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Determinants of Private University Choice in Banten: The Role of Institutional Reputation and Location

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Abstract: Determinants of Private University Choice in Banten: The Role of Institutional Reputation and Location. Objectives: Accurately selecting a university can significantly impact one's future, including career prospects, job market opportunities, and overall well-being. Previous findings have been debated among researchers regarding the relationship between gender, a university's reputation, location, and tuition fees, with university choice. However, studies in the context of private universities in Banten, such as Syekh Yusuf Islamic University (UNIS), are limited and require further research. This study aims to examine the influence of gender, reputation, location, and tuition fees on students' choice of UNIS. **Methods:** This study utilized a quantitative approach and a binary logistic regression model. The sample size was 937 participants. A validated online Google Forms questionnaire was distributed through *WhatsApp* groups to collect the data. **Findings:** The results of the binary logit analysis showed that university reputation and location had a significant influence on the selection of UNIS. Reputation increased students' chances of choosing UNIS, as did a strategic campus location. Conversely, neither gender nor tuition fees were found to influence students' decisions to choose UNIS. These findings confirmed that campus reputation and accessibility are the primary factors influencing students' choices of UNIS. **Conclusion:** The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that UNIS needs to prioritize strengthening its academic reputation as a key factor in attracting prospective students. To address this, improving faculty quality, pursuing program accreditation, and collaborating with industry are strategic steps to strengthen the institution's image. Additionally, its strategic location must be continually optimized through enhanced accessibility and transportation infrastructure, which further supports student recruitment. While tuition fees have not proven to be a significant barrier, maintaining a transparent fee policy and offering scholarships remains necessary to stay competitive. In summary, focusing on both reputation and accessibility will strengthen UNIS's position as a leading private university in Banten.

Keywords: university choice, reputation, location, private university, determinants.

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INTRODUCTION

Higher education is the highest level of continuing education after completing high school (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2017). Higher education has evolved significantly and has become a choice for increasing recognition of the value of education (Panigrahi, 2022), acquiring knowledge and skills for employment (Baliyan & Mokoena, 2024; Leicht, Heiss, & Byun, 2018), and the future of work (D. Van Le & Tran,

2024). Consequently, the challenges faced by higher education institutions are increasing, including lack of funding and sustainability, research and publications, quality assurance (Paschal & Mkulu, 2020), and, most importantly, competitive student enrollment and retention (Mogaji, 2019), as well as competition (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Hemsley Brown & Oplatka, 2010). Meanwhile, the continued growth of private higher education also plays an increasingly important role in expanding educational offerings and future investment (Altbach, Reisberg, & Rumbley, 2010; Tamrat, 2018).

The Ministry of Higher Education oversees state universities in Indonesia, while Islamic universities are supervised by the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Latief, 2022). Despite the large number of universities, participation rates in higher education remain low. The average Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) and Net Enrollment Rate (NER) for the 2012–2023 period reached only 22.74% and 24.34%, respectively, with annual growth rates of 4.47% and 3.77%, respectively (Central Bureau of Statistics, 2024). This suggests that access to higher education for 19 to 24-year-olds is suboptimal. Additionally, the number of universities tends to decline, including in Banten, which is decreasing by 0.88% per year, despite an increase in student numbers from 2019 to 2022. Meanwhile, the number of students in Banten shows an upward trend, averaging 3.04% per year from 2019 to 2022 (BPS Provinsi Banten, 2023). This increase is better than the national average of 2.84%. Furthermore, the contribution of universities in Banten to the national higher education sector is also quite significant. Universities in Banten contribute an average of 3.61% per year, and students contribute 13.73% per year. The phenomenon of declining new student numbers at UNIS, despite Banten's significant contribution to national higher education, highlights the need for research into the determining factors influencing university selection in this region.

Meanwhile, the number of new UNIS applicants decreased significantly from 1.795 in 2018 to 991 in 2024. A similar trend was observed for re-registering students, decreasing from 1,562 in 2018 to 988 in 2024. The downward trend in the number of applicants was faster than the decline in the number of students re-registering. It indicated a potential tendency for students enrolled at UNIS to re-register. However, the declining number of new students should receive more serious attention from university stakeholders. Additionally, suspected causes for the decline in the number of students choosing UNIS include declining interest in enrollment, increased competition, tuition fees, building performance, program availability, and university reputation. Even universities must understand the factors that influence student enrollment decisions (Hemsley-Brown.

Previous literature confirms that university choice is determined by the desire to acquire specialized knowledge and information, the availability of social activities and social and cultural facilities in the city/location, the school environment, and the variety of study programs (Constantinides & Stagno, 2012; Navratilova, 2013; Sakdiah, 2018). Furthermore, the choice of an educational institution depends on ideological (religious and pedagogical), quality, geographic (distance), and non-educational factors (Denessen, Geert, & Sleegers, 2005). Even lifestyle factors are a factor in medical applicants in the United States when choosing a particular specialty (Dorsey, Jarjoura, & Rutecki, 2003).

Recent studies have shown that factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in higher education include university city location, campus appearance, reputation, perceived quality, resources, and facilities, as reported by students (Heathcote, Savage, & Hosseinian-Far, 2020). A study in Vietnam identified employment opportunities, admissions counseling, and university reputation as three key factors

determining university choice (Hai, Thanh, Chau, Van Sang, & Dong, 2023). Other studies have shown that future job prospects, teaching quality, staff expertise, and course content are factors considered in Vietnam's university selection (Le, Le, Nguyen, Tran, & Hoang, 2022; Le, Robinson, & Dobele, 2020). A study in Nigeria found that university reputation, ranking, and tuition fees influence students' decisions (Acar, 2024; Adefulu, Farinloye, & Mogaji, 2020). In Zambia, the main factors in university choice were teaching quality, tuition fees, program availability, facilities, and employability (Ashiru, Whitfield, & Warwick, 2022; Kayombo & Carter, 2016). In general, graduate employment is a factor consistently demonstrated in every study. Personal factors such as gender influence university choice differently. Previous studies have shown a consistent gender bias toward vocational education after secondary school (Stoll, Rieger, Nagengast, Trautwein, & Rounds, 2021). However, apparent differences between male and female students emerge during course selection and enrollment (Hai et al., 2023; Lavy, 2024; Othman, Mohamad, & Barom, 2019; Papp, Karácsony, & Juhász, 2023). It is essential to acknowledge the underrepresentation of women in specific scientific domains (Leslie, Cimpian, Meyer, & Freeland, 2015) and notable disparities in medical specialty choices (Asaad et al., 2020). Another study found that female students with average and high abilities were more likely to choose lower-ranked universities than their male counterparts (Minor, 2023).

Prospective students' knowledge of a university's reputation is also a significant factor in their decision to choose a university. The main factors determining university choice are customer focus, facilities, and academic quality (Padlee, Kamaruddin, & Baharun, 2010). Studies by Mourad (2011) and Briggs (2006) concluded that prospective students in Egypt choose universities based on reputation. Other studies have also shown that university reputation significantly influences the choice of higher education institutions in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (Ahmad & Hussain, 2017; Naveed & Khurshid, 2020). Along with future career expectations and the quality and popularity of university programs, campus reputation is a crucial factor influencing student choice in Turkey (Ýlgan, Ataman, Uðurlu, & Yurdunkulu, 2018) and in Indonesia (Pramesti, 2024). Furthermore, parents who are satisfied with the facilities' quality are more likely to recommend the university to their children for enrollment (Eldegwy, Elsharnouby, & Kortam, 2024). Other researchers have stated that the main determinants of university choice are the quality of education and the expertise of the academic staff (Fadhli, Salabi, Siregar, Lubis, & Sahudra, 2023; Najimudinova, Ýsmailova, & Oskonbaeva, 2022).

Other factors that play a significant role in choosing a private university include easy access to a strategic campus/building location (proximity to various supporting facilities such as shopping centers), availability of parking, a safe environment, a central location, and a supportive environment (a convenient and conducive socializing environment). Previous research has shown that location significantly influences the interest of prospective new students (Ashiru et al., 2022; H. Q. Le, 2020). Another factor is the tuition fees set by private universities. Tuition fees play a crucial role in achieving qualitative and quantitative educational goals. Without tuition fees, the educational process cannot run smoothly. In university education provision, tuition fees are a crucial input component (Triyono, Dasmadi, & Ariestanto-TNK, 2021; Walsh, Moorhouse, Dunnett, & Barry, 2015). Other researchers have shown that the main factors in choosing a private university are facilities and tuition fees (Belmonte et al., 2022; Gille, Moulignier, & Kövesi, 2022; Juhaidi, Fitria, Hidayati, & Saputri, 2025; Juhaidi,

Ma'ruf, Tajudin, Fitri, & Hamdani, 2023; Kholis & Kartika, 2016; Mulyono & Hadian, 2019; Simanjuntak et al., 2024; Wickneswary et al., 2024). However, studies have shown that tuition fees are weakly correlated with high school students' intention to enroll in college (Juhaidi, Fuady, Ramadan, & Ma'ruf, 2024; Vortisch, 2024). Other research suggests that the higher the cost of education, the more likely students are to consider more affordable alternatives (Boring & Brown, 2024).

Higher education plays a crucial role in improving the skills and employability of graduates (D. Van Le & Tran, 2024; Panigrahi, 2022). Building a campus reputation or brand image is also something that cannot be ignored (Muslim, Imperiani, Musthafa, Farlian, & Francisco, 2025; Nofrizal, Juju, & Aznuriyandi, 2024) because it will have an impact on the acceptance of new students, especially at private universities. Various previous studies indicate that university selection decisions are influenced by university reputation (Belmonte et al., 2022; Hai et al., 2023; Heathcote et al., 2020; Kethüda, 2024; T. D. Le et al., 2022; Trivedi et al., 2025; Wut, Xu, & Lee, 2022; Xie, Li, & Jung, 2024). These findings underscore the important role of university reputation as a key driver of student enrollment.

Previous studies have consistently shown that university choice is influenced by factors such as tuition fees, gender, reputation, and location, with variations across different international and national contexts. Research in Indonesia has also highlighted the importance of institutional reputation and program quality in shaping enrollment decisions. However, most of these studies adopt a general or national perspective and do not specifically address private universities at the provincial level. In Banten, universities make a significant contribution to national higher education; however, UNIS continues to experience a decline in new student enrollment. Limited studies have examined the determinants of university choice in this local context, highlighting a research gap in understanding the internal and external factors influencing students' decisions to choose UNIS.

This gap is significant in Indonesia, and Banten Province, in particular, is characterized by the coexistence and competition of diverse private universities. Current research aims to bridge this gap, with a specific focus on UNIS within the dynamic higher education landscape of Banten Province. Researchers integrated the determinants of university choice within the local context. Thus, this study aims to provide comprehensive insights into the factors that influence student decisions. In addition, the findings are expected to contribute to increasing student enrollment and enhancing UNIS's role in expanding access to higher education in Banten.

To facilitate analysis, based on the description, several factors are suspected to influence prospective students' decisions in choosing UNIS. To empirically test factors such as institutional reputation, tuition fees, and location in selecting UNIS as a higher education destination, the following research hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Gender significantly influences the decision to choose UNIS.
H2: The university's reputation significantly influences the decision to choose UNIS.
H3: Tuition fees significantly influence the decision to choose UNIS.
H4: Campus location and accessibility significantly influence the decision to choose UNIS.

METHOD

Participants

The research population, also known as the target population, refers to the entire group or collection of individuals, objects, or events that possess specific characteristics and interest the researcher. The target population of this study

consisted of 12th-grade high school students who will continue their studies and pursue higher education in Banten, as well as prospective students who visited the Public Relations and Marketing Unit of UNIS. The researcher defined the study population as an "infinite population."

A sample is a portion of the research population carefully selected to represent its characteristics. The sample must accurately represent the population, meaning it reflects the main attributes, variations, and proportions present in the population. In this study, the sampling technique used was an incidental sampling approach. Incidental (convenience) sampling facilitates rapid and economical data collection, especially when the population is large or access to respondents is limited (Suen, Huang, & Lee, 2014). This method is particularly useful in exploratory research or preliminary studies, where the primary need is to obtain an initial overview or test a basic hypothesis before undertaking a more complex design (Winton & Sabol, 2022).

Using the Lemeshow formula with a 5% error rate, the sample size was based on the infinite population. Based on Lemeshow's formulation, the sample size can be calculated as a minimum of 384.16. Therefore, the sample size required for this study is a minimum of 384 sample units. The researcher distributed questionnaires to 400% of the sample size, 1,526 units, with 937 units processed. The purpose is to provide a backup in case of outliers, unreturned, and incomplete questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed through student WhatsApp groups. Additionally, researchers collaborated with the Public Relations and Marketing Unit, which visited schools for promotional activities, set up exhibition stands, and administered questionnaires to prospective students applying to UNIS. The participants who dropped out and chose to study outside Banten were excluded. The characteristics of the participants in this study include gender, religion, age, prior school, school status, parental income, and parental occupation (see Table 2).

Research Method and Design

This study used a quantitative approach because the data obtained are numerical and processed using statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2017). The actual problems and phenomena were observed and expressed in quantitative form. The research design employed was a descriptive correlational approach. This research phase began with problem identification and the formulation of research objectives, focusing on the factors that influence the choice of private universities in Banten. The next step was the development of research instruments based on literature reviews and relevant variables, followed by testing the validity and reliability of the instruments to ensure the appropriateness and consistency of the measurements (Tyrer & Heyman, 2016). In addition, the field data was collected using incidental sampling techniques (convenience sampling), which allows respondents to be selected based on ease of access and availability (Sexton, 2022). The data were processed using inferential statistical analysis, specifically binary logit regression, with the aid of *SPSS 25* software. It aims to investigate the impact of independent variables on the likelihood of choosing UNIS. The final stage involves interpreting the analysis results and drawing conclusions, accompanied by the preparation of theoretical and practical implications that serve as the basis for recommendations for higher education policies. This research was conducted from January 2024 to December 2024.

Instruments and Variables Description

This technique employed a questionnaire; documentation was required to gather data on student learning outcomes. A questionnaire is a

written list of questions designed to collect information from respondents, individually or in groups, for research purposes (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). On the other hand, the documentation consisted of literature reviews and secondary data, including both published and unpublished sources, from government agencies and schools. Before collecting data, the research instruments were validated for each variable. This validation was intended to obtain a valid and consistent research instrument. Instrument validation was conducted by two experts with qualifications and experience in instrument development. Validators assist in evaluating the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of questionnaire items in relation to the research objectives. Using expert validators for research instruments has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages include guaranteed content validity, instrument refinement, academic reinforcement, and early detection of errors. Disadvantages include subjectivity, time and expense, dependency, and limited access. Therefore, expert validators are essential to ensure questionnaire quality, although they need to be approached critically and supplemented with other validity tests, such as empirical (statistical) tests.

The content validity test involved five expert lecturers in research, educational evaluation, methodology, and statistics, using a scale of 1–4 (Not Relevant to Highly Relevant). The results showed that 13 instrument items had an I-CVI of 0.80–1.00 (average 0.83), meeting Lynn's (1986) criteria; thus, all items were deemed relevant. Two items, Parent Income (INC) and Tuition Fees (TF), obtained an I-CVI of 1.00, indicating full agreement among experts. In contrast, the other items remained valid despite minor differences in assessment (Polit & Beck, 2006). Construct validity tests using biserial correlations on the variables of tuition fees and reputation yielded item-total values of 0.382 and -0.309, respectively, with $p < 0.01$, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.30, indicating statistical validity for all items. The reliability test results showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.714 for two items, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Guilford, 1957). The instrument can be considered sufficiently reliable for use in research. Indicating limited internal consistency (see Table 1).

Table 1. Instrument reliability test results

Test Type	Subject/	Alpha
Chronbach's Alpha	2	0.
Krippendorff's Alpha)[a]	10	0.683

[a]Researchers utilized the Jamovi 2.4.11.0 application

Meanwhile, the reliability test for the nominal scale instrument used Krippendorff's Alpha. The results of the inter-rater test, as measured by Krippendorff's Alpha, showed a value of 0.683 in 10 subjects with 937 raters (see Table 1). This value falls within the acceptable category for preliminary conclusions, as stated by Krippendorff (and Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The assessment instrument can be considered quite consistent, but improvements in assessment standards and guidelines are still needed to achieve a higher level of reliability.

Measurement maps dominant aspects into other aspects of a range according to applicable rules (Kothari, 2004). In measurement, the steps taken by the author adequately capture the construct of a variable. First, identify empirical indicators from conceptually observable items; second, establish a measurement scale. In creating a measurement scale, the scale design

should have a specific range and then be transformed or mapped to the object properties from the domain to the scale (Kothari, 2004). However, before establishing the measurement scale, the authors created conceptual and operational definitions of the variables, thus obtaining a set of items for each construct. Item relevance and respondents' ability to understand each item are prerequisites for obtaining high-quality data (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). The operationalization of variables in this study focused on constructing a variable. The operationalization of the research variables can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Operationalization of variables

Variables	Definition	Indicator	Scale
Dependent Variable:			
UNIS Choice [*UNIS*] Lavy, 2024	Individual intentions and motivations, as well as rational preferences for university services	If you choose UNIS = 1, others = 0	Nominal
Independent Variable:			
Gender [*GEN*] (Hai et al., 2023; Lavy, 2024; Papp et al., 2023; Philipp, 2023; Porter & Serra, 2020)	Gender reflects an individual's behavioral identity, shaped by social, psychological, and cultural factors.	If Female = 1, Male = 0	Nominal
University's Reputation [*UR*] (Belmonte et al., 2022; Hai et al., 2023; Wut et al., 2022)	People's opinions about a university's achievements, quality of learning, quality of facilities and infrastructure, and employability of its graduates	(Very Good – Very Bad)	Ordinal
Location [*L*] (Ashiru et al., 2022)	Campuses are strategically located to achieve specific goals.	If 1 = strategic location, others = 0	Nominal
Tuition Fees (*TF*) (Belmonte et al., 2022; Juhaidi et al., 2025; Wickneswary et al., 2024)	Fees or payments made by students to colleges, universities, or other educational institutions for teaching and academic support	(Very Cheap – Very Expensive)	Ordinal
Control Variables:			
Religion [*R*] (Collazos-Ortiz, Barrera-Duque, Areiza-Padilla, Barajas-Portas, & Veas-González, 2025; Sarofim et al., 2020)	Beliefs and beliefs held by individuals and applied in daily life	If Muslim = 1, others = 0	Nominal
Age [*A*] (Papp et al., 2023)	Age is calculated from the student's birth year to the present, reflecting the maturity of thought and action.	Senior high school/equivalent student age or have graduated from high school/vocational school/or Islamic high school.	Rasio

College Time (*T*) (Redekopp, 2017)	The period a student studies at a college, from the start of their studies until they complete them.	Morning Regular = 1 Afternoon Regular = 2 Evening Regular = 3 Weekend Regular = 4 Others = 5	Nominal
Parent Job [*JOB*] (Bonneau & Grobon, 2025; Papp et al., 2023)	Type of profession held by parents or other individuals	Unemployed/Housewife = 1 Laborer = 2 Employee = 3 Self-employed = 4 Civil Servant = 5 Indonesian National Armed Forces/Indonesian National Police = 6	Nominal
Parent Income [*INC*] (Bonneau & Grobon, 2025; Chetty, Hendren, Jones, & Porter, 2020; Loo, Leong, Siew, & Ahmadpour, 2024)	Monthly income received	< IDR 3.000.000 = 1 IDR 3.000.000 – IDR 5.000.000 = 2 IDR 5.000.001 – IDR 7.500.000 = 3 IDR 7.500.001 – IDR 10.000.000 = 4. and > IDR 10.000.000 = 5.	Ordinal
Prior School [*PS*] (Farías & Sevilla, 2015; Thaler, 2025)	Refers to the school the student attended before higher education	If Senior High School = 1, others = 0	Nominal
School Status [*STAT*] (Vuong, Chi, Liu, Luc, & Yuan, 2024)	Schools run by the government (state) or the community (private)	If Public School = 1, others = 0	Nominal
Region [*REG*] (Mandic et al., 2023)	Geographic areas with specific characteristics, whether in the form of districts/cities	If Tangerang Municipality = 1, others = 0	Nominal

Notes: The indicators for each variable (REP, L, and TF) were measured using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5 (Very Bad - Very Good and 5 to 1 (Very Cheap – Very Expensive)

Data Analysis

A research model is an abstraction of existing realities or phenomena being studied. In this study, as per the research title set by the researcher, the model is titled "Determinants of Private University Choice in Banten (A Study at Universitas Islam Syekh-Yusuf)." The theoretical model used to test the previously formulated hypotheses is Binary logistic regression (BLR). This model is a form of a binary dependent variable. A binary dependent variable is an example of a limited dependent variable (Wooldridge, 2018). The Logistic Regression analysis method is similar to discriminant analysis in that it tests whether the probability of a dependent variable can be predicted by the independent variables (Ghozali, 2016).

The logit model is related to the probability function of the logistic distribution. This logistic probability meets the criteria of the cumulative distribution model (CDF). The CDF model is a model that can guarantee a probability value between 0 and 1, thus fulfilling the dichotomous dependent variable response of 0 and 1. The basic concept of Logistic Regression can provide several possible probability calculations

expressed as probabilities. Probabilities and odds convey the same information but in different forms. Odds can easily be converted to probabilities or vice versa: These two equations can be used in the equation below to provide log odds as a function of the measure of the choice of UNIS.

$$p = \frac{odds}{1+odds} \quad \text{..... (1)}$$

$$odds = \frac{p}{1+p} \quad \text{..... (2)}$$

$$Ln = [odds\ (P)] \quad \text{..... (3)}$$

Where UNIS = 1 if choosing UNIS Tangerang and others = 0. Returning to equation (3) regarding the probability of factors influencing UNIS. If equation (1) is multiplied on the right-hand side by ez, it will produce the following equation: While the other probabilities = 0 (not selected), then [1-p_i] is as follows: So, from equations (4) and (5), we can calculate the probability ratio of UNIS = 1 (selected) as follows:

$$p_i = F(Z_i) = \frac{1}{1+e^{-z_i}} = \frac{e^{z_i}}{1+e^{-z_i}} \quad \text{..... (4)}$$

$$1 - p_i = 1 - \frac{e^{z_i}}{1+e^{z_i}} = \frac{1}{e^{z_i}} \quad \text{..... (5)}$$

$$\frac{p_i}{1-p_i} = \left(\frac{e^{z_i}}{1+e^{z_i}}\right)\left(\frac{1+e^{z_i}}{1+e^{z_i}}\right) = e^{z_i} \quad \text{..... (6)}$$

The odds ratio is the ratio of the probabilities of UNIS (being selected) to not being selected. Then, transform the equation into a natural logarithm (ln) model, as follows:

$$Ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = Z_i lne = Z_i$$

$$\ln\left(\frac{p_i}{1-p_i}\right) = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 + X_i \quad \text{..... (7)}$$

Based on Equation (7), the researcher established an econometric model specification as a hypothesis-testing model. The binary logistic regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis, which has only two possible values: 1 and 0. The goal was to test whether the probability of the dependent variable, UNIS choice, could be predicted by the independent variables of gender, university reputation, location, and tuition fees.

$$\boldsymbol{UNIS = \mathrm{Ln}\left[\frac{p}{1-p}\right] = \beta_0 + \beta_1 GEN + \beta_2}$$

$$\boldsymbol{\beta_2 UR + \beta_3 L + \beta_4 \mathrm{TF} + \alpha_i \sum X_i + \varepsilon} \quad \textbf{(8)}$$

Where UNIS = Choosing UNIS, *GEN* = gender, *UR* = university reputation, *L* = location, *TF* = tuition fees, Xi = control variables consisting of religion, age, parental occupation, parental income, prior school, school status, and region, ái = coefficients of control variables 1, 2, …, 8. β_0 = constant, β_i = estimated regression coefficients, i = 1, 2, …, 4, and á = estimation error.

The researcher tested one of the classical assumptions, namely, multicollinearity. Meanwhile, the model fit or goodness of fit test aims to determine the appropriateness of an analytical model and examines the odds ratio (*OR*) value, which indicates the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing uses the Wald test (partial test), the likelihood ratio test (simultaneous test), the Omnibus test, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test, and the Pseudo-R^2 test.

■ RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Participant Characteristics

Questionnaires were distributed to 1,056 research participants, of which 937 (88.73%) were collected and completed. Table 1 shows that the number of female participants significantly outnumbered male participants. This is evident because 32.66% of male participants were male, while 67.34% were female. The female participants made significant contributions to this research. In other words, high school/vocational high school/Islamic high school students in Banten are predominantly female.

Table 3. Participant characteristics

Characteristic	Number	Percentage
Gender:		
• Male	306	32.66
• Female	631	67.34
Religion:		
• Muslim	44	4.70
• Non-Muslim	892	95.30
Age:		
• < 16 years	14	1.49
• 16 – 18 years	876	93.49
• > 18 years	47	5.02
Prior School:		
• Senior High School	545	58.16
• Vocational High School	383	40.88
• Islamic High School	9	0.96
School Status:		
• Public	313	66.60
• Private	624	33.40
Parent Income:		
• < IDR 3.000.000	361	38.53
• IDR 3.000.000 – IDR 5.000.000	351	37.76
• IDR 5.000.001 – IDR 7.500.000	95	10.14
• IDR 7.500.001 – IDR 10.000.000,	61	6.51
• > IDR 10.000.000	69	7.36
Parent Job:		
• Indonesian National Armed Forces/Indonesian National Police	35	3.74
• Civil Servant	75	8.00
• Self-Employment	381	40.66
• Employee	334	35.65
• Laborer	45	4.80
• Unemployment/Housewife	67	7.15

Table 3 also shows that the majority of research participants were Muslim, accounting for 95.30%, while the remainder were non-Muslim. The high number of Muslim participants reflects the fact that the population of Banten, particularly Greater Tangerang, is predominantly Muslim. Most research participants were aged 16-18, at 93.49%. The remaining participants were aged 16 and under and over 19. This indicates that research participants were spread across grades 10-12 of high schools, meeting the government-defined criteria for the high school age group.

Participants generally came from senior high and vocational schools, accounting for 58.16% and 40.88%, respectively. However, participants from senior high schools outnumbered those from vocational schools. The remaining 0.96% were from Islamic senior high schools. Participants in this study generally attended public schools, accounting for 66.60%. Meanwhile, 33.40% of the study participants attended private schools. This indicates that participants from public schools are more likely to pursue higher education than participants from private schools. The participants' parents' income

was generally less than IDR 3,000,000 per month (38.53%), and between IDR 3,000,000 and IDR 5,000,000 (37.46%). This suggests that the parents of the students/participants were generally from a lower-middle-class background.

The parents of the study participants were generally employed in the private sector and self-employed, accounting for 40.66% and 35.65%, respectively. Meanwhile, the study participants' occupations were civil servants/first aid workers (8.00%) and military personnel/police (7.15%). Only a small percentage of parents were laborers, unemployed, or housewives. This condition suggests that the participants' parents typically hold jobs and have the potential to encourage increased investment in their children's education in the future.

Statistical Description

Based on the data processing results, descriptive analysis was used to describe each variable tested statistically. Table 4 below shows a general statistical overview, including the number of respondents, minimum score, maximum score, mean, and standard deviation. Descriptive statistics analyze each variable, including interest in continuing education, choice of education, gender, religion, campus reputation, location, cost, and control variables. For more details, see the following table:

Table 4. Statistical summary

Variabel, N = 937	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
UNIS Choice (*UNIS*)	0	1	0.232	0.422
Gender (*G*)	0	1	0.673	0.469
Religion (*R*)	0	1	0.953	0.212
Age (*A*)	14	50	17.416	1.843
University Reputation (*UR*)	1	5	3.901	0.726
Location (*L*)	0	1	0.638	0.481
Tangerang Municipality (*TM*)	0	1	0.464	0.499
Parent Job (*JOB*)	1	6	3.438	1.075
Parent Income (*INC*)	1	5	2.067	1.186
School Status (*STAT*)	0	1	0.666	0.472
Senior High School (*SS*)	0	1	0.582	0.494
Costs From Parents (*CP*)	0	1	0.568	0.496
College Time (*T*)	1	5	1.800	1.215
Tuition Fees (*TF*)	1	5	3.344	0.710

Table 4 shows that the average value of the UNIS selection variable is 0.245. This figure indicates that 24.5% of participants intended to choose UNIS as their university. The gender (*G*) variable had an average value of 0.673, indicating that 67.3% of participants were female. The religion (*R*) variable had an average value of 0.953, indicating that 95.3% of participants were Muslim. The university reputation (*UR*) variable had an average value of 3.901. The value indicates that participants rated UNIS's reputation as quite good, with a score of 78.0%. The campus location (L) variable had an average value of 0.638, indicating that 63.8% of participants stated that the location of UNIS was strategic to be a sufficient reason for choosing it.

The parents' occupation (*JOB*) variable had an average value of 3.438, indicating that most participants' parents were employed. Meanwhile, the parental income variable (*INC*) shows an average of 2,067. It indicates that, in general, the income of the participants' parents is less than

IDR 5,000,000 per month. The average value of the school status variable (*STAT*) is 0.666, indicating that participants studying at public high schools comprise 66.6% of the sample. Participants who come from high schools are 58.2% (average value = 0.582). The average value of the parental source of funds variable (*CP*) is 0.568. It means that 56.8% of the research participants who will study at a university source their funds from their parents. The average value of the college time variable (*T*) is 1,795. Participants generally choose regular morning lecture times when studying at university. The average tuition fee at UNIS (TF) is 2,656. Participants' perceptions were 53.1% (moderate category), indicating that tuition fees at UNIS are quite expensive.

Classical Assumption Test

Before conducting a hypothesis test or inferential statistical test, the initial step is to screen the data to be processed, one of which is the multicollinearity assumption. A normality test is no longer necessary due to the sufficiently large sample size. Similarly, a heteroscedasticity test was not performed because the model used is a probabilistic regression model. The multicollin earity test determines whether the regression model detects a correlation between independent variables. To detect violations of this assumption, the correlation values was used, with the criterion that if $r > 0.80$, multicollinearity is present. The test results showed that all correlation values between independent variables were $r < 0.80$, ranging from -0.001 to 0.363. These results indicate that the regression model is free from violations of the multicollinearity assumption.

Model Test

To produce a feasible and efficient analysis model, model testing is necessary. The model tests used in this study include the Omnibus Model Coefficient test, the Hosmer-Lemeshow test, and the R-squared test. The omnibus test aims to determine whether the independent variables have a significant impact on the dependent variables in this study. The test results show a Chi-square value of 316.379 and a significance value (p-value) of 0.000 <0.05 (see Table 5). The campus reputation, location costs, and control variables significantly impact the selection of UNIS Tangerang.

Table 5. Omnibus tests of model coefficients

Component	Chi-square	Df	Sig.
Step	316.379	13	0.000
Block	316.379	13	0.000
Model	316.379	13	0.000

This study used the Hosmer-Lemeshow test to perform a logistic regression model fit test (overall model fit). This test determines whether the empirical data align with the research model (i.e., there is no significant discrepancy between the data and the model). The results of the Hosmer-Lemeshow test (Hosmer, Lameshow, & Sturdivant, 2013) are shown in Table 6.

Table 6. The results of the hosmer-lemeshow test

Chi-square	df	Sig.
13.733	8	0.089

The results of the Hosmer and Lemeshow test (see Table 6) produced a Chi-Square value of 13.733 degrees of freedom, and a significance value (p-value) of 0.089 > 0.05. Thus, the model can be accepted, and can proceed to test the hypothesis. Additionally, a classification table is a method for evaluating the predictive accuracy of a logistic regression model. It depicts the predicted number of successes compared to the actual number of successes observed, or vice versa. A user-defined cutoff value, for example, p = 0.50, is used for cross-classification.

Table 7. Classification table prediction

Observed		UNIS Choice		Percentage Correct
		Others	UNIS	
UNIS Choice	Others	708	12	98.3
	UNIS	72	145	66.8
Overall Percentage				95.1

Notes: The cut value is 0.500

Table 7 shows that the model had excellent overall predictive ability, with an accuracy rate of 95.1%. In the "Others" category, the model correctly classified all 720 observations (98.3%), resulting in no misclassifications in this group. In the "UNIS" category, the model correctly classified 145 of 217 observations, resulting in an accuracy rate of 66.8%. This indicates that, despite 72 misclassifications, the model still performed relatively well in predicting UNIS choices. The high overall accuracy rate demonstrates that the variables used in the model (gender, campus reputation, campus location, tuition fees, and control variables) significantly contribute to predicting students' decisions to choose UNIS. However, the differences in accuracy between groups also indicate opportunities for model improvements, such as incorporating additional variables or alternative classification approaches, to enhance the precision of predictions in the "UNIS" category.

In addition, the R-squared value is identified using the Nagelkerke R-squared coefficient of determination. This coefficient determines the extent of variability in the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination in logistic regression can be seen in the following table:

Table 8. Model summary

-2 Log likelihood	Cox & Snell R Square	Nagelkerke R Square
697.812[a]	0.287	0.433

a. Estimation terminated at iteration 9 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Table 8 above shows that the Nagelkerke R-squared value is 0.433, which is greater than the Cox & Snell R-squared value of 0.287. This result can be interpreted as the variation in UNIS Tangerang selection, which can be predicted from the independent variables (university reputation, location, and control variables). In addition, the percentage of influence of the independent variables on UNIS selection is explained by the Nagelkerke R-squared value of 43.3%. In comparison, the remaining 56.3% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied.

Regression Results

A binary logit regression was used to test the impact of gender, university reputation, location, and tuition fees on the selection of UNIS Tangerang. Logistic regression results indicate that the gender variable has a regression coefficient of –0.401, with an odds ratio of 0.911 and a significance level of p = 0.658 (p> 0.05). This finding indicates that gender differences tend to reduce respondents' chances of choosing UNIS by 8.9%, but this effect is not statistically significant. The coefficient value for the university reputation variable was positive at 1.876, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000 < 0.01. This indicates that campus reputation has a significant impact on the selection of UNIS at a 1% significance level. The Exp(B) (odds ratio) value indicates the magnitude of the change in the odds for prospective students to choose UNIS if the campus reputation increases by one unit, ceteris paribus. The Exp(B) value = 6.525 means that every increase in UNIS's reputation will increase the odds of prospective students choosing UNIS by almost 6.5 times compared to the previous condition (see Table 9).

Table 9 also shows that the coefficient value for the location (L) variable is positive at 1.124, with a p-value of 0.000 < 0.01. This means that

Table 9. Regression results

Variabel	B	S.E.	Wald	Sig.	Exp(B)
Gender (*G*)	-0.094	0.211	0.196	0.658	0.911
Religion (*R*)	1.794	0.887	4.090	0.043	6.015
Age (*A*)	0.087	0.048	3.371	0.066	1.091
Reputation UNIS (*UR*)	1.876	0.171	120.800	0.000	6.525
Location (*L*)	1.124	0.205	30.105	0.000	3.078
Tangerang Municipality (*TM*)	0.049	0.202	0.059	0.807	1.050
Parent Job (*JOB*)	-0.084	0.142	0.347	0.556	0.920
Parent Income (*INC*)	-0.105	0.093	1.283	0.257	0.900
School Status (*STAT*)	-0.233	0.207	1.277	0.258	0.792
Senior High School (*SS*)	-0.211	0.208	1.028	0.311	0.810
Costs From Parents (*CP*)	-0.172	0.213	0.650	0.420	0.842
College Time (*T*)	0.150	0.131	1.310	0.252	1.162
Tuition Fees (*TF*)	-0.165	0.212	0.609	0.435	0.848
Constant	-11.870	1.625	53.132	0.000	0.000

a strategic campus location has a significant impact on the choice of UNIS, with a significance level of 1%, assuming all other factors remain constant (ceteris paribus). The very high odds ratio indicates that UNIS's strategic location plays a crucial role in student selection decisions. This means that campuses that are easily accessible, close to public transportation, or located in the center of urban activity are more than 3.1 times more likely to be chosen than campuses in less strategic locations. It confirms that spatial factors and accessibility are key determinants of student preference.

The tuition fee (TF) variable has a regression coefficient of –0.165, with an odds ratio of 0.848 and a p-value of 0.435 (higher than 0.05). This means that the increase in tuition fees tends to reduce students' chances of choosing UNIS by around 15.2%. This effect is not significant, so tuition fees are not the main determining factor in the decision to choose UNIS. In contrast, other control variables, including religion, parental occupation and income, school status, college time, prior school, Tangerang Municipality, and source of funding, were not found to exert a significant effect. The control variable, age, has a

significant influence on the choice of UNIS, with a significance level of 10%.

Discussion

Gender and UNIS Choice

This study found no significant gender differences influencing the choice of UNIS Tangerang (H1 is rejected). In other words, prospective students have an equal opportunity to choose a university for their education. This finding suggests that, although the number of female respondents exceeds that of male respondents, this difference in proportion does not necessarily reflect a causal relationship with university selection preferences. In the context of this analysis, the insignificance of gender may be attributed to the dominant influence of other, more substantial variables, such as campus reputation and location, which have been demonstrated to be key determinants of student decisions. In addition, although the sample distribution shows a gender imbalance, gender does not have sufficient predictive power after being controlled for with other variables in the model.

These findings align with the statement by Hosmer et al. (2013) that the statistical significance of a variable in logistic regression depends on its unique contribution to explaining variation in the outcome, rather than solely on its frequency distribution in the sample. Furthermore, the results have important implications for UNIS's development strategy. UNIS is relatively gender-neutral in its approach to attracting students, so marketing and promotional strategies do not need to be specifically tailored to one gender. On the other hand, efforts to improve academic quality, strengthen the institution's image, and optimize campus accessibility will be more effective in increasing UNIS's attractiveness to various groups of prospective students. Additionally, this finding contradicts previous research showing that gender influences university choice (Asaad et al., 2020; Mustafa, Sellami, Elmaghraby, & Al-Qassass, 2018; Othman et al., 2019).

The results of this study also contradict a recent study (Najimudinova et al., 2022), which found that gender significantly influences university choice. Philipp (2023) found a significant intergenerational relationship between gender characteristics in major selection. The results of this study also confirm previous studies that found no statistically significant differences between men and women in university choice (Juhaidi, 2024). The finding means that prospective female students do not prefer the size and structure of the campus to that of male students.

University Reputation and UNIS Choice

The results of this study reveal that the reputation and quality of the educational institution are key determinants influencing prospective students' decision to enroll at UNIS (H2 is accepted). This finding suggests that students' decision-making is strongly career-oriented, as institutional reputation is frequently associated with enhanced employability, professional recognition, and access to broader career networks. In other words, prospective students who prioritize reputation and quality demonstrate a forward-looking orientation, linking their choice of university with anticipated labor market outcomes and long-term professional trajectories. It underscores that reputation operates not merely as a symbolic attribute of institutional prestige but as a proxy for perceived value in terms of academic standards, graduate competencies, and future job opportunities. Consequently, students' knowledge and perception of a university's reputation become critical components shaping higher education choices, where accurate information and effective institutional branding can significantly influence enrollment behavior.

Nevertheless, this reliance on reputation also entails certain limitations. Overemphasis on institutional reputation may overshadow other equally crucial factors, such as affordability, accessibility, and inclusivity, all of which are essential for ensuring equitable access to higher education. As noted in prior theories, students'

choices are multidimensional and may reflect trade-offs between perceived prestige and financial or geographic constraints (Maringe, 2006; Perkins & Neumayer, 2014). Hence, while strengthening institutional reputation remains vital for attracting students, universities must balance reputational strategies with efforts to improve affordability, broaden access, and enhance student support services in order to sustain long-term competitiveness and social relevance.

This study's results confirm previous findings suggesting that reputation and academic quality are key factors in selecting a private university (Ahmad & Hussain, 2017; Naveed & Khurshid, 2020). Other studies have found similar results, indicating that university reputation significantly influences the selection of higher education institutions (Qasim, Pirshing, Salih Mohamad, Hiba K., & Ayoubi, 2021; Trivedi et al., 2025). This study also aligns with previous research that has found factors such as reputation to be a key consideration for prospective students in accessing higher education (Fadhli et al., 2023; Heng et al., 2024; Pramesti, 2024). In addition, Eldegwy et al. (2024) emphasized the role of parental influence, as they tend to recommend that their children choose universities with good reputations. Further empirical support is provided by Juhaidi (2024) and Juhaidi et al. (2025), who found that reputation and perceived academic quality remain the most crucial determinants of university choice. Overall, these consistent findings confirm that enhancing an institution's reputation is not only crucial for student recruitment but also a sustainable strategy for strengthening competitiveness in the higher education sector.

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Tuition Fees and UNIS Selection

Tuition fees are assessed based on the amount paid and how these fees contribute to students' eligibility and ease of access to higher education. The results of this study indicate that, according to participants' perceptions, the fees set by UNIS Tangerang's leadership are considered quite expensive but still affordable. The results of this study indicate that Hypothesis 3 was not supported, namely that tuition fees did not significantly influence students' decisions to choose UNIS Tangerang. This finding suggests that, although tuition fees are often considered a key factor in college selection, in the context of UNIS, fees are not the primary determinant of choice.

The description of the income of the majority of students' parents comes from the lower-middle class, so affordability remains a significant consideration in the decision-making process. In other words, although higher education is viewed as a long-term investment, financial affordability remains a determining factor, especially for lower-middle-class groups who are vulnerable to cost pressures. However, this finding differs from the results of previous studies, which concluded that costs have a significant influence on college selection (Juhaidi et al., 2023; Nuseir & El Refae, 2022; Wickneswary et al., 2024). Other literature emphasizes that education costs have a significant influence on college choice, particularly among families with limited economic resources (Belmonte et al., 2022; Gille et al., 2022; Juhaidi et al., 2025; Wickneswary et al., 2024).

The findings of this study align with previous research, which has concluded that costs do not significantly correlate with university choice (Boring & Brown, 2024; Juhaidi et al., 2024; Vortisch, 2024). However, before applying to an institution, students tend to establish a strong preference for a particular institution by analyzing their financial potential and considering alternative financial options (Nuseir & El Refae, 2022). In other words, students enrolled at UNIS know the high costs of studying at a private institution. However, they chose UNIS because it is feasible and affordable for their parents' financial situation (Kusumawati, 2018). This choice is also based on the relatively affordable accommodation and transportation costs for local students, as well as

the easy access compared to pursuing higher education in Banten. Consequently, in this study, with a specific sample of students, cost does not appear to be a concern when choosing a private institution.

Location and UNIS Selection

A university's strategic location is also a factor for prospective students when choosing a university. Prospective students will consider factors such as distance, ease of access, road conditions, and transportation options. Prospective students currently tend to choose universities with the most strategic locations. Based on the findings, it showed that a strategic campus location has a significant influence on students' choice of UNIS Tangerang (H4 is accepted). Prospective students noted that Syekh Yusuf Islamic University is easily accessible, with convenient access to public and private transportation, good road conditions, and low traffic congestion.

Geographical location is a factor in prospective students' decision-making. Therefore, higher education leaders and policymakers should consider this when planning and developing higher education institutions. Distance is no longer a barrier if accessibility is easy. The results of this study align with previous studies that concluded that campus location directly influences prospective students' decisions in university selection (Ashiru et al., 2022; Le, 2020; Le et al., 2020). Conversely, the findings of this study do not support a previous study that found location to be a non-determining factor in students' university choices in North Sumatra (Simanjuntak et al., 2024). This difference in findings is due to the measurement of variables and the analytical model used.

Research Limitations

Every study has weaknesses regarding participants, research location, and variable measurement. This study is subject to several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the use of incidental sampling restricts the representativeness of the sample, thereby limiting the generalizability of the findings to the wider population. The use of incidental sampling limits representativeness because respondents are selected by chance, making the results difficult to generalize. This situation increases the potential for bias, weakens external validity, and is less suitable for confirmatory research that requires strong generalization. Second, the reliability of the instrument was found to be moderate, indicating that the internal consistency across items requires further refinement. Third, the scope of the study was confined to a limited set of variables, leaving other potentially influential factors unexplored. Fourth, the relatively small sample size may have reduced the statistical power to detect more nuanced relationships. Finally, the variables of gender and tuition fees are not significant in determining the choice of UNIS. It needs to be retested to increase the consistency of the findings. Consequently, the results of this study should be regarded as exploratory in nature and serve as a foundation for future research employing more rigorous designs, larger samples, and stronger measurement tools.

■ CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of gender, campus reputation, campus location, tuition fees, and control variables on the choice of a UNIS. By applying a binary logit regression model, it can be concluded that campus reputation was positively associated with the choice of UNIS. In other words, the better the reputation of UNIS, the higher the likelihood of being selected by prospective students. The strategic campus location was also a significant consideration for prospective students choosing a UNIS. A more strategic campus location increased the probability of prospective students choosing a UNIS. Meanwhile, gender and tuition fees were not significant determinants in determining

students' choice to enter UNIS. The control variables contributing to prospective students' choice of a private university were religion, age, and length of study.

The research findings indicate that reputation significantly encourages prospective students to choose a UNIS. This implies that university management should adapt to this new evaluation and measurement model and system to continuously demonstrate higher education quality indicators, improve rankings, enhance research and publication performance, and fulfill the other three pillars of the university. Given that prospective students consider a university's reputation before making their choice, another managerial implication of this study's findings will be beneficial to private universities, particularly UNIS. UNIS should continue to build a positive institutional reputation by increasing scientific publications through the elaboration of internal and external research, empowering discussion communities among lecturers, fostering international collaboration, strengthening alumni relations, and promoting student achievements. Furthermore, the campus's strategic location has proven to be a crucial factor in attracting prospective students. UNIS needs to optimize accessibility by providing transportation and parking facilities, as well as improving supporting infrastructure to enhance student comfort and mobility. The research also shows that tuition fees are not a major determining factor, allowing UNIS to focus its marketing strategy on academic excellence and the learning environment rather than price. Overall, the research confirms that enhancing reputation and optimizing strategic location are key to strengthening UNIS's appeal in the face of competition from private universities.

This study also encourages future research examining the influence of these selection factors on private university choice in Banten Province. Future research should address these limitations by employing probability-based sampling techniques to enhance representativeness and allow broader generalization of the findings. Increasing the sample size will also improve statistical power and the robustness of the results. Furthermore, the research instrument requires further refinement and expansion to achieve higher reliability and capture more comprehensive dimensions of the studied phenomenon. Future researchers can also re-examine the relationship between gender and tuition fees in relation to university choice. Subsequent studies could also incorporate additional variables, such as socioeconomic background, institutional characteristics, or policy factors, to provide a more holistic understanding. Employing longitudinal or mixed-method designs may further enrich insights by capturing both temporal dynamics and contextual depth. Collectively, these directions will strengthen the validity, reliability, and applicability of future investigations.

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