

FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO STUDY IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Abstract— The purpose of this research was to study the factors affecting the students' decisions to study in higher education institutions. The sample group used in the study was 400 first-year undergraduate students in the academic year 2021 of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, using stratified sampling method. The research tool is a questionnaire. Statistics used in data analysis were frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and multiple regression analysis. The results of the research revealed that factors affecting students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, overall opinions were at a high level. The image of the university is the most important factor, followed by curriculum and teaching management, instructors and personnel, social influence, public relations, and physical environment, respectively. In addition, the results of the hypothesis test revealed that the factors affecting the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees were the image of the university, curriculum and teaching management, instructors and personnel, and physical environment with the statistically significant at 0.05. While the factor of public relations and social influence had no influence on the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Keywords— Decisions to study, Teaching and learning management, Undergraduate degrees

INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, the world is changing rapidly both revolution in digital technology as well as the subject of a professional revolution. Causing the way of life of humans to change in order to keep up with the changing world. Human resources are the most important factor for the development of the country and the global society. To create a quality human resource, one of the key factors is education and enabling people to have knowledge and self-development. It can also determine the direction of the country as well. If any country promotes education in the right direction as well as planning the production of human resources to be effective. Inevitably, that country will have the cost of human resources that have the potential to jointly build the country forward. Many countries have begun to promote education to prepare their populations to be suitable for the modern world to develop the potential of the population and labor to keep pace with this change as well.

Along with every business need personnel with quality, efficiency and experience working at the same time. Every business therefore needs to select personnel who have knowledge the ability to lead their own business to achieve their goals as well. As a result, human beings have a greater necessity to constantly pursue additional knowledge. For this reason, education is important and causes competition among learners to bring themselves to the top level as well as being an important force for the development of the country (Promma & Vorapichet, 2015; Suknoi, 2020).

Higher education is a source of knowledge that will enhance academic progress and is a fundamental factor in human resource development and national development. The general public therefore attaches importance to education, with the idea that people with higher education will have a better chance of progressing in various fields. is tertiary level Until there is a saying Thai society is popular with people with degrees. Thailand is highly competitive in education. Whether it is a public or private institution, there is intense business competition for students to choose to pursue their studies. In this regard, the business competition of higher education institutions has therefore become aimed at producing a large number of graduates to enter the labor market regardless of desired quality of graduates in each professional field causing graduates to graduate without quality. It is unacceptable to the labor market and negatively affects credibility as in the past (Office of the Secretariat of the Council of Education, 2017).

Thailand is highly competitive in education whether it is a public or private institution, there is intense business competition for students to choose to pursue their studies. However, the business competition of higher

education institutions has therefore become aimed at producing a large number of graduates to enter the labor market without regard to the desirable quality of graduates in each professional field, causing graduates to graduate with inadequate quality. It is unacceptable to the labor market and negatively affects credibility as in the past (Intawee, 2021). The university has organized education to meet the needs of students and attract as many people as possible to study in the institution. As a result, universities are competing for market share in higher education. Every university wants to be the dream university of students by intensively publicizing the information of the institution, such as academic ranking, teaching excellence, research results, and modern aspect of various technologies in order to present the image of the university and to create awareness among the target group of students.

A study on factors affecting students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees will be beneficial to university in order to know the factors affecting students' choice of study in higher education. Moreover, it is also a collection of information to be used to solve the problem of the reduction of students and is also the basic information for organizing a student guidance project in deciding to choose to study in the university. It is also the basic information for organizing educational programs, opening a branch that interests students and continue to improve the quality of graduates.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

Higher education is another process in human development to meet the needs of the labor market. Choosing to study in higher education is therefore very important. It can be regarded as an important starting point for choosing a job and choosing a career in the future. Therefore, there must be a correct decision-making process and careful practice. Any person can make the right choice to study further and appropriate to the knowledge, interest, and personal aptitude that they already have. It will inevitably result in effective learning and affect the selection of suitable jobs, careers and positions. It is also accepted by those around you.

Decisions must go through a process of deliberation and analysis from the collected information and priorities before deciding on the best choice. It is creating as many options as possible to achieve creativity or the best choice. Including being something related to the behavior of people, whether it is a decision making alone, a group or an organization. The behavior of each person and each group will be different. The same is true for parents or their children in choosing the most suitable and best school. Decision-making means analyzing multiple alternatives. by studying the data and gain more knowledge to be able to make decision on just one good choice that the choice can meet the needs and achieve the goals set (Barnard, 1938; Simon, 1960; Awae & Paiboon, 2019).

The alternative analysis process will have various environmental factors that have an impact. Internal factors, such as the information and experience that the decision-maker has for each option. External factors such as advice or information received from family, educational institutions, friends or close people, various media, and the ability to contribute to family members, etc. The decision-making process can be divided as follows: 1) Realize needs and goals. 2) Identify alternatives 3) Analyze alternatives 4) Decide on the best alternative. 5) Implement decision-making results to meet the needs and achieve the goals set (Ritplaek, 2019).

Image of the university is an element of trust, recognition and faith that people have towards the university in terms of reputation, location, educational expenses, as well as results in producing graduates. The image of the educational institution means the picture from the idea towards the educational institution that arises from the perception and impression. The image of an educational institution consists of a recognized reputation, open to teach a variety of disciplines, and have leadership in education. As well as there are faculty members and educational personnel with knowledge and ability, able to produce quality students to be accepted. It also includes modern teaching materials, good atmosphere and environment within the educational institution and convenient transportation, etc. (Awae & Paiboon, 2019; Intawee, 2021; Suknoi, 2020).

Curriculum and teaching management means a course of study offered at the higher education level which covers the courses that are offered with quality and meet the needs of the labor market and able to study at a higher level after graduation. It also includes the presence of fee rates such as student registration fees. The tuition fees are appropriate for the courses offered including having sufficient sources of scholarship (Intawee, 2021; Suknoi, 2020).

Individual reasoning components refers to individual reasons used as criteria for deciding to choose to study in the university (Awae & Paiboon. 2019), consisting of 1) Interest in a field means the university has a field that students are interested in studying. 2) Friends and close people mean friends or close people are part of the decision making because close friends choose to study at this university. Also, most friends choose to go on to study in large numbers because of the popularity of the university, etc. 3) Influence from family means family members are part of decision-making because family members graduated from this university. So, it is advisable to choose to study because they can contribute to further study in this university. 4) The influence of school teachers and seniors means the guidance teachers in the recommended schools from seniors who came to give advice to choose to study in this university (Awae & Paiboon. 2019; Suwannawong & Rak-U, 2017).

Related Works

The study of Intawee (2021) in the topic of Factors in Affecting Decision Making in Selecting Educational Institutions for Higher Education, the results of the study revealed that the deciding factor in choosing an educational institution to study in higher education can be grouped into 6 components. Therefore, the university should support all 6 components in order to group decisions in choosing an institution to study in higher education as follows. The Component 1 is influence and persuasiveness from other people. The second component is productivity and quality. The third component is the teaching and learning process. The fourth component is the credibility of the institution. The fifth component is the expense aspect throughout the course. The sixth element is the environment. Therefore, the six elements should be supported by the university in order to group decision making in selecting higher education institutions for higher education. In addition, a study by Laomalor (2019) on factors affecting students' decisions to choose undergraduate study of Khon Kaen University for the academic year 2019 by being selected through the TCAS system, the results of the multiple regression analysis revealed that the affecting factors including factors on the reputation of the university, social acceptance factor and social factors praised in knowledge and ability. Moreover, the study of Suknoi (2020) on decision-making to further study at a higher education level of high school students at Thasala Prasitsuksa School, the hypothesis testing results revealed that individual factors of high school students with sex education level different educational needs lead to different decision-making in tertiary education. In addition, the image factor of the school personal reasons affecting the decision to choose to study in higher education of high school students. Including Awae & Phaiboon (2019) studied on the decision to choose to study in bachelor degree of Prince of Songkla University students, the results revealed that the three factors were the factor of the image of the university, program/curriculum factors and personal reasons all affected the decision to choose to study at Bachelor's Degree in Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus at the high level of all factors.

METHODS

This research is a quantitative research. The target population and the sample used in the research. is a student who is choosing an educational institute to study at the undergraduate level of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in the Bangkok area with the scope of research on the content of factor affecting to decision making in choosing an institution to study in higher education. Yamane's formula was used to determine sample size at a 95% confidence level for large populations. The sample size was 400 people. The research tool was an opinion questionnaire on factors affecting the decision to choose an educational institution to study in undergraduate level of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University consists of 3 parts. Part 1 is a questionnaire on personal information of the respondents with 5 items. Part 2 is a questionnaire on factors affecting decision making in choosing an institute to study in undergraduate education of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University There are 5 levels of questions to choose from, where 5 means most agree, 4 means strongly agree, 3 means moderately agree, 2 means less agree, 1 means least agree. To find reliability of the measurement used in this research, it will be done after analyzing each item's discriminant power value by selecting only the items that are significant. It was used to find the confidence value with Alpha coefficient by selecting questions with a confidence value of 0.70 or higher (Hair, 2010). The analysis was divided into 2 parts: preliminary data analysis and data analysis to answer the research hypothesis.

RESULTS

The sample group used in the study was 400 first-year undergraduate students in the academic year 2021 of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The results of general characteristics of sample group were that the majority of respondents were female, studying in grade 12 at public schools, have a cumulative GPA of 2.51 or higher, parents' occupations are employees in private companies, total monthly income of the family is less than 40,000 baht, and the tendency or desire to decide to study at a bachelor's degree in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University is at a high level.

The results of decision making to study in higher education among high school students classified by personal factors, the research results revealed that different genders and school type make the decision to choose to study in higher education in general differently. While high school students with academic performance/GPA, academic plans, average monthly income of families and parents' occupations different from each other, resulting in the decision to choose to study in higher education that is not different.

The results of the factors affecting students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees by calculating the coefficients of various factors in the predictive equation using Multiple Regression showed that the predictive equation had the Coefficient of Determinant (R Square) equal to 0.589. The factors affecting the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees were the image of the university ($\beta=.257$), curriculum and teaching management ($\beta=.226$), instructors and personnel ($\beta=.209$), and physical environment ($\beta=.161$) with the statistically significant at 0.05. While the factor of public relations and social influence had no influence on the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Conclusion and discussion

The research results can be summarized according to the objectives as follows. The study results of the decision to study in higher education of upper secondary school students. Overall, the level of decision-making was at the highest level. In addition, the study results of the decision to study in higher education of upper secondary school students classified by personal factors, it can be concluded that high school students with different genders and educational levels make the decision to choose to study in higher education in general differently. The researcher's opinion is that high school students of different sexes differ fundamentally in their physical needs and goals regarding higher education. This is consistent with Suknoi (2020) revealed that individual factors of high school students with sex education level different educational needs lead to different decision-making in tertiary education. In addition, when at a higher level, one must be prepared in deciding to study further, having to study information and gain additional knowledge. They are also aware of the needs and goals of further education. This is in line with Sudsa-nguan (2017) found that high school students pay attention to and their interest in pursuing higher education as a whole was at a high level. While high school students with academic plans, academic performance, average monthly income of families and parents' occupations different from each other, resulting in the decision to choose to study in higher education that is not different. This is inconsistent with Ritplaek (2019) found that students with gender, age, GPA, average income of families and faculty of education were different, there were no different factors for decision making to study at the graduate level.

Moreover, the results of the study of factors affecting the decision to study in higher education of high school students can conclude that the factors affecting the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees were the image of the university, curriculum and teaching management, instructors and personnel, and physical environment with the statistically significant at 0.05. This is in line with some studies by Awae & Paiboon (2019) and Laomalor (2019), which found that the image factor of the university, program/curriculum and in terms of personal reasons affecting the decision to choose to study at the bachelor's degree level, all factors were at the high level. As for personal reasons, it shows that family members and the information from the school is very important. Including having the curriculum and field of study that you want to study affected the decision to study in higher education of high school students. On the other hand, the factor of public relations and social influence had no influence on the students' decisions to study undergraduate degrees in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. This shows that the curriculum meets the needs of the labor market and reasonable tuition fees did not affect the

decision to study in higher education of high school students. Unlike the study of Intawee (2021), it was found that the educational programs/curriculars offered matched the needs of the labor market and the availability of funding sources to support education had an effect on the decision to study at the degree level at a high level.

Recommendations and future work

Based on the results of this research, there are suggestions for research to be useful and as guidelines for relevant agencies as follows. The personal factors in term of gender, education level and further study requirements had different effects on the decision to study in higher education of high school students. Therefore, schools and higher education institutions should pay attention to providing information in order to make decision-making to study in higher education more efficient. Including the results of the study showed that the factors of study plan, academic performance, average monthly income of the family and parents' occupations are different affecting the decision to study in higher education of high school students no differently. Therefore, those who use the information do not need to focus on these factors as the main reason for making decisions.

In addition, factors affecting the decision to study in higher education of high school students were the decision on the image of the school and the aspect of personal reasons. Therefore, educational institutions should pay attention to the perception and presentation of information by institutions in various areas, such as leadership in the quality of educational institutions, teachers and educational personnel are knowledgeable and capable including the atmosphere and environment within the school which has the greatest influence on the level of decision making. For personal reasons, educational institutions and schools should give priority to the curriculum and the field in which the student wishes to study, guidance programs, advisory and providing information on courses to meet the needs and achieve the goals the students themselves have set.

For future work, the selected population for this study was only high school students in Bangkok. There should be further study of sample groups in schools in other areas. It should also be a comparative study of the samples in each area in order to know the decision to choose to study in higher education with different environments and what different decision-making behaviors should be. In addition, research tools should be available and wider than the use of questionnaires, such as interviews, in order to obtain more qualitative data for analysis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to formally express appreciations to Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University for financial support and the Faculty of Management Sciences for providing full assistance until this research was successfully completed. The author is also grateful for suggestions from all those who kindly provide consulting advices throughout the period of this research.

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