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Factors influencing the decision to study for a bachelor's degree Music Department, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

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Abstract

This research aimed to study the factors that are important to the decision to study for a bachelor's degree in music of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students.

A questionnaire was created using Google Form and distributed to students by distributing it in the LINE group of all music students. A total of 76 sets of questionnaires were received, representing 100 percent of the total number of questionnaires. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. In conclusion, the majority of the sample were male (76.32%), 19 years old (72.37%), living in the central region, having (42.11%) a high school diploma (90.79%), a GPA of 2.51-3.00 (47.37%), graduating from a government school (81.58%), choosing to study as a major instrument, electric guitar (36.84%), and having a family occupation as a private company employee (31.58%), and having an average income of 10,001 - 20,000 baht (51.32%). They learned about the recruitment news from the guidance activities the most (43.42%).

The results of the research found that the factors that influenced the decision to study for a bachelor's degree were generally at a high level. Including confidence in the cost of education and personal factors, average (4.69), university location (4.58), university image (4.56) and curriculum (4.54). The results of the study concluded that opinions on factors influencing the decision to study at the bachelor's degree level, when classified by gender, age, place of residence, parent's occupation, family income, and decision to study at the bachelor's degree level in Western music, major in music, of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students.

Keywords: Factors influencing the decision, decision to study, major in music, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

1. Introduction

Factors Influencing the Decision to Pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Western Music. The rapid advancement of education, coupled with the dynamic changes in the global educational landscape, underscores the critical importance of equipping students with the competencies required for the 21st century. Educators must prioritize designing instructional approaches that enable learners to develop essential knowledge and skills for modern life. According to Khammanee (2019, cited in Torsin, 2022, p. 3), teaching techniques refer to the various methods, procedures, and strategies employed in the teaching-learning process to enhance the

quality and efficacy of education. These techniques are integral components influencing factors behind students' decisions to pursue higher education.

In Thailand, the higher education system includes a vast array of institutions, spanning public universities, private colleges, and government-affiliated institutions under the Ministry of Education, many of which offer graduate-level programs. This widespread availability of higher education opportunities has significantly expanded access to education while intensifying competition among institutions. Consequently, universities have implemented strategic measures to attract prospective students, meet enrollment targets, and provide diverse options for learners (Chuaythukpuen, 2014, cited in Jamnongluk, 2021, p. 2). Kaewtan (2016, p. 90) similarly highlights the proliferation of undergraduate programs in Thailand across various disciplines, including music. Within the field of music, Western music has gained notable popularity, prompting both public and private universities to expand their curricula to include specialized programs in this area. The pursuit of a bachelor's degree in music demands significant academic and professional commitment, as well as profound passion for the discipline. Students who embark on this educational journey often do so out of a deep-seated love for music and aspirations for a career in the field. Additionally, music is widely recognized for its benefits in enhancing cognitive performance, fostering creativity, and serving as a therapeutic tool. It positively impacts human development across physical, emotional, and spiritual dimensions (Inkaew, 2022, p. 301). However, the decision to study music is shaped by various factors beyond personal passion, necessitating targeted strategies by educational institutions such as the Faculty of Fine Arts at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University to attract and retain students in their music programs. Complexity of Decision-Making in Music Education. The decision to pursue a bachelor's degree in music is multifaceted and influenced by a wide range of factors. Socioeconomic considerations, in particular, play a crucial role in shaping students' educational trajectories. This aligns with the vision outlined in Thailand's 20-Year National Strategy (2018–2037), which aims to develop a stable, prosperous, and sustainable nation guided by the principles of the Sufficiency Economy Philosophy. The strategy emphasizes fostering citizens who are ethical, skilled, and equipped to thrive in the 21st century while building a lifelong learning society that supports continuous development (National Strategy, 2018, p. 1). Among the primary factors influencing students' decisions to study music are their intrinsic interests and enthusiasm for the discipline. Students with a strong affinity for music tend to exhibit greater determination to excel academically and professionally in this field. Additionally, technical skills such as playing instruments, vocal performance, and composition enhance students' confidence in pursuing music education. Clearly defined goals, such as becoming a professional musician or studying at prestigious institutions, further motivate these students to pursue their aspirations (Pongwattananusorn, 2022, p. 83).

Influence of Family and Career Prospects. Family and societal support serve as pivotal determinants in students' educational decision-making processes. Sukthaworn and Angkanawin (2018, p. 206) identify several familial factors, such as family size, financial resources, parental occupation and education, and even religious background, as critical influences. Beyond familial support, students also consider career opportunities associated with a music degree, such as roles in music performance, education, and composition. The potential to establish a career in the music industry plays a significant role in shaping students' decisions to pursue higher education in this discipline.

Conclusion and Research Implications. This study aims to examine the factors influencing students' decisions to pursue a bachelor's degree in Western music at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat

University. Insights derived from this research will contribute to the development of curricula and instructional strategies that align with the aspirations and needs of prospective students, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of higher education in music.

1.1 Research Objective

To Study the Factors Influencing the Decision to Pursue a Bachelor's Degree in Western Music at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

2. Body of paper

2.1 Methodology

This study focuses on investigating the factors influencing students' decisions to pursue a bachelor's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the academic year 2024. The methodology is detailed as follows:

2.1.1 Sample Group

The sample group comprises first-year students majoring in music within the Faculty of Fine Arts during the first semester of the 2024 academic year. The sample was selected purposively, targeting students who specifically chose to study in the Faculty of Fine Arts, Music Department. The sample breakdown is as follows: Vocal performance students: 19

Electric guitar students: 28 Classical guitar students: 1 Drum set students: 10

Piano students: 4 Brass instrument students: 2 Woodwind instrument students: 6

Bass students: 3 Thai music students: 3 In total, the sample group includes 76 students.

2.1.2 Focus of the Study

The study aims to analyze the factors influencing students' decisions to enroll in the bachelor's degree program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the academic year 2024.

2.1.3 Research Timeline

The study commenced in March 2024, with data collection conducted from June 17–21, 2024. Data were gathered using online questionnaires completed by the selected students who were eligible for admission and enrollment in the bachelor's degree program at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the academic year 2024.

Results

This study explored the factors influencing the decision of students to enroll in a bachelor's degree program in Western music at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the 2024 academic year. The findings are summarized below:

3.1 Characteristics of the Sample Population

Gender: A majority of participants, 76.32%, were male.

Age: The average age of respondents was 19 years.

Place of Residence: Most participants lived in Thailand's central region.

Educational Background: Respondents had completed high school with GPAs ranging between 2.51 and 3.00.

School Type: The majority attended government schools.

Preferred Musical Instrument: The electric guitar was the most popular instrument, selected by 36.84% of respondents.

Family Background: Most families had jobs in private companies, with an average monthly income of 10,001–20,000 baht.

3.2 Influential Factors in the Decision to Study

University Reputation: The university's credibility and reputation were crucial, receiving an average score of 4.56 (SD = 0.61), categorized as "very high."

Curriculum: The alignment of the curriculum with career aspirations, its diversity, and its modern design were highly valued, with an average score of 4.70 (SD = 0.51).

Location: Convenient transportation and access to modern facilities, such as up-to-date teaching equipment and a supportive campus environment, achieved the highest average score of 4.78 (SD = 0.42).

Education Costs: Affordable tuition, scholarship availability, and reasonable living expenses were key considerations, with an average score of 4.61 (SD = 0.56).

Personal Factors: Family encouragement, particularly guidance from parents, along with a strong personal interest in music, played a significant role, earning an average score of 4.76 (SD = 0.46).

The findings indicate that students were primarily influenced by the university's reputation, the relevance and modernity of the curriculum, ease of access to the campus, affordability, and family support. These insights can guide the development of strategies to attract prospective students and enhance the university's educational standards.

3. Conclusion

This research investigates the factors influencing students' decisions to pursue a bachelor's degree in music at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for the academic year 2024. The findings are summarized as follows:

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender: The majority of men were male.

Age: Most were 19 years old.

Region: Predominantly from the central region of Thailand.

Educational Background: Respondents were high school graduates with GPAs ranging from 2.51 to 3.00.

School Type: Most graduated from public high schools.

Major Selection: The most popular primary instrument was electric guitar.

Family Background: Most respondents' families were employed in private companies.

Parental Income: Average monthly income ranged between 10,001–20,000 THB.

Information Source: The most common source of admission information was educational guidance activities.

Key Findings

University Image

The men rated university image as a significant factor influencing their decision to enroll.

Overall Mean Score: 4.56 (SD = 0.61), classified as "very high."

Sub-factors with Highest Scores:

Affordability of tuition and personal factors: Mean = 4.69 (SD = 0.50).

University location and curriculum: Mean = 4.58 (SD = 0.55).

Confidence in the university's reputation: Mean = 4.63 (SD = 0.50).

Alumni prominence: Mean = 4.61 (SD = 0.56).

University operations: Mean = 4.58 (SD = 0.54).

Positive image-enhancing activities: Mean = 4.53 (SD = 0.62).

Curriculum

The curriculum was identified as a critical factor, with the following elements receiving the highest ratings:

Alignment with career goals: Mean = 4.70 (SD = 0.51).

Popularity of the program: Mean = 4.67 (SD = 0.55).

Program diversity: Mean = 4.64 (SD = 0.53).

Modernity of the curriculum: Mean = 4.53 (SD = 0.64).

University Location

Location emerged as a significant factor, with the following aspects highlighted:

Modern equipment and teaching resources: Mean = 4.78 (SD = 0.42).

Convenience of commuting: Mean = 4.74 (SD = 0.44).

Green and pleasant environment: Mean = 4.72 (SD = 0.45).

Availability of amenities: Mean = 4.70 (SD = 0.49).

Cleanliness of learning spaces: Mean = 4.67 (SD = 0.52).

Natural and beautiful campus atmosphere: Mean = 4.62 (SD = 0.58).

Cost of Education

Financial considerations were a major influence on decision-making:

Reasonable tuition fees: Mean = 4.61 (SD = 0.56).

Scholarship availability: Mean = 4.57 (SD = 0.55).

Affordable living expenses compared to other universities: Mean = 4.55 (SD = 0.57).

Personal Factors

Personal influences also played a significant role:

Parents as alumni of the university: Mean = 4.76 (SD = 0.46).

Alignment of program with personal interests: Mean = 4.69 (SD = 0.53).

Parental recommendation: Mean = 4.68 (SD = 0.57).

Peer popularity of the university: Mean = 4.63 (SD = 0.56).

Conclusions

University Image: Confidence in the university's reputation emerged as the most influential factor.

Curriculum: The alignment of the program with future career goals and its modernity were critical.

University Location: Modern facilities and ease of access were pivotal in decision-making.

Cost of Education: Reasonable tuition fees and scholarship availability were key factors.

Personal Factors: The influence of parents, particularly those who were alumni, significantly affected students' decisions.

This study highlights the interconnected factors shaping students' enrollment decisions, providing insights for Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University to enhance its academic offerings and maintain its competitive edge.

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