to study at a particular institution. They found that the most important factor was the recognition of their qualifications by prospective employers. This was followed by the institution's reputation in terms of quality, its willingness to recognise students' previous qualifications, and the academic staff's reputation in term of quality and expertise.

In a separate Australian study, Soutar and Turner (2002) investigated the importance of a number of attributes used by school leavers in Australia to determine their preference for a particular university. The results indicated that the four most important determinants were course suitability, academic reputation, job prospects and teaching quality.

Lin (1977), who investigated the reasons for students' selection of a particular educational institution in the Netherlands, found that the most significant reasons for students' selection were the quality of education offered, career opportunities, the school's reputation, traineeship opportunities, faculty qualifications, academic standards, availability of modern facilities, curriculum emphasis, student life, and the availability of an international student body.

In addition to the studies conducted by Mazzarol et al. (1996) and Lin (1997), the study by Turner (1998) on the reasons a group of business undergraduates decided to enroll at a particular university, found that students rated future job prospects, qualification that is valued by employers, opportunity to use modern facilities, standard of teaching, and international recognition of the university's programs as the most important factors.

While there has been no published study done on students' choice of university in Malaysia, the studies that have been conducted in other countries provided a useful list of potential factors such as course suitability, university location, academic reputation, distance from home, type of university, family opinion, job prospects, quality of teaching and campus atmosphere. Therefore, these factors were considered as the list of possible factors for investigation in this study.

### **3.0 Problem Statement**

Students may come to know a university through various sources, and some of these sources may be more influential than others in shaping the students' preference of a university. Also, the students may consider many factors before selecting a university in which to further their studies. But, whatever factors that they may have considered in their selection of a particular university, some factors will be more important than others. To select a university, the students will consider the factors important to them and, consciously or unconsciously, trade-off between these factors. It is the nature of this trade-off process that this study seeks to investigate and understand. Knowledge of this trade-off process and the relative importance attached to the various factors should provide a good foundation for the university to formulate strategies which would attract students to come and study in its campus.

This study, therefore, attempted to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What were the information sources available to students that enable them to discover UNIMAS and its academic programs, and which among these source(s) was/were the most influential?
2. What were the factors that influenced students to select a university (UNIMAS) to further their studies, and which among these factors was/were the most important?
3. Were there certain groups of students for whom different factors were more important?

### **4.0 Research Methodology**

This study employed a cross-sectional survey to collect data from the respondents. The population of this study was the 2040 first year students enrolled in all the academic programs offered by all the eight faculties in UNIMAS for the 2007/08 academic session. The respondents were obtained through a stratified random sampling method and were stratified by faculty and academic programs. The sample size for this study was 1396 students which represent approximately 68.0 percent of the first year student population for the 2007/08 academic session.

#### **4.1 Research Instrument**

The research instrument for this study was modified from instruments that have been used by other researchers (Hooley & Lynch, 1981; Lin, 1997; Turner, 1998; Soutar & Turner, 2002). The research instrument consisted of three sections.

Section A contained questions to gather information on selected demographic characteristics of the students.

Section B included 12 closed-ended items to obtain data on the students' sources of information regarding the university and the extent of each of these sources in influencing their choice. There was an additional open-ended item to elicit additional information on students' sources of information regarding the university which were not listed among the 12 items.

Section C consisted of 41 closed-ended items related to factors that influenced students' preference of a university. There were six sub-sections: University Choice (12 items), Institutional Reputation (7 items), Personal Fit (11 items), Academic Program Choice (6 items), Employment Prospect (5 items) and Quality of Teaching and Learning (5 items). There was an additional open-ended item to elicit additional information not listed in the close-ended items.

The close-ended items in Section B and Section C had six response selections, ranging from "Very little influence", "Little influence," "No influence," "Strong influence," "Very strong influence," to "Not applicable."

A pilot test was conducted prior to the actual study to ensure the reliability of the research instrument, especially for Section B and Section C. The research instrument is attached in Appendix 1.

## **4.2 Data Collection Procedures**

Data collection was conducted in February 2008 during the second semester of the 2007/08 academic session. The questionnaires were distributed to the selected sample of students through their respective faculties.

## **4.3 Data Analyses**

Descriptive statistics such as percentages (%), means, and standard deviations were used to analyze data on the students' selected demographic characteristics, their information sources and the choice of UNIMAS as a university to further their studies. Independent t-tests, One-Way ANOVAs, and regression analysis were used to determine which of the information source(s) was/were more influential, and whether the factors that influenced students' preference differed among certain groups of students.

## **5.0 Findings and Discussions**

## 5.1 Reliabilities of the Questionnaire

The reliability of Section B and Section C of the questionnaire was found to be at an acceptable level during a pilot study conducted on 72 third year Education students from the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD), UNIMAS; the students were not involved in the actual study. The Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) values for Section B and the six sub-sections in Section C were more than 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978). Likewise, subsequent reliability analyses on the actual research sample showed that Section B and Section C of the questionnaire showed acceptable reliability levels (refer to Table 1).

Table 1  
*Reliabilities of the questionnaire based on pilot and actual studies*

Questionnaire	Pilot Study (N=71)	Actual Study (N=1396)
<i>Section B:</i> Source of information on UNIMAS (12 items)	0.914	0.879
<i>Section C:</i> University choice (7 items)	0.753	0.735
Institutional reputation (7 items)	0.883	0.913
Personal fit (11 items)	0.860	0.850
Academic program choice (6 items)	0.787	0.847
Employment prospect (5 items)	0.770	0.894
Quality of teaching and learning (5 items)	0.896	0.910

## 5.2 Demographics of Survey Respondents

A total of 1396 respondents consisting of first year undergraduates of the 2007/2008 academic session from all the eight faculties in UNIMAS were involved in this study.

### 5.2.1 Faculty

Table 2 shows the breakdown of the respondents by faculty: 10.1% from the Faculty of Engineering (FE), 7.2% from the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences (FMHS), 21.2% from the Faculty of Resource Science and Technology (FRST), 2.0% from the Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology (FCSIT), 17.0% from the Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB), 17.3% from the

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts (FACA), 10.7% from the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development (FCSHD), and 14.5% from the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS).

Table 2  
Distribution of respondents by faculties

Faculty	Frequency	Percent
Faculty of Engineering	141	10.1
<i>Civil Engineering</i>	13	
<i>Electronics &amp; Telecommunication Engineering</i>	30	
<i>Electronics &amp; Computer Engineering</i>	19	
<i>Mechanical Engineering &amp; Manufacturing Systems</i>	77	
<i>Omitted</i>	2	
Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences	100	7.2
<i>Medicine</i>	65	
<i>Nursing</i>	29	
<i>Omitted</i>	6	
Faculty of Resource Science and Technology	296	21.2
<i>Aquatic Resource Science &amp; Management</i>	45	
<i>Animal Resource Science &amp; Management</i>	24	
<i>Plant Resource Science &amp; Management</i>	43	
<i>Resource Chemistry</i>	47	
<i>Resource Biotechnology</i>	127	
<i>Omitted</i>	10	
Faculty of Computer Science and Information Technology	28	2.0
<i>Software Engineering</i>	6	
<i>Network Computing</i>	6	
<i>Information System</i>	4	
<i>Computational Science</i>	8	
<i>Multimedia Computing</i>	3	
<i>Omitted</i>	1	
Faculty of Economics and Business	237	17.0
<i>International Economics &amp; Business</i>	34	
<i>Industrial Economics &amp; Organization</i>	32	

<i>Tourism &amp; Hospitality Management</i>	1	
<i>Marketing</i>	161	
<i>Omitted</i>	9	
Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts	242	17.3
<i>Fine Arts</i>	22	
<i>Design Technology</i>	93	
<i>Arts Management</i>	50	
<i>Music</i>	12	
<i>Drama &amp; Theatre</i>	-	
<i>Cinematography</i>	28	
<i>Omitted</i>	37	
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development	150	10.7
<i>Cognitive Science</i>	41	
<i>Human Resource Development</i>	105	
<i>Omitted</i>	4	
Faculty of Social Sciences	202	14.5
<i>International Studies</i>	22	
<i>Industrial Relations &amp; Labor Studies</i>	37	
<i>Communication Studies</i>	33	
<i>Social Works Studies</i>	29	
<i>Development Planning &amp; Management</i>	34	
<i>Politics &amp; Government Studies</i>	30	
<i>Omitted</i>	17	
<hr/>		
Total	1396	100.0
<hr/>		

## 5.2.2 Gender

As revealed in Table 3, a majority of the respondents (68.7%) were female. Only 30.9% of the respondents were male. This finding shows that the ratio of female to male students in UNIMAS is approximately 2:1.

## 5.2.3 Ethnicity

The ethnicity of the respondents reflects the composition of the major races found in Malaysia. As shown in Table 3, the Malays who made up 44.5% of the

respondents is the major race followed by Chinese (28.6%), Sarawak Bumiputera - such as, Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu (26.0%), Sabah Bumiputera - such as, Kadazan, Dusun, Bajau and Murut (4.4%), and Indian (4.4%).

### 5.2.4 Residence

The respondents of the study were categorized into urban and rural students. Table 3 reveals that 62.3% of the respondents came from urban areas and 30.5% of them from rural areas.

Table 3  
*Distribution of respondents by gender, ethnicity and residence*

Selected Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	431	30.9
Female	959	68.7
Omitted	6	0.4
Ethnicity		
Malay	623	44.6
Chinese	399	28.6
Indian	61	4.4
Sarawak Bumiputera	223	16.0
Sabah Bumiputera	61	4.4
Other Bumiputera	13	0.9
Others	8	0.6
Omitted	8	0.6
Residence		
Urban	876	62.8
Rural	426	30.5
Omitted	94	6.7
Total	1396	100.0

### 5.3 Selection of UNIMAS

When applying for a place to pursue their studies in public institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, applicants are given the opportunity to indicate their pref-

erence for universities by ranking them from 'first choice' to 'eighth choice' in the application form. As indicated in Table 4, slightly more than one quarter of the respondents (27.2%) put UNIMAS as their first choice for a university to pursue their studies. But there were also respondents (18.0%) who did not put UNIMAS in their list of preference for universities but were offered a place in UNIMAS and chose to pursue their studies at the university.

Table 4  
*Distribution of respondents by their choice of UNIMAS (n=1361)*

	N	%
First choice	370	27.2
Second choice	140	10.3
Third choice	111	8.2
Fourth choice	98	7.2
Fifth choice	75	5.5
Sixth choice	73	5.4
Seventh choice	92	6.8
Eighth choice	155	11.4
I didn't select UNIMAS	247	18.0
Total	1361	100.0

From the gender aspects, approximately 31.6% of male respondents selected UNIMAS as their first choice for a university compared to 25.2% of female respondents. However, females (20.8%) outnumbered males (11.7%) in term of those students who did not put UNIMAS as one of their preferred university, but were offered a place to study in the university and chose to pursue their studies in the university.

Table 5  
*Distribution of respondents by gender on their preference for UNIMAS*

	Gender			
	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
First choice	130	31.6	236	25.2
Second choice	40	9.7	100	10.6
Third choice	46	11.2	65	6.9

Fourth choice	29	7.1	69	7.3
Fifth choice	28	6.8	46	4.9
Sixth choice	24	5.8	49	5.2
Seventh choice	27	6.6	65	6.9
Eighth choice	39	9.5	115	12.2
I didn't select UNIMAS	48	11.7	196	20.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>411</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>941</b>	<b>100.0</b>

So, does student residence background influence their decision in deciding to put UNIMAS as their first choice for a university? The data shown in Table 6 indicates that whether they're from the rural or urban background, the percentage of students who decided to put UNIMAS as their first choice university is almost similar between the two residence background, i.e. 28.0% for the urban areas and 27.8% for the rural areas. Little difference were also seen between the two residential background in terms of those who did not indicate UNIMAS as their first choice for a university but were offered a place and chose to pursue their studies at UNIMAS; 18.2% and 17.7% for urban and rural residential background, respectively.

Table 6

*Distribution of respondents by residence background on their preference for UNIMAS*

	Residence			
	Urban		Rural	
	N	%	N	%
First choice	240	28.0	115	27.8
Second choice	87	10.2	42	10.2
Third choice	67	7.8	34	8.2
Fourth choice	65	7.6	23	5.6
Fifth choice	48	5.6	24	5.8
Sixth choice	50	5.8	20	4.8
Seventh choice	56	6.5	30	7.3
Eighth choice	87	10.2	52	12.6
I didn't select UNIMAS	156	18.2	73	17.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>100.0</b>

## 5.4 Sources of Information

The study looked at the various sources of information that may have reached the students and investigated the extent to which respondents used those various sources and how far each of those sources actually influenced the students' decision. Twelve sources of information were identified and investigated (Table 7).

The findings indicate that the most used and influential source of information for the respondents was "by word of mouth from friends and relatives," with more than half of the students (55.6% with a mean of 2.47) suggesting this source of information as having a strong influence.

The next important source of information on UNIMAS was its "website" with a mean of 2.46. However, although 54.2% of the respondents felt that the website was an influential source of information, 29.2% perceived it to be of "little influence" and "very little influence" and 11.9% reported it as of "no influence".

The next cluster of information source was the "*Unit Pusat Universiti Guides*" (UPU Guides), "school teacher career talks" and "UNIMAS published materials" with means of 2.08, 2.06 and 2.01 respectively, which indicated that these sources were of little influence. Slightly more than one third of the 1396 respondents (36.4%) felt that the UPU Guides were of "little" or "very little influence" and 16.4% viewed that the guides as of "no influence". Likewise, 31.5% of the respondents perceived that their "school teacher career talks" had little or very little influence on their decision making, and approximately 19.0% of the respondents felt that the career talks did not influence their choice of UNIMAS for furthering their studies.

Printed material and electronic media exposure, it seems, has little or no influence at all on students' decision to enroll in UNIMAS. "UNIMAS published materials" was not considered to be an important information source as 34.4% of the respondents indicated that it was of little influence and 18.6% stated that it had no influence at all. In addition, "Newspaper articles", "UNIMAS roadshow", "school visit to UNIMAS", "newspaper advertisement", "UNIMAS open day", "UNIMAS telephone hotline" and "documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio" ranked lowly as influential sources of information on the 1346 respondents' decisions to choose UNIMAS.



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Table 7

Respondents' sources of information and the extent of their influence.

Sources of Information about UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		No Influence	Very Little Influence	Little Influence	Strong Influence	Very Strong Influence	Not Applicable	Omitted	Mean	Std Dev
12	Friends and relative	171 (12.2%)	85 (6.1%)	285 (20.4%)	500 (35.8%)	276 (19.8%)	60 (4.3%)	19 (1.4%)	2.47	1.256
2	UNIMAS website	166 (11.9%)	64 (4.6%)	344 (24.6%)	505 (36.2%)	251 (18.0%)	54 (3.9%)	12 (0.9%)	2.46	1.213
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides	229 (16.4%)	158 (11.3%)	351 (25.1%)	351 (25.1%)	182 (13.0%)	93 (6.7%)	32 (2.3%)	2.08	1.300
7	School teacher career talk	265 (19.0%)	92 (6.6%)	348 (24.9%)	411 (29.4%)	141 (10.1%)	124 (8.9%)	15 (1.1%)	2.06	1.300
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	260 (18.6%)	99 (7.1%)	381 (27.3%)	405 (29.0%)	115 (8.2%)	112 (8.0%)	24 (1.7%)	2.01	1.262
9	Newspaper articles and supplements	254 (18.2%)	118 (8.5%)	386 (27.7%)	378 (27.1%)	118 (8.5%)	117 (8.4%)	25 (1.8%)	1.99	1.258
5	UNIMAS road-show event and career fair	288 (20.6%)	96 (6.9%)	381 (27.3%)	353 (25.3%)	122 (8.7%)	135 (9.7%)	21 (1.5%)	1.94	1.297

8	School visit to UNIMAS	328 (23.5%)	97 (6.9%)	298 (21.3%)	235 (23.3%)	121 (8.7%)	215 (15.4%)	12 (0.9%)	1.84	1.369
10	Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS	316 (22.6%)	119 (8.5%)	379 (27.1%)	347 (24.9%)	94 (6.7%)	130 (9.3%)	11 (0.8%)	1.83	1.284
3	UNIMAS open day	317 (22.7%)	101 (7.2%)	352 (25.2%)	323 (23.1%)	101 (7.2%)	145 (10.4%)	57 (4.1%)	1.82	1.314
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	359 (25.7%)	136 (9.7%)	347 (24.9%)	300 (21.5%)	107 (7.7%)	233 (9.5%)	14 (1.0%)	1.73	1.330
11	Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio	366 (26.2%)	140 (10.0%)	331 (23.7%)	283 (20.3%)	100 (7.2%)	161 (11.5%)	15 (1.1%)	1.68	1.332

Note: 0 = No Influence, 1 = Very Little Influence, 2 = Little Influence, 3 = Strong Influence, 4 = Very Strong Influence

#### 5.4.1 Differences in Influence of Information Sources based on Selected Demographics.

##### Gender and Residence

Looking at gender, the degree to which the various information sources influence the decision of either group differs only for five sources of information (Table 8). The scores obtained from female respondents were generally higher compared to males for each of the five sources of information: "UPU Guides", "UNIMAS published materials", "UNIMAS telephone hotline", "School visit to UNIMAS" and "Newspaper articles and supplements". The two strong influential sources of information i.e. "Friends and relatives" and "UNIMAS website" were similar in their degree of influence for both gender groups.

Similarly, when residential factors are taken into account, there were no differences in the degree of influence of the two strong influential sources of information between the urban and rural group (Table 8). Differences in the degree of influence were detected in seven sources of information: "UPU Guides", "UNIMAS published materials", "UNIMAS telephone hotline", "School teacher career talk", "School visit to UNIMAS", "Newspaper advertisements by UNIMAS", and "Documentary on UNIMAS in television and radio". The scores obtained from rural respondents were generally higher compared to urban respondents for these sources of information. Thus, efforts should be made to ensure that these sources of information reach potential students living in the rural areas.



Table 8

The various sources of information and the extent of their influence based on gender and residence.

Sources of Information on UNIMAS and its Academic Programs		Gender					Residence				
		Male	Female	t	df	p-value	Urban	Rural	t	df	p-value
No.											
1	Unit Pusat Universiti (UPU) Guides	1.94	2.14	-2.483*	1263	0.013	1.99	2.21	-2.757**	1184	0.006
2	UNIMAS website	2.41	2.48	-0.942	1323	0.346	2.45	2.47	-0.295	1238	0.768
3	UNIMAS open day	1.73	1.86	-1.590	1187	0.112	1.80	1.86	-0.804	1116	0.422
4	UNIMAS published materials (UNIMAS brochure, Faculty pamphlets, etc)	1.89	2.07	-2.226*	1253	0.026	1.94	2.14	-2.557*	1169	0.011
5	UNIMAS roadshow event and careers fair	1.89	1.96	-0.935	1233	0.350	1.94	1.97	-0.433	1155	0.665
6	UNIMAS telephone hotline	1.56	1.80	-2.893**	1242	0.004	1.64	1.89	-3.028**	1163	0.003
7	School teacher career talk	1.99	2.09	-1.255	1250	0.210	1.97	2.19	-2.737**	1170	0.006
8	School visit to UNIMAS	1.72	1.89	-2.013*	1164	0.044	1.73	2.02	-2.013***	1088	0.001