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## **Factors Influencing Students' Awareness and Motivation in Choosing the Philippine College Foundation**

Ronalyn Barte<sup>a\*</sup>, Arhleen Arat<sup>b</sup>

*<sup>a</sup>Administrative Personnel in Philippine College Foundation, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines*

*<sup>b</sup>Student Affairs and Services Director in Philippine College Foundation, Valencia City, Bukidnon, Philippines*

*<sup>a</sup>Email: barteronaly23@gmail.com*

### **Abstract**

This study investigated students' knowledge and motivation in selecting the Philippine College Foundation (PCF) as their top school. The study, which included 970 participants, aimed to determine the factors that influenced students' decision to join and how they first learnt about PCF. Based on the data, which comprised over half of the responses, friends and family were the primary sources of inspiration and information. Other significant issues were accessibility, cost, and the availability of desired academic programs. These findings align with earlier studies that emphasize the importance of family influence, word-of-mouth marketing, and financial considerations in decision-making regarding schooling. The study emphasizes the need to strengthen family influence, grow school-based programming, and raise institutional presence online. The study, which included 970 participants, aimed to determine the elements that influenced students' decision to join and how they first learnt about PCF. Friends and family were the main sources of information and inspiration, according to the data, which included more than half of the responses.

**Keywords:** Student motivation; education choice; family influence; word-of-mouth marketing; higher education choice; Philippine College Foundation.

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*Received: 10/17/2025*

*Accepted: 12/17/2025*

*Published: 12/27/2025*

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*\* Corresponding author.*

## **1. Introduction**

Social considerations, the school's standing, and pragmatic considerations such as cost and location are all critical factors when selecting an institution. Previous study asserts that a variety of information sources, the school's standing, and family expectations all affect students' choices [1]. This process encompasses both cognitive and emotional elements, including the belief in parental guidance, word-of-mouth recommendations, and the perceived value of schooling [2]. Cultural values and family involvement strongly influence decisions about schooling in the Philippine environment. Filipino students frequently rely on the advice of their parents, friends, and relatives, particularly in rural areas where community ties are still strong [3]. Other studies indicate students should consider cost, accessibility, and the availability of desired academic programs when selecting nearby schools and universities [4,5].

The Philippine College Foundation (PCF), located in Valencia City, offers accessible, high-quality education to students in Bukidnon and surrounding provinces. Understanding how students become aware of PCF and what influences their decision to enroll is imperative for institutional strategy. This knowledge enables targeted recruitment initiatives by identifying which information sources, such as social media, familial recommendations, or school visits, exert the greatest influence.

Therefore, this study aims to determine (1) how students first learned about the Philippine College Foundation and (2) what factors motivated them to choose PCF over other higher education institutions in Valencia City. The study's findings are expected to provide insights that can improve student engagement, inform institutional planning, and support successful recruitment strategies.

### **Objective of the Study**

This study aims to explore the factors influencing students' awareness and motivation in choosing the Philippine College Foundation (PCF) as their preferred institution of higher education.

1. To determine how students first learned about the Philippine College Foundation.
2. To identify the primary motivational factors that influenced students to choose PCF over other institutions in Valencia City.
3. To propose plans that can strengthen PCF's recruitment strategies and student engagement efforts based on the findings.

## **2. Methodology**

The researcher used a descriptive survey research method, collecting information without changing the environment. This approach can involve a one-time interaction with groups or a longitudinal study tracking individuals over time. Data were gathered through surveys or interviews, allowing direct researcher-participant interaction. The descriptive method aims to obtain information about an existing condition, going beyond simple data gathering [8].

A total of 970 students from various programs and year levels at PCF participated, ensuring broad representation of the student population. A systematic survey questionnaire with both closed-ended and open-ended questions was used to gather data. In the first question, students were asked how they first learned about PCF and were given a variety of possibilities, including Facebook pages, pamphlets, career counseling, family or friends, and other sources. Students were asked to elaborate on why they chose PCF above other universities in the following question.

The responses to the closed-ended questions were analyzed using frequency and percentage distribution to identify the most common sources of information about PCF. This statistical approach enabled the researcher to quantify the dominant factors influencing students' awareness, such as family, friends, social media, school promotions, and alumni feedback. Patterns and trends became evident, highlighting which sources most significantly shaped students' initial perceptions of PCF.

This study employed a descriptive research design to examine participants' responses to open-ended questions. This approach was deemed suitable for obtaining an accurate portrayal of the students' views and experiences without altering or influencing their responses. Through this method, the researcher carefully reviewed and organized the qualitative data to detect recurring ideas, terms, and expressions that conveyed the students' underlying motivations for enrolling at the Philippine College Foundation (PCF). By systematically identifying these patterns, the descriptive method enabled the researcher to present a clear, structured, and evidence-based account of the factors that shaped the students' enrollment decisions.

### 3.Results and Discussion

**Table 1:** Distribution of Respondents according to how they first learned about the Philippine College Foundation

Source of Information	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Family/Friends	486	50.1%
PCF Students	238	24.5%
PCF Facebook Page	96	9.9%
Career Guidance	70	7.2%
PCF Faculty/Staff	27	2.8%
PCF Alumni	19	2%
Other	13	1.3%
Radio	10	1.0%
Webpages	7	0.7%
Tarpaulins	4	0.4%
Leaflets	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>100%</b>

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents (50.1%) first became aware of the Philippine College Foundation (PCF) through friends and relatives. This finding underscores the enduring influence of interpersonal communication as a credible and trusted source of information in higher education contexts. Word-of-mouth promotion continues to be among the most effective mechanisms through which institutions establish reputational credibility and attract prospective students [2]. In the Philippine setting, students demonstrate a pronounced tendency to rely on personal recommendations rather than formal marketing materials when making enrollment decisions [14]. These results reinforce the assertion that trust-based relationships and social networks play a pivotal role in shaping students' educational choices.

A significant portion of respondents (24.5%) reported learning about PCF through current students, highlighting the critical role of peer-to-peer communication in influencing institutional awareness. This finding suggests that enrolled students function as informal institutional ambassadors, offering firsthand insights into academic life, campus culture, and overall student experience. While this mechanism may also be classified as word-of-mouth promotion, its direct peer-based nature further enhances institutional credibility among potential enrollees. The prominence of student referrals indicates a generally favorable perception of PCF among its current student body, which, in turn, encourages others to consider enrollment.

In contrast, 9.9% of respondents identified the PCF Facebook page as their primary source of information, reflecting the growing importance of digital platforms in educational marketing. Social media enables institutions to extend their reach beyond geographical limitations and maintain sustained engagement with prospective students. However, the relatively modest percentage also suggests opportunities for improvement in PCF's digital visibility and online engagement strategies. Career guidance initiatives accounted for 7.2% of student awareness, demonstrating that collaborations with secondary schools, guidance counselors, and educational fairs remain effective channels for disseminating institutional information.

Other traditional media sources—such as radio (1.0%), institutional websites (0.7%), and tarpaulins (0.4%)—had minimal influence on student awareness. Notably, no respondent identified leaflets as a source of information (0.0%), indicating a decline in the effectiveness of print-based promotional materials in the current information landscape. This shift may be attributed to changing communication preferences among younger audiences, who increasingly favor digital and interpersonal sources. Meanwhile, alumni (2.0%), faculty and staff (2.8%), and other sources (1.3%) contributed moderately to information dissemination, suggesting that although internal stakeholders remain relevant, peer and family networks exert a stronger influence on institutional choice.

Overall, the findings suggest that PCF's strongest recruitment asset lies in its reputation within the community, primarily shaped by family members, peers, and current students. To broaden its recruitment reach, the institution may benefit from strengthening its digital marketing initiatives while expanding career guidance collaborations. Enhancing social media engagement, deepening partnerships with high schools, and sustaining alumni relations may collectively improve institutional visibility and enrollment outcomes. By integrating traditional interpersonal strategies with modern digital approaches, PCF can maintain its strong community presence while adapting to evolving information-seeking behaviors among prospective students.

#### **4. Factors Influencing Students' Motivation in Choosing the Philippine College Foundation**

The results indicate that students' decisions to enroll at PCF are primarily self-determined, yet significantly shaped by external influences. Family members, peers, proximity and accessibility, affordability and scholarships, as well as institutional environment and reputation emerged as key motivational factors guiding students' enrollment choices.

##### **4.1. Family**

Family influence emerged as one of the strongest motivating factors for students. They believe that family encouragement not only provides guidance but also offers emotional and psychological support, strengthening students' confidence in their choice of institution. Research supports the role of family in educational choices. Parents are often the most influential social agents in guiding students' college decisions [19], particularly in collectivist cultures where family opinions carry considerable weight [15].

Several participants cited parents and siblings as key motivators, especially when family members had successfully graduated from PCF. Family members' educational success reinforces perceptions of institutional quality and trustworthiness [16]. These findings are consistent with studies emphasizing the combined emotional, cognitive, and intuitive processes involved in educational decision-making [17].

##### **4.2. Friends and Peers**

Peer recommendations were highly valued, particularly when peers had firsthand experience at PCF. Students were more likely to choose institutions endorsed by individuals they perceive as credible and successful [18]. Peer validation within similar academic tracks further enhances institutional trust [13]. Peer influence extended beyond academic alignment to emotional reassurance and social belonging, reducing anxiety associated with transitioning to college. These findings emphasize that college choice is often a socially influenced decision rather than a purely individual one.

These students found mental relief and a sense of resolution in the prospect of attending college together. In addition to being a respectable organization, they saw PCF as a friendly place where they could maintain the connections that had helped them in their early school years. Their belief that they were making the right decision was reinforced by colleagues' encouraging comments, who were already enrolled at the institution. Their decision was also greatly influenced by their desire to remain close friends and follow the same academic path. This tendency emphasizes the crucial importance of social affiliation. Their desire to be close friends and to pursue the same academic path also had a significant impact on their choice. This trend emphasizes the importance of social belonging in shaping educational decisions and demonstrates that peer influence extends beyond mere suggestion.

As they transition to college, students' worries about new academic challenges are lessened when they are part of a familiar social group. It contributes to the school community's sense of stability and belonging. As a result, peer endorsements, group experiences, and shared decisions have a significant impact on students' motivation and final institutional choice. This implies that rather than being solely an individual choice, selecting a college is often a

social one influenced by emotional and interpersonal relationships.

#### **4.3. Proximity and Accessibility**

Proximity and accessibility significantly influenced enrollment decisions. Shorter travel time, convenient transportation, and affordable commuting options made PCF a practical choice. Transportation accessibility affects convenience, security, and time management, all of which influence educational participation [21].

The availability of transportation alternatives relates to how easily students can travel from home to school using accessible modes, such as public transportation, private transportation, or walking. This aspect has a substantial impact on students' decisions when choosing an educational institution, particularly those living off-campus. Students are more likely to enroll and attend classes regularly without stress or delays brought on by travel issues when transportation is affordable, dependable, and convenient. On the other hand, students may be deterred from attending schools that are far from their homes by insufficient or costly transportation options. Transportation accessibility significantly impacts students' educational choices by influencing not only convenience but also their sense of security and time management [21]. This is evident in the responses of several participants who emphasized the importance of proximity and ease of travel in choosing the Philippine College Foundation (PCF).

#### **4.4. Affordability and Scholarships**

One factor that motivated students to enroll is the school's provision of scholarship opportunities, along with affordable tuition. The availability of scholarships, grants, and tuition discounts is a major incentive for students when selecting a higher education institution. The availability of scholarships and financial aid plays a crucial role in shaping students' college choices, as documented extensively in educational literature. Financial support, such as scholarships and grants, alleviates the burden of tuition costs and significantly influences enrollment decisions. A study suggests that students often select institutions based on the financial aid available to them, highlighting the pivotal role of scholarships in expanding access to higher education [22]. Many students said the institution's financial assistance greatly reduced the burden on their families. The tuition and miscellaneous fee considerations made the school more accessible and appealing, especially to those who aspire to pursue higher education despite financial limitations.

Tuition and miscellaneous fee considerations refer to how students and their families evaluate the overall cost of studying in a particular institution. In addition to tuition, these also cover costs such as laboratory fees, uniforms, school supplies, and other expenses throughout the semester. The entire cost of education is a major deciding factor for many students, particularly those from low- to middle-income households. Participant 14 said, "What motivated me is their courses offered, and the tuition is not expensive." This further supports the notion that students are motivated not only by the availability of desired academic programs but also by the school's cost-effective tuition structure. Affordability thus becomes a strong incentive for enrollment. And Participant 763 explained, "I chose PCF because I am convinced by my cousin that it is a nice and beautiful school, and also, PCF offers so many scholarships that can help not me but everyone willing to learn and does not think about problems when it comes to tuition." This demonstrates how family and peer recommendations, combined with the assurance

of financial aid, influence students' educational decisions. A well-informed approach to financial aid is essential in guiding students through the complexities of college applications and financing. Other studies emphasize that providing students, particularly those from minoritized backgrounds, with clear, early information about financial aid opportunities positively affects college-going outcomes [22]. This aligns with findings that underscore the importance of financial aid awareness in influencing students' educational choices [22]. The two responses above support the claim that the institution offers affordable tuition fees, which play a vital role in motivating students to enroll in PCF, and that the Philippine College Foundation has offered scholarships for students determined to pursue college without incurring high costs.

#### **4.5. Positive Environment and Reputation**

After careful analysis of the responses, the researcher identified the last factor affecting students' motivation in choosing PCF: school reputation and community image. Many participants mentioned that they chose to enroll at the Philippine College Foundation (PCF) because of its reputable name in the community and its positive learning environment. They shared that PCF is known for having dedicated teachers, quality education, and a welcoming atmosphere that makes students feel comfortable and supported.

School reputation and community image refer to how the public perceives an educational institution in terms of academic quality, student success, faculty competence, and overall community trustworthiness. A school with a good reputation is often described as having a strong reputation and a positive community image. Reputable educational institutions are typically associated with excellence, order, and a nurturing environment that fosters student success. However, the community image reveals how the school's involvement in social and educational development is perceived by outsiders, such as parents, former students, and local residents.

Participant 12 reinforced this idea, stating, "I chose the Philippine College Foundation for its outstanding academic reputation, good instructors, and programs that are relevant to my professional ambitions." This statement demonstrates how institutional reputation and curricular relevance influence decision-making. When programs are aligned with students' career goals, they are perceived as practical investments in future success [24]. In addition, Participant 86 stated, "I chose Philippine College Foundation over other institutions in Valencia City primarily because of its strong academic programs and the supportive community environment it offers... the blend of these practical and personal factors made PCF the best choice for achieving my educational and career goals." This comprehensive reflection integrates both academic and socio-emotional motivations, illustrating how the institution's values and student-centered approach foster trust and a sense of belonging. Students who feel supported and who belong at their schools are more likely to be persistent and engaged in their studies [25].

The literature underscores the complexity of decision-making in higher education, highlighting how students weigh multiple influences when selecting a college. Although personal recommendations provide valuable perspectives, students tend to prioritize quantitative measures over qualitative influences. Decision-making is also influenced by socioeconomic background and access to information [27]. This implies that, even though students acknowledge peer and family input, it rarely outweighs material factors such as college expenses and program offerings. The significance of recommendations in college decisions is also influenced by socioeconomic

background. Although social recommendations matter, students often prioritize pragmatic factors such as affordability, program offerings, and institutional quality [26]. However, for students who are struggling financially, pragmatic factors like affordability usually take precedence over social effects.

**Table 2:** Enrollment Growth Strategies

Key Result Area	Proposed Plan	Expected Outcome
<b>Digital Marketing and Visibility</b>	Enhance PCF's official Facebook page, produce short promotional videos, and regularly update the website with student testimonials and success stories.	Increased online presence and broader visibility among potential enrollees.
<b>Alumni Engagement</b>	Implement the "PCF Family and Alumni Referral Strengthened Program" to encourage referrals through small mouth promotion and incentives and community recognition.	word-of-mouth promotion and community-based trust.
<b>Career Guidance Collaboration</b>	Conduct regular orientation seminars and career talks in partner high schools to promote PCF programs and opportunities.	Improved student awareness of PCF's academic offerings and career pathways.
<b>Scholarship and Financial Assistance Promotion</b>	Launch campaigns that highlight available scholarships, such as UNIFAST and internal financial aid programs.	Increased access for economically disadvantaged students and reduced financial barriers.

Based on the study's findings, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the Philippine College Foundation's (PCF) student recruitment and engagement efforts. First and foremost, increasing digital marketing and visibility is essential. PCF may update its website with student endorsements and success stories, make quick promotional videos, and enhance its official Facebook presence. Particularly in the digital age, where students primarily rely on social media for information, a good online presence expands the institution's exposure and reach among potential students [1].

Second, promoting family and alumni involvement can significantly increase word-of-mouth advertising. The proposed "PCF Alumni Referral Program" would offer modest incentives to foster community ties, uphold a positive reputation, and encourage successful student referrals. This finding aligns with the previous that Filipino families and tight social networks have a significant impact on school choices [14,3]. Third, students can gain greater awareness of PCF's programs and career opportunities by strengthening career-advisory partnerships with nearby high schools through regular orientation seminars. This initiative supports national higher education priorities that promote school–community collaboration to help students make informed educational decisions Reference [29]. Lastly, economically disadvantaged students may benefit from a scholarship awareness campaign that highlights UNIFAST and internal financial aid programs. By reducing perceived financial barriers, access to



financial assistance information can significantly influence enrollment decisions [26]. This approach is consistent with educational marketing theory, which emphasizes experience-based and value-driven communication in shaping institutional perceptions [27]. These initiatives aim to increase PCF's visibility, strengthen community ties, and boost student enrollment through sustained and intentional efforts.

These proposed actions are consistent with findings that successful educational institutions effectively employ relationship marketing and customized communication strategies to engage diverse student populations [2]. Schools can build trust-based partnerships that extend beyond traditional advertising by fostering genuine relationships with families, alumni, and local communities. Enhancing communication through digital platforms and community outreach may lead to a more comprehensive and sustainable recruitment strategy for the Philippine College Foundation (PCF).

Integrating this relationship-based marketing approach into PCF's strategy means that institutional promotion should not only highlight academic programs but also cultivate long-term partnerships grounded in care, accessibility, and shared values. Through this approach, PCF positions itself as a student-centered institution that understands its stakeholders' goals and constraints, thereby strengthening its reputation, visibility, and enrollment outcomes.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

Numerous factors can affect students' motivation in choosing which institution to enroll in to pursue college. It would be the influence of the people around them. It was amazing to observe how students first discovered PCF and what influenced their decision to enroll. The study has demonstrated the importance of social connections and community ties in students' educational choices, showing that friends and family were the most significant sources of awareness and motivation. Digital media, particularly Facebook, are increasing awareness, even as flyers and other conventional promotional techniques remain helpful for attracting new registrants. Peer support, family links, cost, accessibility, and the relevance of the academic offers were additional factors that attracted students to PCF.

The study's findings inform several targeted recommendations. First, given that interpersonal networks involving families and friends emerged as the primary sources of initial awareness and motivation for enrolling at PCF, the institution may further expand its community engagement initiatives to reinforce these relationships and sustain trust within local communities. Second, as social media, particularly the PCF Facebook page, has become an increasingly important channel for student awareness, the institution must strengthen its online presence by providing timely updates, incorporating student testimonials, and producing promotional content that reflects authentic student experiences. This approach aims to enhance digital outreach while capitalizing on the demonstrated influence of peer and alumni endorsements. Third, as affordability and access to scholarships were significant factors motivating enrollment, PCF may intensify the dissemination of information regarding financial aid and scholarship opportunities to better reach economically disadvantaged students. The results also suggest the value of integrating digital and conventional marketing approaches to ensure that communication strategies resonate with both technology-oriented and community-oriented audiences. Lastly, future research may explore

the specific roles of alumni networks and digital engagement in shaping student decision-making, especially in the context of higher education institutions, as the current findings highlighted these factors as potential areas for improving institutional recruitment strategies.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates that the institution's reputation, connections, and trust continue to influence students' educational choices. The Philippine College Foundation can carry out its purpose as a student-centered organization that prioritizes accessibility, top-notch instruction, and authentic connection by cultivating community relationships and embracing digital innovation. This will guarantee the institution's ongoing development and significance.

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## **6.Appendix A**

### Digital Survey Questionnaire

## New Student Survey 2024-2025

**B** *I* U ↗ ~~X~~

This survey aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the promotional methods used by Philippine College Foundation. The results will be utilized to further enhance and elevate the quality of institutions services.

Name

Short answer text

Short answer

Required

Address \*

Long answer text

Email \*

Short answer text

Figure 1

**Functional Contact Number: \***

Short answer text

**Course: \***

- ☐ Bachelor of Science in Business Administration Major in Financial Management (BSBA-FM)
- ☐ Bachelor of Science in Office Administration (BSOA)
- ☐ Bachelor of Science in Criminology (BSCRIM)
- ☐ Bachelor of Education in Elementary Education (BEED)
- ☐ Bachelor of Science in Hospitality Management (BSHM)

**Parents/Guardians Name: \***

Short answer text

**Emergency Contact Number of Parents/Guardians:**

Short answer text

**Figure 2**

Among the following options, how did you first learn about the Philippine College Foundation \*  
(PCF)?

1. Career Guidance
2. Leaflets
3. Radio
4. Friends/Family
5. Webpages
6. Tarpaulins/ Posting
7. PCF Facebook Pages
8. PCF Faculty and Staff
9. PCF Student
10. PCF Alumni
11. Others please specify

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What motivated you to choose Philippine College Foundation over other institutions in \*  
Valencia City?

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**Figure 3**

What motivated you to choose Philippine College Foundation over other institutions in Valencia City?

970 responses

My family
Family
Family
N/A
Friends
Friends
My family
Nice school
Parents

Figure 4

## Appendix C

### Graphical Representation of the Survey Results

Among the following options, how did you first learn about the Philippine College Foundation (PCF)?

970 responses

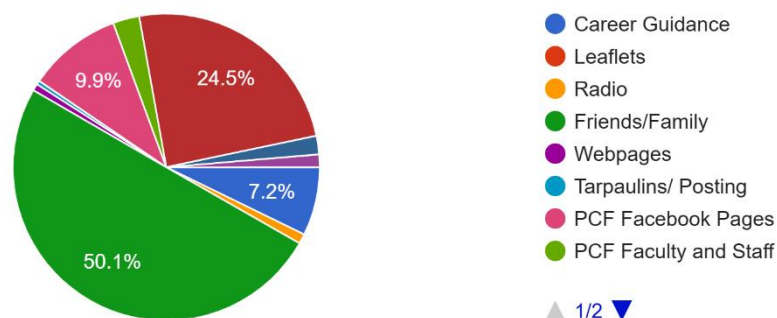


Figure 5

Among the following options, how did you first learn about the Philippine College Foundation (PCF)? [Copy chart](#)

970 responses

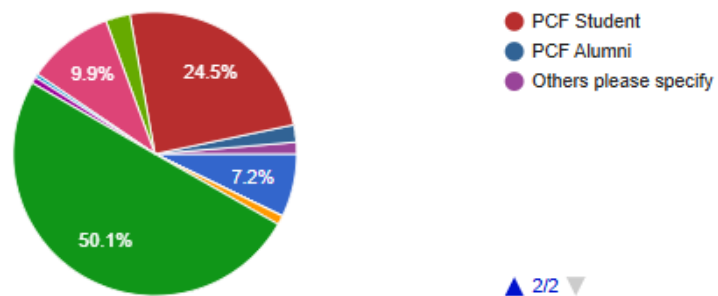


Figure 6