

FACTORS INFLUENCING CHINESE STUDENTS' DECISION TO STUDY IN THAI UNIVERSITIES: A CASE STUDY OF SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to investigate the factors influencing the decision-making process of Chinese students to study in Thai universities, with a specific focus on Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in Bangkok. Through a survey involving Chinese student that enrolled Chinese students, the study identified significant influences: university image and reputation, perceived value in facilities, and student expenditure.

The result found that Thai universities' academic advertising, lower student costs, and strong academic image significantly influenced Chinese students' decision to study there, with advertising having the biggest impact. This suggests Thai universities should focus on promoting their academic strengths and affordability to attract more Chinese students.

Keywords: Chinese Students, Decision Making, Decision to Study

INTRODUCTION

1. Introduction

The factors influencing Chinese students' decisions to study at Thai universities is crucial in today's competitive higher education landscape (Kang et al., 2019). By delving into these preferences and attributes, we can gain valuable insights that will aid in attracting more Chinese students to Thailand. The motivation behind this research is rooted in the necessity for universities to comprehend the key determinants guiding students' choices.

Approaching this study from the standpoint of Thai universities allows us to tailor our strategies effectively (Rungtornsupavan, 2019). The goal is to utilize the findings to enhance our appeal to Chinese student applicants. Identifying and leveraging the factors that significantly impact the number of applicants is pivotal for the sustained growth and internationalization of Thai universities. (Luo et al., 2022).

OBJECTIVE

To study factor Influencing Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities.

Research scope

1.2.1 Content Scope

This research aims to investigate the factors influencing the decision-making process of Chinese students studying in Thai universities in Bangkok, Thailand. Specifically, the study will focus on Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University as the location for conducting the survey. The main respondents will be Chinese students who have chosen Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University as their study destination. The research will be conducted during the year 2023.

1.2.2 Population scope

Research Data used in this study were obtained from Chinese students who have used to study or is studying bachelor, master and doctor degree who study Thai universities in Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

1.2.3 Scope of area

Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University Thailand.

Conceptual Framework

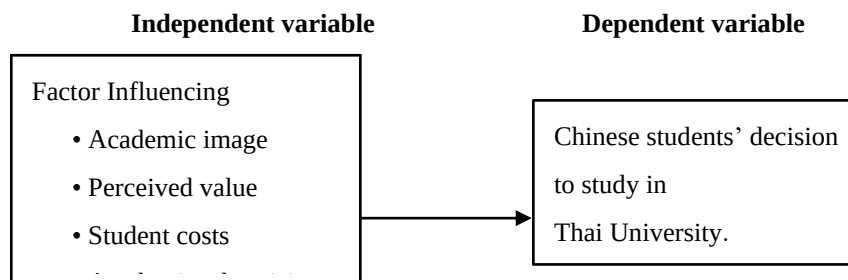


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: (Zhang & Zhang, L. 2019), (Wang & Fan 2019)

METHODOLOGY

2. Research methodology

2.1 Research design

This study adopts a quantitative research approach, which entails explaining phenomena through the collection of numerical data analyzed using mathematical techniques, particularly statistics. Professional quantitative research hinges on accurate data. Thus, the questionnaire design, population selection, sampling strategies, and data collection were methodically structured to ensure reliability.

2.2 Population and samples

2.2.1 Population

Chinese students studying in Thai universities in Bangkok, Thailand. Specifically, the study will focus on Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, n.d.).

2.2.2 Samples

A sample group of 378 Chinese students from was selected using a simple random sampling method, which means that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected.

The sample size was determined using the Taro Yamane formula (Yamane, 1973) with a 95% confidence level and a margin of error of 0.025 for the sample group, as follows:

$$\text{Using the formula } n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

n = sample size
N = study population size
e = is the margin of error (set at 2.5% or 0.025)

the sample size for this study is calculated as follows:

$$n = \frac{500}{1+500(.25)^2}$$

$$n = 378$$

2.3 Instrumentation

The research tool used to collect data is a questionnaire, which applied theories, concepts, and related research on factors influencing Chinese students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities. To define each variable and create the questionnaire. Then checked the quality of the questionnaire and set scoring criteria. The development process of the research questionnaire

2.4 Testing quality of research instrument

This research used a questionnaire to examine the content validity of the text in each question to ensure that they aligned with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was reviewed by three qualified individuals to assess the clarity of the language and the congruence of the questions with the objectives (Index of Item Objective Congruence: IOC), where an acceptable index value must be 0.60 or higher. The scoring criteria were as follows:

The IOC for each question was calculated using the following formula:

$$IOC = \frac{\sum R}{N}$$

Where IOC refers to the index of item objective congruence between the content of the question and the objectives of the study.

R refers to the score given by each qualified individual.

$\sum R$ refers to the sum of scores given by each qualified individual for each question.

N refers to the number of qualified individuals.

An acceptable index value must be 0.50 or higher. And selected questions with an IOC value of 0.50 or higher for use in the study, all of which were evaluated by the three qualified individuals and found to have content validity that covered all aspects of the objectives, with an IOC value ranging from 0.80-1.00.

2.4.1 Content validity

The instrument has been revised based on expert feedback, the content validity could be assessed using the Index of Content Validity (IOC) method, as described in my previous response. The IOC could be calculated by obtaining ratings.

2.5 Data collection

This research collected data by using an online questionnaire with a sample group of 100 people, while keeping backup data in case of incomplete or inaccurate responses at a rate of 10%.

2.6 Data Analysis

This research makes inferences about the population based on the sample data, then inferential statistics such as multiple regression analysis (Gujarati & Porter, 2009). Multiple regression analysis can be used to examine the relationships between the dependent variable and multiple independent variables and test hypotheses about the population.

RESULTS

3. Results and Findings

3.1 Testing the reliability of the questionnaire

To validate the questionnaire's accuracy and reliability (DeVellis, 2016), a preliminary test with 30 sets will be conducted under conditions similar to actual data collection. This aims to assess data collection, comprehension, and communication of question meanings within the sample group. Furthermore, an analysis will be performed to gauge the questionnaire's reliability using the Internal Consistency Method. This analysis will consider corrected item total correlations, ideally at least 0.20, and Cronbach's alpha, introduced by Cronbach (1951) as a measure of internal consistency reliability. A Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.70 is indicative of consistency among the questionnaire items within each aspect as shown in Table 3.1

Table 3.1: Results of reliability analysis (Reliability)

Variables	Number of questions	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha (n=30)
1. Academic image	5	0.905
2. Perceived value	5	0.912
3. Student costs	6	0.935
4. Academic advertising	3	0.905
5. Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities	4	0.939
Total	23	0.969

The results of the reliability analysis from Table 3.1 show that the reliability for the questions in each section ranges from 0.905 to 0.939, and the overall reliability is 0.969 (n = 30). Additionally, the questionnaire has been reviewed and its content has been confirmed to be appropriate. Therefore, it can be concluded that the questionnaire is suitable for use in collecting data for research.

3.2 Results of the Opinion Level of Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities.

Results of Data Analysis on the Opinion Level Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities. Analyzing the data on Academic image

Perceived value, student costs and academic advertising. The results are presented as averages, standard deviations, and data interpretation in Table 3.2

Table 3.2: Average and standard overall deviation of Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities.

Factors Influencing Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities overall	Level of opinion			
	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level	Sequence
1. Academic image	4.26	0.751	High	2
2. Perceived value	4.35	0.744	High	1
3. Student costs	4.24	0.803	High	3
4. Academic advertising	4.13	0.827	High	4
Total	4.24	0.781	High	

From Table 3.2, the average and standard deviation values of opinions regarding Chinese Students' Decision to Study in Thai Universities were found to be high, with an average value of 4.24 when considered across all aspects. When considering each aspect individually, found that the aspect with the highest average value was perceived value, with an average value of 4.35, followed by Academic image with an average value of 4.26, Student costs with an average value of 4.24, and academic advertising with an average value of 4.13, in order.

3.3 Hypothesis test results

Hypothesis 1: Academic image (X1) influences Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

Hypothesis 2: Perceived value (X2) affects Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

Hypothesis 3: Student costs (X3) impact Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

Hypothesis 4: Academic advertising (X4) influences Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

The statistical hypotheses can be stated as:

H0: Academic image (X1), Perceived value (X2), Student costs (X3), and Academic advertising (X4) collectively affect Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

H1: Academic image (X1), Perceived value (X2), Student costs (X3), and Academic advertising (X4) do not collectively affect Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities.

The statistical test used to test the hypothesis is Multiple Regression Analysis, by selecting independent variables into the regression equation using the Stepwise technique at a confidence level of 95%, rejecting the null hypothesis (H0) when Sig is less than 0.05. The results of the test are shown in Tables 3.3-3.4

Table 3.3: The correlation coefficients between factors influencing Chinese students' decision to study in Thai university that affect Chinese students' decision to study in Thai university.

Factor	X1	X2	X3	X4	Y
X1	1.000				
X2	0.699*	1.000			
X3	0.689**	0.757	1.000		
X4	0.590**	0.612*	0.764**	1.000	
Y	0.624**	0.637**	0.762**	0.731**	1.000

* Statistically significant 0.05

** Statistically significant 0.01

X1 represents Academic image.

X2 represents Perceived value.

X3 represents Student costs.

X4 represents Academic advertising.

Y represents Chinese students' decision to study in Thai university.

Table 3.4: Model Summary

R	R ²	Adjust R ²	SE	Durbin-Watson
0.480	0.231	0.223	0.669	1.848

From Table 3.4, Shows the relationship between all dependent variables and independent variables, found that the Adjusted R² value 0.231 means that the variance in the dependent variable can explained by the independent variable, decision to study in Thai university that affect Chinese students' decision to study in Thai university.

Table 3.5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Regression	80.877	3	26.959	192.177	0.000*
Residual	28.898	206	0.140		
Total	109.775	209			

* Statistically significant 0.05

The multiple regression analysis explored factors affecting Chinese students' choice of studying in Thai universities: Academic image, Perceived value, Student costs, and Academic advertising. Using the Stepwise method, the analysis revealed an Adjusted R² value of 0.733, indicating that 73.30% of the variance in decision-making stems from these factors.

ANOVA results (F-value = 192.177, Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) confirmed an overall significant impact of at least one factor on Chinese students' decision to study in Thai universities. Specifically, Academic advertising, Student costs, and Academic image significantly influenced their decisions (Sig. = 0.000, Sig. = 0.000, Sig. = 0.020, respectively), highlighting their substantial impact below the 0.05 significance level. These findings underscore the significant influence of these factors on Chinese students' selection of Thai universities for their studies. The regression equation can be written as follows:

$$\hat{Y} = 0.572(X4) + 0.268(X3) + 0.140(X1)$$

Factors influencing Chinese students selecting Thai universities include Academic advertising, Student costs, and Academic image. Academic advertising holds the strongest correlation at 0.572, signifying a significant influence on their choice. Student costs follow with a correlation of 0.268, indicating a partial impact. Academic image displays a correlation of 0.140, reflecting a moderate influence on their decisions.

CONCLUSION

4. Conclusion

4.1 General information

The study found that perceived value, academic image, student costs, and academic advertising greatly influence Chinese students' choice of studying in Thai universities. These factors explain a significant part of their decision-making variance. Perceived value ranked highest, followed by academic image, student costs, and academic advertising. Improving these aspects could help Thai universities attract and retain more Chinese students.

DISCUSSION

5. Discussion

The study highlights the importance of perceived value in drawing Chinese students to Thai universities. To attract and retain them, Thai institutions should emphasize program quality, job prospects, and unique cultural experiences. Strengthening academic reputation, addressing affordability through aid and scholarships, and targeted marketing via Chinese channels are key. Continuous adaptation to trends and qualitative research can further enhance appeal, fostering stronger academic ties between Thailand and China.

SUGGESTIONS

6. Suggestions

Implementing these suggestions and conducting further research can help Thai universities attract and retain more Chinese students, fostering a valuable exchange of knowledge and culture. This involves targeted academic advertising emphasizing value, academic image, and affordability, providing financial support through scholarships or work-study programs, establishing academic partnerships with Chinese universities, and continually enhancing the quality and relevance of education programs to meet students' evolving needs.

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