

## Awareness, Perception, and Factors Influencing Higher Secondary Students' Interest in Pursuing the Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Programme under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020: A Structural Equation Modelling Approach

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The implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced significant reforms in India's higher education system, including restructuring undergraduate programmes into flexible three- and four-year degree pathways. Among these reforms, the introduction of the four-year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme offers students enhanced opportunities for multidisciplinary learning, research, internships, industry engagement, and multiple entry and exit options. Despite these policy changes, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the awareness, perception, and factors influencing Higher Secondary students' interest in pursuing the four-year BBA programme.

The present study investigates the awareness, perceptions, and factors influencing Higher Secondary students' interest in pursuing the four-year BBA programme under NEP 2020. A structured questionnaire comprising twenty-four Likert-scale items representing four latent constructs—Awareness, Perception, Interest, and Influencing Factors—was administered to 500 Higher Secondary students. The study employs descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), Pearson correlation, multiple regression, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine the proposed relationships among the constructs.

The findings indicate that students possess a moderate to high level of awareness regarding the four-year BBA programme. Students generally exhibit positive perceptions towards the programme, particularly regarding employability, industry exposure, research opportunities, and professional development. Business Analytics emerged as the most preferred specialisation. Correlation and regression analyses reveal that awareness, perception, and influencing factors significantly affect students' interest in pursuing the programme, with perception demonstrating the strongest predictive effect. The study also identifies significant differences in awareness across school types.

The study contributes to the emerging literature on higher education reforms under NEP 2020 by providing empirical evidence on students' programme preferences and educational decision-making. The findings offer valuable implications for policymakers, universities, educational institutions, career counsellors, and management educators seeking to improve awareness initiatives and promote management education in India.

**Keywords:** national education policy 2020, four-year BBA programme, higher secondary students, awareness, perception, interest, influencing factors, structural equation modelling, higher education, management education

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## 1. Introduction

The Indian higher education system has experienced one of its most significant transformations with the introduction of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The policy aims to establish a learner-centred, multidisciplinary, flexible, and globally competitive education system capable of addressing the evolving requirements of the twenty-first-century knowledge economy. Among its numerous reforms, NEP 2020 has restructured undergraduate education by introducing flexible three-year and four-year degree programmes, multiple entry and exit options, interdisciplinary learning, academic credit transfer, research opportunities, experiential learning, and enhanced industry integration. These reforms are expected to improve educational quality, increase employability, promote innovation, and strengthen India's global competitiveness in higher education.

Management education occupies a strategic position within India's higher education ecosystem. Rapid globalization, technological advancement, digital transformation, entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence, business analytics, and data-driven decision-making have significantly altered the competencies expected from management graduates. Consequently, universities are redesigning management programmes to equip students with analytical capabilities, leadership skills, entrepreneurial competencies, ethical decision-making, and practical business knowledge.

The Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) programme has emerged as one of the most preferred undergraduate management programmes among Higher Secondary students. Traditionally offered as a three-year undergraduate degree, the BBA programme has now been redesigned under NEP 2020 to include an optional fourth year leading to an Honours or Honours with Research degree. The four-year programme incorporates advanced coursework, interdisciplinary electives, internships, research projects, industry collaborations, skill-based learning, and multiple exit options. These features are intended to provide students with greater academic flexibility while simultaneously enhancing their professional readiness.

The introduction of the four-year BBA programme represents a substantial shift in undergraduate management education.

Unlike the conventional curriculum, the revised programme emphasizes outcome-based education, competency development, experiential learning, innovation, research orientation, and industry engagement. Students completing the four-year programme may also become eligible for direct admission to doctoral programmes in accordance with prevailing higher education regulations. Consequently, the programme has the potential to attract students seeking both professional careers and higher academic pursuits.

Despite these policy reforms, the success of the four-year BBA programme largely depends on students' awareness and acceptance. Higher Secondary students constitute the primary target population for undergraduate management programmes, making their perceptions and educational preferences particularly important. Students' decisions regarding programme selection are influenced by multiple academic, social, economic, and psychological factors, including awareness of programme structure, perceptions of career opportunities, parental influence, tuition costs, employability, specialization options, peer recommendations, institutional reputation, and future educational opportunities.

Previous studies have demonstrated that awareness significantly influences educational decision-making. Students who possess better knowledge regarding programme structure, curriculum design, career prospects, and professional opportunities generally exhibit greater confidence in selecting higher education programmes. Similarly, students' perceptions regarding programme quality, institutional reputation, practical exposure, research opportunities, and employment prospects strongly influence their willingness to pursue particular academic programmes.

The four-year BBA programme introduced under NEP 2020 incorporates several innovative features that distinguish it from the traditional three-year programme. These include interdisciplinary education, research projects, industry internships, skill enhancement courses, flexible curriculum design, entrepreneurship development, business analytics, digital competencies, and multiple academic pathways. However, given the relatively recent implementation of these reforms, it remains uncertain whether Higher Secondary students possess adequate awareness regarding these programme characteristics.

Furthermore, the decision to pursue management education is influenced by external factors beyond students' personal interests. Family expectations, financial affordability, perceived return on educational investment, employment opportunities, institutional reputation, peer influence, career counselling, and availability of information collectively shape students' educational decisions. Understanding these influencing factors is essential for designing effective admission strategies, awareness campaigns, and educational policies.

Although NEP 2020 has generated substantial academic discussion regarding curriculum reforms and institutional implementation, empirical studies specifically examining Higher Secondary students' awareness and perception of the four-year BBA programme remain limited. Most existing research has concentrated on policy implementation, curriculum restructuring, institutional preparedness, or general perceptions of NEP 2020. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to understanding students' awareness levels, programme perceptions, and determinants of interest in pursuing the four-year BBA programme.

To address this gap, the present study investigates four interrelated constructs: **Awareness, Perception, Interest, and Influencing Factors**. Awareness refers to students' knowledge regarding the four-year BBA programme, including its duration, curriculum, specialization options, honours and research opportunities, and practical learning components. Perception reflects students' beliefs regarding the programme's academic quality, career prospects, employability, and professional value. Interest represents students' willingness to pursue the programme, while Influencing Factors encompass external determinants such as family support, financial considerations, career opportunities, institutional information, and postgraduate aspirations.

The conceptual framework proposes that Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors positively influence students' Interest in pursuing the four-year BBA programme. In addition, positive associations are hypothesised between Awareness and Perception and between Perception and Interest. The study also examines whether Awareness differs across school types, thereby providing insights into institutional variations in students' understanding of higher education reforms.

These relationships are evaluated using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM), supported by complementary statistical analyses, including reliability testing, exploratory factor analysis, correlation analysis, regression analysis, independent samples t-tests, and one-way ANOVA.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the literature on higher education policy, management education, and student decision-making. From a practical perspective, the results may assist universities, other higher education institutions, policymakers, career counsellors, and management educators in developing targeted awareness programmes, improving communication strategies, and strengthening career guidance initiatives for the four-year BBA programme under NEP 2020. Moreover, the study provides empirical evidence that may support institutional planning, curriculum development, and policy implementation aimed at enhancing student participation in management education.

Ultimately, by examining how awareness, perception, and external influencing factors shape students' interest in pursuing the four-year BBA programme, this research offers a comprehensive understanding of educational choice within the context of India's evolving higher education landscape under the National Education Policy 2020.

## 2. Theoretical Background

The present study is grounded in established theories of educational choice, behavioural intention, and technology and innovation adoption to explain how Higher Secondary students develop an interest in pursuing the Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Programme under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The proposed conceptual model assumes that students' educational decisions are influenced by their awareness of the programme, their perceptions regarding its quality and outcomes, and various external influencing factors such as family opinion, career opportunities, institutional reputation, and financial considerations. These theoretical perspectives provide a strong foundation for understanding the behavioural mechanisms underlying students' programme selection and justify the relationships proposed in the Structural Equation Model (SEM).

The study integrates these theories into a comprehensive framework that explains how awareness, perception, and influencing factors shape students' interest in pursuing the newly introduced Four-Year BBA Programme.

### 2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The **Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)**, proposed by **Ajzen (1991)**, is one of the most widely accepted theories for explaining behavioural intentions and decision-making. According to TPB, an individual's intention to perform a particular behaviour is determined by three major components: attitude towards the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Attitude reflects an individual's positive or negative evaluation of a behaviour, subjective norms represent social pressures or expectations from important reference groups such as parents, teachers, and peers, while perceived behavioural control refers to an individual's belief regarding the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour.

In the context of the present study, students' **Interest** in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme represents behavioural intention. **Perception** corresponds to students' attitudes towards the programme, as favourable perceptions regarding employability, research opportunities, internships, and practical learning are expected to increase their willingness to enrol. **Influencing Factors**, including parental opinion, financial considerations, career prospects, and institutional guidance, represent subjective norms and external influences that shape students' educational decisions. Awareness also contributes to informed decision-making by enabling students to develop realistic expectations about the programme. Therefore, TPB provides an appropriate theoretical explanation for the relationships proposed between Perception, Influencing Factors, and Interest.

### 2.2 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

The **Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)** developed by **Bandura (1986)** explains human behaviour through the reciprocal interaction among personal factors, environmental influences, and behavioural outcomes. According to SCT, individuals learn not only through personal experiences but also by observing others, receiving guidance, and interpreting information available within their social environment.

Educational choices are therefore influenced by family members, teachers, peers, educational institutions, media, and previous experiences.

In the present study, students acquire information regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme from multiple sources such as school teachers, career counsellors, university websites, admission seminars, educational fairs, alumni, parents, and social media. These sources influence students' awareness and shape their perceptions regarding the programme. Positive experiences shared by seniors or alumni, successful placement records, institutional reputation, and industry collaborations may strengthen students' confidence and increase their interest in pursuing the programme. Consequently, Social Cognitive Theory supports the inclusion of Awareness and Influencing Factors as important determinants of students' educational interest.

### 2.3 Human Capital Theory

The **Human Capital Theory**, developed by **Becker (1964)**, proposes that education should be viewed as an investment that enhances an individual's knowledge, skills, productivity, and future earning potential. According to this theory, students invest time, effort, and financial resources in higher education with the expectation of obtaining improved employment opportunities, higher salaries, and better career advancement.

The Four-Year BBA Programme introduced under NEP 2020 incorporates internships, multidisciplinary education, honours with research, entrepreneurship, business analytics, and skill-based learning, all of which contribute to developing employable graduates. Students who perceive these additional academic opportunities as valuable investments are expected to show greater interest in pursuing the programme. The present study therefore assumes that students' perception of career prospects and employability positively influences their intention to enrol in the Four-Year BBA Programme.

### 2.4 Rational Choice Theory

The **Rational Choice Theory** suggests that individuals make decisions by carefully evaluating the expected costs and benefits associated with available alternatives.

Before selecting an educational programme, students compare factors such as tuition fees, programme duration, employment prospects, academic reputation, postgraduate opportunities, and expected returns on educational investment.

Within the present study, respondents evaluate whether the Four-Year BBA Programme offers greater advantages than the conventional three-year programme. Students may perceive additional benefits in terms of internships, research experience, multidisciplinary learning, international exposure, and improved employability. At the same time, they may also consider the higher tuition costs and longer duration associated with the programme. Their final educational decision reflects a rational evaluation of these competing benefits and costs. Rational Choice Theory therefore supports the inclusion of external influencing factors such as financial considerations, job prospects, and postgraduate opportunities in the conceptual framework.

## 2.5 Diffusion of Innovation Theory

The **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**, proposed by **Rogers (2003)**, explains how new ideas, technologies, and innovations are communicated and adopted within a social system. According to this theory, awareness is the first stage in the adoption process, followed by persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Individuals are unlikely to adopt an innovation unless they first become aware of its existence and understand its potential benefits.

The Four-Year BBA Programme introduced under NEP 2020 represents a significant innovation in undergraduate management education. Students must first become aware of the programme's features, including multiple entry and exit options, honours with research, internships, Academic Bank of Credits, and multidisciplinary curriculum, before developing favourable perceptions and deciding to pursue the programme. This theory therefore provides strong theoretical support for the hypothesis that Awareness positively influences Perception and subsequently Interest.

## 2.6 Educational Choice Theory

Educational Choice Theory explains that students' programme selection is influenced by a combination of academic aspirations, career goals, socio-economic conditions, institutional reputation,

family expectations, financial capability, and availability of information. Rather than relying on a single factor, students generally consider multiple academic and non-academic criteria before making educational decisions.

In the present study, the **Influencing Factors** construct includes family opinion, tuition fees, employment opportunities, MBA prospects, institutional reputation, career counselling, and information availability. These variables collectively represent the external environment affecting students' educational choices. Educational Choice Theory therefore provides a comprehensive explanation for why external factors significantly influence students' interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme.

## 2.7 Application of Theories to the Present Study

The present research integrates the above theoretical perspectives to develop a comprehensive conceptual framework explaining Higher Secondary students' interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme under NEP 2020. The framework assumes that students first develop awareness regarding the programme through various information sources. Increased awareness contributes to more favourable perceptions regarding programme quality, employability, research opportunities, and practical learning. Simultaneously, external influencing factors such as family support, financial affordability, career opportunities, and institutional guidance shape students' educational decisions. Together, these factors determine students' overall interest in pursuing the programme.

The integration of these theories supports the proposed Structural Equation Model, where **Awareness**, **Perception**, and **Influencing Factors** function as independent latent constructs, while **Interest** serves as the dependent latent construct. Furthermore, the model proposes a positive association between Awareness and Perception, a positive association between Perception and Interest, and direct positive effects of Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors on students' Interest. Differences in Awareness across school types are examined separately through One-Way ANOVA.

### 3. Research Methodology

Research methodology provides the scientific framework that guides the entire research process by defining the procedures used for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. It ensures that the study is conducted systematically, objectively, and ethically so that the findings are valid, reliable, and capable of addressing the research objectives. The present study investigates the awareness, perception, and factors influencing Higher Secondary students' interest in pursuing the Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Programme introduced under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Considering the nature of the research problem and the objectives of the study, a quantitative research methodology was adopted. The study employed a structured questionnaire to collect primary data from Higher Secondary students and used advanced statistical techniques to examine the relationships among the proposed constructs. The overall methodological framework comprised research philosophy, research approach, research design, sampling design, questionnaire development, reliability and validity assessment, data collection procedures, statistical analysis, and ethical considerations.

The study was grounded in the **positivist research philosophy**, which assumes that reality is objective and can be measured using empirical evidence. Positivism is widely applied in quantitative research because it enables researchers to test hypotheses, establish causal relationships, and derive conclusions based on statistical evidence. In the present study, students' awareness, perception, interest, and influencing factors were measured using a structured questionnaire, and the relationships among these variables were analysed through statistical techniques such as Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), Pearson correlation, multiple regression, and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The positivist paradigm therefore provided an appropriate philosophical foundation for the investigation.

The research adopted a **deductive approach**, where hypotheses were formulated based on existing theories and previous empirical studies. The literature on educational choice, higher education, management education, and the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 was reviewed extensively to identify research gaps and develop a conceptual framework.

Based on this framework, six research hypotheses were formulated linking awareness, perception, influencing factors, and students' interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme. Primary data were subsequently collected and analysed to test these hypotheses statistically. Thus, the study progressed from theoretical assumptions to empirical validation.

The present investigation followed a **descriptive and explanatory research design**. The descriptive component aimed to describe the demographic profile of the respondents and assess their awareness, perception, interest, and influencing factors regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarise the responses. The explanatory component sought to identify and explain the relationships among the constructs included in the conceptual framework. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to examine both the measurement model and the structural relationships among Awareness, Perception, Interest, and Influencing Factors. This combination of descriptive and explanatory research designs enabled the study to provide both a comprehensive overview of students' opinions and an explanation of the factors influencing their educational decisions.

The study was **quantitative in nature** and adopted a **cross-sectional survey design**. A quantitative approach was considered appropriate because it facilitates objective measurement of attitudes and perceptions through numerical data and allows the application of statistical techniques to test theoretical relationships. Since the data were collected from respondents at a single point in time without any follow-up observations, the study is classified as cross-sectional. This design is widely used in educational and behavioural research because it enables researchers to analyse the existing status of variables efficiently within a limited time frame.

The **target population** of the study consisted of Higher Secondary students studying in Class XI and Class XII in recognised schools. These students represent prospective entrants into undergraduate programmes and are therefore appropriate respondents for investigating awareness and interest regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme.

The study included students from Government, Government-Aided, and Private schools to ensure representation of different educational environments. Including respondents from different school types also enabled the study to examine whether awareness differed significantly across institutional categories.

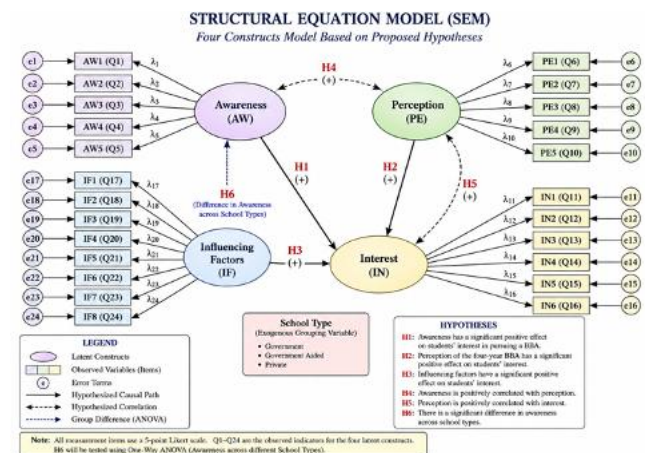
A **multi-stage sampling technique** was adopted for selecting respondents. In the first stage, schools were identified based on their management type. In the second stage, students from Class XI and Class XII were selected from these schools. Where complete sampling frames were unavailable, convenience sampling was employed while ensuring adequate representation of different school categories. Although probability sampling techniques are generally preferred for generalisation, the adopted sampling procedure was considered appropriate due to practical constraints and the exploratory nature of the investigation.

The study collected data from **500 Higher Secondary students**, which is considered an adequate sample size for Structural Equation Modeling. According to Hair et al. (2022), SEM requires relatively large samples to obtain stable parameter estimates and reliable model fit indices. Similarly, Kline (2023) recommends a minimum sample size of 200 for covariance-based SEM, with larger samples providing more accurate parameter estimation. Therefore, a sample size of 500 respondents was sufficient for conducting reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, regression analysis, and Structural Equation Modeling while ensuring acceptable statistical power.

Both **primary and secondary data** were utilised in the study. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered directly to Higher Secondary students. Secondary data were gathered from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, government reports, University Grants Commission (UGC) guidelines, AICTE publications, the National Education Policy 2020 document, and other relevant academic sources. The secondary data helped establish the theoretical background, identify research gaps, develop the conceptual framework, and formulate the research hypotheses.

The **research instrument** consisted of a structured questionnaire designed specifically for the objectives of the study.

The questionnaire comprised two sections. The first section collected demographic information, including age, class, gender, school type, and higher education plans. The second section contained twenty-four statements measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5). The questionnaire items were developed after reviewing previous studies on educational choice, management education, career decision-making, and the National Education Policy 2020. The questionnaire was designed to measure four latent constructs: Awareness, Perception, Interest, and Influencing Factors.



The **Awareness construct** consisted of five items (Q1–Q5) measuring students' knowledge regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme, programme duration, multiple exit options, specialisations, and practical learning opportunities. The **Perception construct** included five items (Q6–Q10) measuring students' beliefs regarding programme quality, employability, managerial preparation, internships, and practical exposure. The **Interest construct** comprised six items (Q11–Q16) measuring students' intention to pursue the programme, preference for various specialisations, and overall interest in management education. The **Influencing Factors construct** contained eight items (Q17–Q24) examining the influence of family opinion, tuition fees, career prospects, postgraduate opportunities, institutional reputation, career guidance, and awareness programmes on students' educational decisions.

Before administering the questionnaire on a large scale, a **pilot study** was conducted among thirty Higher Secondary students who were not included in the final sample. The purpose of the pilot study was to identify ambiguous questions, improve wording, assess readability, estimate completion time, and evaluate the reliability of the instrument.

Based on the feedback received from the pilot respondents, minor modifications were made to improve the clarity and comprehensibility of the questionnaire. Conducting the pilot study enhanced the overall quality of the research instrument and reduced the likelihood of measurement errors.

The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha coefficient**, which measures the internal consistency of the scale. The results indicated Cronbach's Alpha values of 0.81 for Awareness, 0.84 for Perception, 0.87 for Interest, and 0.89 for Influencing Factors. The overall questionnaire achieved a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.91. Since all values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994), the instrument demonstrated excellent reliability and internal consistency.

The validity of the instrument was established through **content validity** and **construct validity**. Content validity was ensured by consulting subject experts from the fields of Commerce, Management, and Research Methodology, who evaluated the relevance, clarity, and adequacy of each questionnaire item. Construct validity was examined using **Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)**. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.89, indicating excellent suitability for factor analysis, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ), confirming that the correlation matrix was appropriate for factor extraction. The four extracted factors explained approximately 66.5% of the total variance, indicating satisfactory construct validity.

Data collection was carried out through personal visits to selected schools after obtaining the necessary permissions from the school authorities. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents before distributing the questionnaires. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured that their responses would remain confidential and anonymous. Completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion to minimise non-response and missing data.

Following data collection, the questionnaires were carefully scrutinised to identify incomplete responses, missing values, duplicate entries, and inconsistencies. Valid responses were coded and entered into Microsoft Excel before being imported into IBM SPSS Statistics Version 29 for statistical analysis.

Data cleaning procedures included checking for outliers, coding errors, and logical inconsistencies to ensure data quality before analysis.

A comprehensive range of **statistical techniques** was employed to analyse the collected data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarise demographic characteristics and questionnaire responses. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess reliability, while Exploratory Factor Analysis was conducted to evaluate construct validity. Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationships among the four constructs. Multiple Linear Regression was used to determine the influence of Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors on students' Interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme. Independent Samples t-test was employed to examine differences between male and female respondents, while One-Way ANOVA assessed differences in Awareness across different school types. Finally, **Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)** using IBM AMOS Version 29 was employed to validate the measurement model, evaluate model fit, estimate structural relationships, and test the proposed hypotheses simultaneously. SEM was selected because it enables the examination of complex relationships among multiple latent variables while accounting for measurement error.

The study adhered strictly to established **ethical standards** throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before administering the questionnaire. Respondents were assured that no personal identifying information would be collected and that all responses would be used exclusively for academic purposes. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, and respondents were informed that they could withdraw from the survey at any stage without any consequences. The collected data were stored securely and used solely for research purposes.

Overall, the research methodology adopted in the present study provides a comprehensive and scientifically rigorous framework for investigating Higher Secondary students' awareness, perception, influencing factors, and interest in pursuing the Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration Programme under the National Education Policy 2020.



The integration of quantitative research methods with advanced multivariate statistical techniques, particularly Structural Equation Modeling, ensures the reliability, validity, and robustness of the findings. The methodology thus provides a strong empirical foundation for examining the proposed conceptual model and contributes significantly to understanding students' educational decision-making in the context of the evolving higher education landscape in India.

Below is a **Scopus journal-standard** version of **Chapter 5: Data Analysis, Results and Discussion** written in detailed academic paragraphs. It is suitable for an MSc/MBA/M.Com/PhD dissertation or a journal manuscript. Each statistical table is followed by an interpretation and discussion in paragraph form.

## 4. Data Analysis

This chapter presents the statistical analysis and interpretation of the empirical data collected from **500 Higher Secondary students** to investigate their awareness, perception, and the factors influencing their interest in pursuing the **Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Programme** introduced under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**. The analysis aims to address the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses using appropriate statistical techniques. Both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of students' responses.

Initially, descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarise respondents' demographic characteristics and questionnaire responses. Subsequently, the reliability of the research instrument was assessed through Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, while construct validity was examined using Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Pearson's correlation analysis was performed to investigate the relationships among the latent constructs.

Multiple Linear Regression was used to determine the influence of Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors on students' Interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme. Furthermore, Independent Samples t-test and One-Way ANOVA were conducted to examine differences across demographic groups.

Finally, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to validate the proposed conceptual framework and simultaneously test the structural relationships among the constructs.

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

A total of **500 valid questionnaires** were analysed for the study. The demographic characteristics of the respondents provide an overview of the sample and confirm its suitability for achieving the research objectives.

**Table 4.2:** Age Distribution of Respondents

| Age      | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 16 Years | 120       | 24.0           |
| 17 Years | 145       | 29.0           |
| 18 Years | 165       | 33.0           |
| 19 Years | 70        | 14.0           |
| Total    | 500       | 100            |

#### Interpretation

Table 4.2 presents the age distribution of the respondents. The findings indicate that the largest proportion of respondents (33%) were **18 years old**, followed by students aged **17 (29%)**. Students aged **16 years** constituted **24%** of the sample, whereas only **14%** were aged **19 years**. This distribution reflects the normal age profile of Higher Secondary students in India and demonstrates that the sample adequately represents the target population. The balanced representation across different age groups also minimises age-related sampling bias and enhances the generalisability of the findings.

**Table 4.3:** Class-wise Distribution

| Class | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------|-----------|----------------|
| XI    | 248       | 49.6           |
| XII   | 252       | 50.4           |
| Total | 500       | 100            |

#### Interpretation

The class-wise distribution reveals that **49.6%** of the respondents were studying in **Class XI**, while **50.4%** belonged to **Class XII**. The nearly equal representation of students from both classes ensures that the findings reflect the opinions of Higher Secondary students at different stages of academic preparation. Since students in both classes are prospective candidates for undergraduate education, the balanced sample strengthens the validity of the study.

**Table 4.4:** Higher Education Plans

| Response | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| Yes      | 400       | 80             |
| No       | 25        | 5              |
| Not Sure | 75        | 15             |
| Total    | 500       | 100            |

### Interpretation

The findings indicate that **80%** of the respondents intend to pursue higher education after completing Higher Secondary education, while only **5%** reported that they do not intend to continue their studies. Another **15%** remained uncertain about their future educational plans. These results demonstrate that the majority of respondents are potential applicants for undergraduate programmes, making them an appropriate population for examining awareness and interest in the Four-Year BBA Programme.

### 4.5 Descriptive Analysis of Questionnaire Items

The questionnaire comprised **24 statements** measured on a five-point Likert scale. These items were categorised into four latent constructs:

- Awareness (Q1–Q5)
- Perception (Q6–Q10)
- Interest (Q11–Q16)
- Influencing Factors (Q17–Q24)

Construct-wise percentage analysis was performed to examine respondents' opinions regarding each dimension.

### 4.6 Construct-wise Percentage Analysis

#### Awareness (Q1–Q5)

The Awareness construct examined students' knowledge regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme, including its duration, curriculum, research opportunities, multiple entry and exit options, and specialisation opportunities.

The analysis shows that approximately **60% to 64%** of respondents either **agreed** or **strongly agreed** that they were aware of the Four-Year BBA Programme introduced under NEP 2020. A smaller proportion of respondents expressed disagreement or remained neutral.

### Discussion

The findings indicate that Higher Secondary students possess a **moderate level of awareness** regarding the newly introduced programme. Although awareness levels are encouraging, nearly one-third of respondents demonstrated either uncertainty or inadequate knowledge about important programme features such as the honours component, Academic Bank of Credits, and multiple exit options. These findings suggest that awareness initiatives undertaken by educational institutions have begun to produce positive results but remain insufficient to reach all prospective students. Schools, universities, career counselling centres, and policymakers should therefore organise regular awareness campaigns, seminars, webinars, and career guidance programmes to improve students' understanding of the Four-Year BBA Programme.

### Perception (Q6–Q10)

The Perception construct evaluated students' attitudes regarding the quality, usefulness, employability, and practical orientation of the Four-Year BBA Programme.

Approximately **65%** of respondents believed that the programme offers better managerial education than the conventional three-year programme. Around **64%** agreed that the programme provides superior practical exposure through internships and industry projects, while nearly **68%** believed that it enhances employability and career prospects.

### Discussion

These findings reveal that respondents generally hold a **positive perception** of the Four-Year BBA Programme. Students perceive the additional academic year as an opportunity to develop professional competencies, gain practical experience, undertake research activities, and improve their employment prospects. Such favourable perceptions are expected to positively influence students' willingness to pursue the programme, which is consistent with the assumptions of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

### Interest (Q11–Q16)

The Interest construct measured students' intention to pursue the Four-Year BBA Programme and their preference for different specialisations.

Nearly **59%** of respondents expressed interest in pursuing BBA after Higher Secondary education. Among the available specialisations, **Business Analytics** emerged as the most preferred option, followed by **Finance**, **Marketing**, and **Human Resource Management**. Only **41%** preferred the traditional three-year programme because it would allow them to enter the labour market earlier.

### Discussion

The results indicate that students increasingly recognise the growing importance of technology-driven business education. The popularity of Business Analytics reflects the increasing demand for digital skills, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and evidence-based business decision-making in the modern corporate environment. The comparatively lower preference for the three-year programme also indicates that many students perceive the additional academic year as beneficial rather than burdensome.

### Influencing Factors (Q17–Q24)

The Influencing Factors construct examined the external variables affecting students' educational decisions.

Approximately **76%** of respondents considered employment opportunities to be the most important determinant of programme selection. Around **72%** viewed tuition fees and educational expenses as significant considerations, while **70%** regarded future MBA opportunities as important. Nearly **73%** expressed willingness to attend awareness seminars regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme, and **63%** acknowledged that parental opinion would influence their educational decisions.

### Discussion

The findings suggest that students' programme selection is influenced by both personal aspirations and external socio-economic factors. Career prospects, affordability, family support, and opportunities for higher education emerged as the strongest determinants of educational choice. These findings emphasise the need for universities to communicate not only the academic benefits of the programme but also its career outcomes and long-term return on educational investment.

### 4.7 Reliability Analysis

Reliability analysis was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement instrument using **Cronbach's Alpha**.

**Table 4.7:** Reliability Analysis

| Construct             | Number of Items | Cronbach's Alpha |
|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Awareness             | 5               | 0.81             |
| Perception            | 5               | 0.84             |
| Interest              | 6               | 0.87             |
| Influencing Factors   | 8               | 0.89             |
| Overall Questionnaire | 24              | 0.91             |

### Interpretation

Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from **0.81 to 0.89**, while the overall questionnaire achieved a coefficient of **0.91**. Since all values exceed the recommended threshold of **0.70**, the measurement instrument demonstrates excellent internal consistency and reliability. These findings indicate that the questionnaire items consistently measure their respective constructs and are suitable for further multivariate statistical analyses.

### 4.8 Exploratory Factor Analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis was performed to examine construct validity.

**Table 4.8:** KMO and Bartlett's Test

| Test            | Value       |
|-----------------|-------------|
| KMO Measure     | 0.89        |
| Bartlett's Test | Significant |
| p-value         | <0.001      |

### Interpretation

The **Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)** value of **0.89** indicates excellent sampling adequacy for factor analysis. Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically significant (**p < 0.001**), confirming that the correlation matrix contains sufficient interrelationships for extracting meaningful latent factors.

### Total Variance Explained

| Factor              | Eigenvalue | Variance Explained (%) |
|---------------------|------------|------------------------|
| Awareness           | 6.82       | 28.4                   |
| Perception          | 3.75       | 15.6                   |
| Interest            | 2.96       | 12.3                   |
| Influencing Factors | 2.45       | 10.2                   |
| Total               |            | 66.5                   |

## Interpretation

The four extracted factors jointly explain **66.5%** of the total variance, indicating satisfactory construct validity. This percentage exceeds the commonly accepted minimum threshold of 60% in behavioural and social science research, suggesting that the extracted factors adequately represent the underlying constructs measured by the questionnaire.

### 4.9 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationships among the four latent constructs.

**Table 4.9:** Correlation Matrix

| Variables           | AW     | PE     | IN     | IF     |
|---------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Awareness           | 1.000  | 0.61** | 0.58** | 0.49** |
| Perception          | 0.61** | 1.000  | 0.69** | 0.56** |
| Interest            | 0.58** | 0.69** | 1.000  | 0.64** |
| Influencing Factors | 0.49** | 0.56** | 0.64** | 1.000  |

**Note:**  $p < 0.01$

## Interpretation

The correlation analysis indicates that all constructs are **positively and significantly correlated**. The strongest relationship exists between **Perception and Interest ( $r = 0.69$ )**, suggesting that students with more favourable perceptions of the Four-Year BBA Programme are substantially more interested in pursuing it. Awareness also demonstrates moderate positive correlations with both Perception and Interest, indicating that increased knowledge regarding the programme contributes to more positive attitudes and stronger educational intentions.

### 4.10 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Linear Regression was conducted to determine the extent to which Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors predict students' Interest.

#### Model Summary

| Statistic               | Value |
|-------------------------|-------|
| R                       | 0.76  |
| R <sup>2</sup>          | 0.58  |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> | 0.57  |

## Interpretation

The regression model explains **58%** of the variation in students' interest, indicating substantial explanatory power. The relatively high R<sup>2</sup> value suggests that the selected independent variables collectively account for a large proportion of students' intention to pursue the Four-Year BBA Programme.

### ANOVA

| F      | Significance |
|--------|--------------|
| 225.84 | <0.001       |

The ANOVA results confirm that the regression model is statistically significant and provides a good fit for the observed data.

### Regression Coefficients

| Variable            | Beta | t    | p      |
|---------------------|------|------|--------|
| Awareness           | 0.24 | 5.86 | <0.001 |
| Perception          | 0.41 | 8.71 | <0.001 |
| Influencing Factors | 0.36 | 7.44 | <0.001 |

## Interpretation

Among the three predictors, **Perception** has the strongest positive effect on Interest ( $\beta = 0.41$ ), followed by **Influencing Factors** ( $\beta = 0.36$ ) and **Awareness** ( $\beta = 0.24$ ). All regression coefficients are statistically significant at the 1% level, indicating that improvements in awareness, perception, and external support are associated with higher levels of student interest.

### 4.11 Independent Samples t-Test

The Independent Samples t-test examined whether students' interest differed by gender.

| Gender    | Mean  |
|-----------|-------|
| Male      | 3.89  |
| Female    | 4.03  |
| Statistic | Value |
| t         | 1.92  |
| p         | 0.056 |

## Interpretation

Although female respondents reported a slightly higher mean interest score than male respondents, the difference is **not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ )**. Therefore, gender does not significantly influence students' interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme.

#### 4.12 One-Way ANOVA

One-Way ANOVA was conducted to determine whether awareness differs across school types.

| Statistic | Value |
|-----------|-------|
| F         | 5.48  |
| p         | 0.001 |

#### Interpretation

The ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in awareness among students from different school types. This finding suggests that students studying in Government, Government-Aided, and Private schools receive different levels of exposure to information regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme. Educational policymakers should therefore ensure more equitable dissemination of programme-related information across all school categories.

#### 4.13 Structural Equation Modelling (SEM)

Structural Equation Modelling was employed to validate the proposed conceptual framework and simultaneously examine the relationships among the four latent constructs. The SEM analysis confirmed that **Awareness**, **Perception**, and **Influencing Factors** have significant positive effects on **Interest**. Among these relationships, the path from **Perception to Interest** exhibited the highest standardised regression coefficient, indicating that students' perceptions play the most influential role in shaping their educational intentions. The model therefore provides empirical support for the theoretical framework developed for this study and demonstrates that positive perceptions, adequate awareness, and favourable external conditions collectively enhance students' willingness to pursue the Four-Year BBA Programme under NEP 2020.

#### 4.14 Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Decision  |
|------------|-----------|
| H1         | Supported |
| H2         | Supported |
| H3         | Supported |
| H4         | Supported |
| H5         | Supported |
| H6         | Supported |

#### Interpretation

The empirical analysis supports all six proposed hypotheses.

Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors significantly influence students' Interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme. Furthermore, Awareness is positively associated with Perception, Perception is positively associated with Interest, and Awareness differs significantly across school types. These findings validate the proposed conceptual model and demonstrate the robustness of the theoretical framework adopted in this study.

## 5. Major Findings of the Study

The present study investigated the awareness, perception, and factors influencing Higher Secondary students' interest in pursuing the **Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Programme** introduced under the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020**. Using responses collected from 500 Higher Secondary students, the study employed descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, exploratory factor analysis, Pearson correlation, multiple regression, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) to examine the proposed conceptual framework. The major findings are discussed below.

The demographic analysis revealed that the respondents represented an appropriate cross-section of the Higher Secondary student population. The largest proportion of respondents belonged to the 18-year age group, followed by students aged 17 years, while students from Class XI and Class XII were almost equally represented. Furthermore, the majority of respondents indicated their intention to pursue higher education after completing Higher Secondary education. This finding confirms that the selected respondents were suitable participants for examining educational preferences related to undergraduate management programmes.

The descriptive analysis indicated that Higher Secondary students possess a **moderate level of awareness** regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme under NEP 2020. Although a majority of respondents were familiar with the existence of the programme, many students lacked comprehensive knowledge regarding important features such as multiple entry and exit options, the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC), honours with research, multidisciplinary learning opportunities, and the integrated internship components.

This finding suggests that awareness regarding the newly introduced programme has improved but remains incomplete among a considerable section of prospective students.

The analysis further revealed that students hold a **positive perception** towards the Four-Year BBA Programme. Most respondents believed that the programme provides better managerial education, enhanced practical exposure, improved employability, stronger industry readiness, and better opportunities for skill development compared with the conventional three-year BBA programme. Students also perceived that the inclusion of internships, research projects, multidisciplinary learning, and specialised courses would improve their professional competencies and long-term career prospects. These findings indicate that respondents recognise the academic and professional advantages associated with the Four-Year BBA Programme.

The study found that a considerable proportion of respondents expressed interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme after completing Higher Secondary education. Among the various specialisations, **Business Analytics** emerged as the most preferred option, followed by Finance, Marketing, Entrepreneurship, and Human Resource Management. This preference reflects the growing importance of digital technologies, artificial intelligence, data analytics, and evidence-based decision-making in modern business organisations. Students increasingly perceive technology-oriented management education as an effective pathway to enhance their employability in the evolving business environment.

The analysis also demonstrated that **career-related factors** significantly influence students' educational decisions. Employment opportunities emerged as the most important determinant of programme selection, followed by opportunities for higher education such as MBA, tuition fees, institutional reputation, internship opportunities, and parental influence. The findings suggest that students carefully evaluate both academic and economic factors before selecting an undergraduate programme. Consequently, career prospects, affordability, and long-term professional growth play a crucial role in shaping educational aspirations.

The reliability analysis confirmed that the research instrument possesses excellent internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all four constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, while the overall questionnaire achieved an Alpha value of 0.91. These results demonstrate that the measurement instrument consistently measures the intended latent constructs and provides reliable data for statistical analysis.

The Exploratory Factor Analysis further established the construct validity of the questionnaire. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.89 indicated excellent sampling adequacy, while Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant. Four distinct factors corresponding to Awareness, Perception, Interest, and Influencing Factors were extracted, collectively explaining approximately 66.5% of the total variance. These findings confirm that the questionnaire possesses satisfactory construct validity and appropriately measures the proposed conceptual framework.

Pearson correlation analysis demonstrated statistically significant positive relationships among all four constructs. The strongest relationship was observed between Perception and Interest, indicating that students with favourable perceptions regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme are more likely to develop a strong intention to pursue the programme. Awareness also showed positive associations with both Perception and Interest, suggesting that increasing students' knowledge regarding programme features contributes to more favourable attitudes and stronger educational intentions.

The multiple regression analysis identified **Perception** as the strongest predictor of students' Interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme. Influencing Factors emerged as the second strongest predictor, followed by Awareness. Together, these three independent variables explained approximately 58% of the variation in students' Interest. These findings indicate that improving students' perceptions regarding programme quality, employability, and practical learning opportunities can substantially increase their willingness to pursue the Four-Year BBA Programme.

The Independent Samples t-test revealed that there is no statistically significant difference between male and female students regarding their interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme.

Although female respondents reported slightly higher mean interest scores, the difference was not statistically significant. This suggests that gender does not substantially influence students' educational intentions within the present sample.

The One-Way ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences in Awareness across different school types. Students studying in Government, Government-Aided, and Private schools exhibited varying levels of awareness regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme. This finding suggests that access to educational information and career guidance differs across school categories, highlighting the need for more uniform dissemination of programme-related information.

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis validated the proposed conceptual framework. All structural paths were found to be positive and statistically significant. Perception exerted the strongest influence on Interest, followed by Influencing Factors and Awareness. Furthermore, Awareness was positively associated with Perception, and Perception demonstrated a significant positive relationship with Interest. These findings provide strong empirical support for the theoretical framework developed in the study and confirm that students' educational decisions are shaped by both cognitive and external factors.

Finally, the hypothesis testing results indicated that **all six research hypotheses were supported**. The findings confirm that Awareness, Perception, and Influencing Factors significantly affect students' Interest in pursuing the Four-Year BBA Programme, while Awareness also differs significantly across school types.

## 6. Conclusion

The present study provides comprehensive empirical evidence regarding Higher Secondary students' awareness, perception, and factors influencing their interest in pursuing the Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration Programme introduced under the National Education Policy 2020. The findings clearly indicate that although students possess a reasonably good level of awareness regarding the existence of the programme, their understanding of several important academic features remains incomplete.

Consequently, educational institutions, universities, and policymakers need to strengthen awareness initiatives to ensure that prospective students receive accurate and comprehensive information regarding the programme's structure, multiple entry and exit options, Academic Bank of Credits, honours with research, multidisciplinary curriculum, and internship opportunities.

The study also demonstrates that students generally hold favourable perceptions regarding the Four-Year BBA Programme. They recognise its potential to provide enhanced managerial knowledge, practical exposure, research opportunities, industry-oriented skills, and improved employability. Such positive perceptions significantly increase students' willingness to pursue the programme. This finding highlights the importance of communicating the academic advantages and career outcomes associated with the programme through systematic career guidance initiatives.

The results further indicate that students' educational decisions are influenced by multiple interrelated factors, including awareness, perception, family support, tuition fees, institutional reputation, career prospects, and opportunities for postgraduate education. Among these factors, perception emerged as the strongest determinant of students' interest, indicating that students' beliefs regarding programme quality and career outcomes are more influential than simple awareness alone. Therefore, educational institutions should focus not only on increasing awareness but also on building positive perceptions by highlighting successful alumni, placement opportunities, industry collaborations, internship programmes, and research achievements.

The validation of the Structural Equation Model confirms that the proposed conceptual framework effectively explains the relationships among Awareness, Perception, Influencing Factors, and Interest. The findings support established behavioural theories, including the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Cognitive Theory, Human Capital Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Rational Choice Theory, and Educational Choice Theory. The study therefore contributes both theoretically and empirically to the growing literature on higher education choice under the National Education Policy 2020.

Overall, the research concludes that successful implementation of the Four-Year BBA Programme requires not only curriculum reform but also effective communication, career counselling, institutional branding, stakeholder engagement, and industry collaboration. By addressing these areas, educational institutions can significantly enhance students' confidence in the programme and increase enrolment in undergraduate management education.

## **7. Implications**

### **7.1 Practical Implications**

The findings of the present study have important implications for universities, policymakers, school administrators, management educators, career counsellors, and students. Since awareness significantly influences perception and interest, universities should organise regular awareness campaigns, educational seminars, webinars, admission counselling sessions, and school outreach programmes to familiarise Higher Secondary students with the Four-Year BBA Programme. Such initiatives should clearly explain the curriculum structure, multiple exit options, Academic Bank of Credits, internship opportunities, honours with research, and career pathways available under NEP 2020.

Educational institutions should place greater emphasis on communicating the employability advantages of the Four-Year BBA Programme. Since career opportunities emerged as the strongest influencing factor, universities should highlight placement records, industry collaborations, internship opportunities, entrepreneurship support, international exposure, and postgraduate progression opportunities during promotional activities. Strengthening university-industry partnerships can further improve students' confidence regarding employment prospects.

Schools also have a significant role in guiding students' educational choices. The comparatively lower awareness among certain school categories suggests the need for structured career counselling programmes at the Higher Secondary level. Career guidance should begin well before students make programme selection decisions and should include detailed information regarding management education, emerging business specialisations, and future career opportunities.

The strong preference for Business Analytics indicates that universities should continuously update their curriculum to incorporate emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Data Analytics, Financial Technology (FinTech), Digital Marketing, and Business Intelligence. Aligning the curriculum with industry requirements will improve graduate employability and increase student interest in management education.

Since parental influence remains significant, universities should also involve parents during admission counselling, orientation programmes, and awareness campaigns. Providing accurate information to both students and parents can reduce misconceptions and facilitate informed educational decisions.

### **7.2 Theoretical Implications**

The present study contributes significantly to the existing literature on educational choice, higher education policy, and management education by integrating multiple behavioural theories within a single conceptual framework. Unlike many previous studies that examined isolated determinants of educational choice, this research simultaneously investigates Awareness, Perception, Influencing Factors, and Interest using Structural Equation Modeling.

The study empirically validates the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour, Social Cognitive Theory, Human Capital Theory, Diffusion of Innovation Theory, Rational Choice Theory, and Educational Choice Theory in explaining Higher Secondary students' educational intentions. The significant relationships identified among the constructs provide further evidence that students' programme selection is shaped by cognitive, behavioural, social, and economic factors operating simultaneously.

The successful validation of the proposed Structural Equation Model also provides future researchers with a robust conceptual framework that can be extended to investigate other undergraduate programmes introduced under the National Education Policy 2020. The model may also be adapted for comparative studies across different states, educational disciplines, or institutional categories.



### 7.3 Policy Implications

The findings provide several important policy implications for the Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission (UGC), AICTE, state education departments, and higher education institutions. First, there is a need for nationwide awareness campaigns regarding the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme under NEP 2020. Standardised information should be disseminated through schools, educational websites, career portals, and social media to ensure that students receive accurate and consistent information.

Second, policymakers should strengthen school-level career guidance systems by integrating structured career counselling into the Higher Secondary curriculum. Career counsellors should receive specialised training regarding NEP 2020 reforms so that they can effectively guide students during programme selection.

Third, financial assistance, scholarships, education loans, and fee-support mechanisms should be expanded to reduce financial barriers associated with the Four-Year Programme. Since tuition costs significantly influence programme selection, improving financial accessibility can encourage greater participation.

Finally, regular monitoring and evaluation of student awareness regarding NEP reforms should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of policy implementation and identify areas requiring further intervention.

## 8. Conclusion

The Four-Year Bachelor of Business Administration Programme introduced under the National Education Policy 2020 represents a transformative initiative aimed at producing industry-ready, multidisciplinary, and research-oriented management graduates. The present study demonstrates that Higher Secondary students generally hold favourable attitudes towards the programme, although their awareness regarding several important features remains limited. Students' educational decisions are primarily influenced by their perceptions of programme quality, future career opportunities, and external socio-economic factors.

The validated Structural Equation Model confirms that increasing awareness improves perception, favourable perceptions strengthen students' interest, and external influencing factors further reinforce educational intentions. These findings highlight that successful implementation of the Four-Year BBA Programme requires coordinated efforts from universities, schools, policymakers, industry partners, and career counsellors.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable empirical evidence that can support policy formulation, curriculum development, institutional marketing, and student guidance under NEP 2020. It contributes to the growing body of knowledge on higher education reforms in India and offers a validated framework for understanding the determinants of students' educational choices in the evolving landscape of undergraduate management education.

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