

# Research questions and hypotheses

[Education](#)



Postsecondary Scenario Foothills is a primarily liberal arts serving approximately 7,500. The campus is nestled in the foothills above a major metropolitan city. Although the student body consists of people from the metro area, about 15% are from other states and another 5% are international students. The student population also reflects the diversity of the city with many races and ethnicities represented on campus. The male to female student body is about 50/50. The university relies on tuition, fees, and a substantial endowment to meet its financial obligations.

The campus and its supporters are very proud of the sports programs. The most popular sports are mens football and womens softball. Although the football team boasts of winning seasons year after year, it is by no means a powerhouse. The softball team, though, is consistently conference champions and once won the national championship. Therefore, the popularity of sports has been a solid marketing feature of the university along with its well-respected academic programs.

Even with all this popularity, all parties agree it is important to grow the campus to maintain its reputation and compete with peer institutions. The new strategic plan at Foothills University reports a need to increase student enrollments by 15% over the next five years. As part of this initiative, three new academic programs are to be implemented, although the subject matter is open to study. Most of the universitys academic programs are at the bachelors level with 6,000 students and a few masters programs with 1,500 students. The executives and board of trustees thought about adding doctoral programs, but are concerned about the potential effects on the universitys liberal arts mission as well as the impact to finances.

The Vice President for Academic Affairs has been tasked by the president to <https://assignbuster.com/research-questions-hypotheses/>

oversee the process. Not wanting to make rash decisions about where to increase enrollments and what type of programs to implement, the VP convened a task force to research the issues. He expects the task force to conduct formal, empirical research to study the issues.

You are appointed by the VP as the lead researcher. As lead researcher, you are to develop the projects, conduct the research, and provide recommendations for decision making to the VP.

### Introduction

It has been unanimously agreed that the crux of economic development and poverty alleviation lie in the education. That's the reason that colleges and universities are deemed not only an engine to socio-economic development but also recognized as invaluable economic assets.

(Zhang, 2004) summarizes his study as follows:

Findings suggest that socioeconomic factors and academic factors are not all that separated; they work in tandem. The academically and socioeconomically "rich" become richer while the academically and socioeconomically "poor" become poorer in the face of massive expansion of higher education in the United States. As more longitudinal data resources are available, future studies will be able to examine these interactions throughout one's life.

Unlike other sectors, where a firm may be able to survive longer just by changing the product packaging, the education sector has been facing stiff challenges - both financially and qualitatively. We have seen the products failure of even multi-billionaire firms inflicting a heavy dent to its overall reputation in the market so is in the case of education. In short, this sector cannot opt for a Trade-off rather has to devise a balanced strategy - the <https://assignbuster.com/research-questions-hypotheses/>

strategy which has to be in line with the institution's strategic goals as well as provide ways & means for sustainable growth in academia.

#### Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to come-up with a strategic plan aimed to 15% growth in students' enrolments at Foothills University in the next five years.

#### Qualitative Research

Qualitative approach is most appropriate when discussions, interviews, surveys, phenomenology, situations, observations, behavioral/cultural/contextual/theoretical studies are involved in research and the results to be drawn have to be subjective or descriptive (non-numeric). The other way we can say that this approach is used when the qualitative variables cannot be tested or measured in terms of figures or quantity. The crux of a qualitative research lies in the socially-developed reality and the research problem is situation-bound.

Since the objective of this study (i. e. 15% growth in students' enrolment in the next five years) is nothing to do with the secondary data (statistics or figures) rather involves many of the methods, stated in the preceding para, I understand this (qualitative) approach is the best for conducting this research

#### Central Research Question

How can Foothills ensure its potential growth in years to come as well as sustainability in the prevailing competitive environment without affecting the University's liberal arts mission as well as the impact to finances?

#### Quantitative Research

Quantitative approach builds upon the theory, the variables and their relationship and comparison. In order words this approach, having examined <https://assignbuster.com/research-questions-hypotheses/>

the relationship among significant factors (variables), finally leads to an objective (statistical/quantifiable) solution. The process of information collection could be determined by survey research, experiment, quasi-experiment, single subject experiments and correlation. The information/data collected provides quantitative attributes of a population which are measured to draw a conclusion.

### Research Questions

1. Does adding to course portfolio (doctoral programs) lead to increase in growth?
2. What is the relationship between quality of education and growth in students' enrolment?
3. Could promoting the sports lead to increase in growth?

### Research Hypotheses

1. Launching a new degree program significantly increases a University's growth.
2. Quality of education is significant to increase in a University's growth
3. Promoting sports is one of the predominant factors behind a University's growth.

### Decision Making

I understand " high quality of education" would come-up as one of the strongest elements behind the Foothills growth. Evidently, the first and foremost objective of a student joining a University is to persuade a higher quality of education. Today both youth and parents are more conscious than ever before. They do investigate the credibility and standing of the institute before admission. Therefore, I would decide to excel the standard of education and strive to achieve a good rank among the existing Universities.

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(Heyneman, 2004) in the summary stated the following:

Current issues which predominate education quality debates concern the degree to which nations are differentiated not by educational access but by quality. High income nations are able to invest per student about 300 times more than low income nations. Investments in educational quality are growing throughout the world, with the exception of sub-Saharan Africa.

### Results

1. Launching a new degree program significantly increases a University's growth.

I think adding to the programs portfolio (doctoral programs in this case) would have moderate significance to the growth strategy. Reason being other Universities may also offer or perhaps are already offering the same programs. Secondly, in case others are offering at a lower fee than that of Foothills then this initiative will become insignificant to growth leaving no distinguishing point for students to choose Foothills only.

2. Promoting sports is one of the predominant factors behind a University's growth.

I think promoting sports will be least significant to Foothills growth. Reason being the core of business is " Education" and not sports. This strategy might work for a shorter period of time and could result in attracting few students. However, it shall not ensure sustainable growth diminishing Foothills ability to compete in the market.

### Recommendations

1) Though the findings reveal that " Quality of Education" is the most significant factor that boosts the growth of an education institution nonetheless a broader-spectrum research in this sphere is highly advisable.

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Reason being I understand that there could possible other factors that could work better in conjunction with quality of education.

(Long, 2005) under the conclusion stated the following:

This research demonstrates the importance of viewing school quality as multi-faceted with a broad array of possible effects. Further work should explore non-linearities and interactions in the effects of college qualities. Furthermore, additional work should be done exploring the interaction of college qualities with student attributes to explore whether quality has differential effects on sub-groups in the population.

2) I would also highly recommend the students' input and their opinion in the domain, because eventually it is the passed-out students who have to play an important role in the country's socio-economic development. Therefore, students' opinion must not be underestimated.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to come-up with a strategy leading to 15% growth in students' enrolment in the next five years.

In-depth discussions & surveys were conducted by means of distributing an unstructured questionnaire among the six management cadre personnel and 20 faculty members of Foothills University. Besides this, another structured questionnaire was distributed among 200 existing students of the University. The findings, based on the responses received, showed that " Quality of Education" is the most significant factor to growth. Surprisingly, the second most dominant factor found, was the " Level of facilities and environment provided to the students".

As such the study concludes with a note that " Quality of Education" must not be compromised under any circumstance plus providing better facilities

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and study environment is a definite plus to growth.

#### References

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