

**AFFECTING OF CHANEL OF INFORMATION EXPORSURE ON
STUDENTS' DECISION-MAKING IN CHOOSING TO STUDY AT
COLLEGE INNOVATION AND MANAGEMENT, SUAN SUNANDHA
RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY**

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ABSTRACT

The Thai university central admission system, commonly known as teas, serves as a centralized mechanism with five rounds for selecting individuals for tertiary education. This research delves into exploring the most effective channels of information exposure influencing students' decision-making within this system. The study specifically targets bachelor's degree students enrolled in the college of innovation and management at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, with a sample size of 200 units. statistical methods, particularly descriptive statistical analysis, are employed to analyze the data and fulfill the research objectives. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the demographic characteristics of the sample. The findings reveal variations in the quantity and proportion of how students in the college of innovation and management perceive different channels of information exposure, with social media platforms, events and experiential activities, recommendations from acquaintances, and digital media being the prominent sources. Examining the decision-making process, the average and standard deviation of students' choices indicate that certain aspects hold higher significance. The most influential factors include the search and comparison of information related to courses and educational institutions, consistently contemporary public relations activities for the program, and diverse activities with various public relations approaches. The implications of this research extend to future planning for the college of innovation and management. By understanding the preferred channels and influential factors in students' decision-making, the institution can tailor its information dissemination strategies and public relations activities, ensuring a more informed and engaged student body.

Keyword: Information Exposure, Decision Making, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

In Thailand, the process of higher educational system following the commitments of council of university president of Thailand presented the TCAS system for higher educational system. TCAS, or the Thai University Central Admission System, is a centralized system for selecting individuals for university-level education. This system has been in use since the year 2018 and operates on the principle of 1 person per 1 right, aiming for fairness in the selection process. It also helps reduce examination costs by utilizing a centralized examination format, with scores submitted according to the guidelines specified in each round of TCAS. The TCAS selection process consists of a total of 5 rounds, each using the following criteria: Round 1: Selection based on the submission of a portfolio without a written exam. This is not a general admission round, and candidates are evaluated on their portfolios and abilities. Some universities may conduct interviews or skill assessments. Round 2: Application for quota with a written exam. Students in specified areas, as designated by universities, may organize their exams, or use a centralized exam format, such as A-level and T-GAT/T-PAT, for candidate selection. Round 3: Admission-style admission using selection criteria from previous years, considering GPAX, A-level and T-GAT/T-PAT scores, or other scores specified by universities. Applicants can choose up to 10 disciplines with specified rankings. Round 4: Independent Direct Admission, where universities independently set criteria or conduct specific subject exams, with selection results submitted to the TCAS office. (Council of university president of Thailand, 2023)

The College of Innovation and Management (CIM) constitutes a distinct educational entity within Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, delivering educational and instructional services to a diverse student body encompassing both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The core objective of CIM is to cultivate graduates endowed with professional proficiency and specialized expertise, tailored to meet the contemporary societal demands. CIM offers a range of programs for undergraduate students, featuring two distinct learning systems: traditional bachelor programs and long-distance programs. The bachelor's degree in business administrative programs consist of Innovation Quality Management, Digital Marketing, Innovation Management (Bilingual programs), e-sports Management and sport management for bachelor's degree of art consist of Security Management.

The global trend towards expanding student choice in higher education options and the growing influence of external factors on college students' decisions regarding their choice of higher education destination have become more pronounced (Chun Sing Ho & Lu, 2019). With the marketization of higher education and the adoption of a 'student choice' model for public service funding, students are now active participants in selecting university degrees and institutions, rather than passive consumers. As Higher Education Institutions compete for student enrollment, there is a significant focus on recruitment teams to attract more students. The experience of potential applicants during the application period plays a crucial role in this recruitment effort. This experience shapes their decision-making process and plays a key role in determining which university and course they choose to enroll in (McNicholas & Marcella, 2022). Given that education is a service and not a product, it cannot be extensively sampled or tested before the decision to enroll in a program is made. Consequently, the applicant's experience during the pre-admissions and admissions process significantly influences their affinity towards a particular institution or course, thereby impacting their decision-making process (Dirin et al., 2021).

The channels of information exposure play a crucial role in influencing students' decision-making processes. As students navigate through various stages of their academic journey, they rely on different channels to gather information, make informed choices, and ultimately shape their educational experiences. The several key reasons highlighting the importance of channels of information exposure on students' decision-making such as accessibility to information, awareness of educational opportunities, influence on program and institution selection, peer and social influences, financial considerations, real-time updates and notifications, alumni stories and successes, in summary, channels of information exposure play a pivotal role in shaping students' decisions throughout their educational journey. By providing accurate, relevant, and accessible information, these channels empower students to make informed choices that align with their academic and career goals. Educational institutions and stakeholders should recognize the significance of effective communication through these channels in influencing students' decision-making processes.

Considers in the previous research show that, the lucrative international student recruitment market and the decision-making processes of potential students in this landscape (Dowling-Hetherington, 2020) related to the widening participation agenda and individuals and groups encompassed by this. Research by Heathcote et al. (2020) shows that a singular model or framework cannot necessarily be applied to diverse groups when it comes to decision-making behaviors related to choosing a higher educational institute at which to study. In Thailand context they're not much research on the channel of information exposure. This research aims to understand the most effective Chanel of Information Exposure on students' decision making to study in college of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Research Question

1. What is the most effective Chanel of Information Exposure on students' decision making?
2. What is the current situation of Chanel of Information Exposure and students' decision making?

OBJECTIVE

1. To clarify the most effective Chanel of Information Exposure on students' decision making.
2. To understand the current situation of Chanel of Information Exposure on students' decision making.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The connection between information channels and student decision-making in higher education is crucial. Students receive information from various sources like university websites, social media, advisors, peers, and promotional materials, creating a diverse and comprehensive information pool. These channels shape perceptions through positive portrayals, testimonials, and engaging content, influencing students' attitudes. Access to relevant details varies across channels, impacting the clarity of

information about academic programs, admissions, faculty, facilities, and extracurriculars. Social media and peer interactions strongly influence decision-making, providing a social context for experiences and opinions. Diverse channels enable students to conduct comparative analyses of institutions, considering factors like program offerings and reputation. Decision criteria, including academic excellence and career opportunities, are established through information exposure. Recognizing this interplay is crucial for educational institutions to effectively communicate strengths and offerings to prospective students.

1.1 Channels of Information Exposure

Channel of Information Exposure refers to the various means or avenues through which individuals meet information. In the context of communication and information dissemination, a channel represents the medium or platform used to convey messages, data, or content to an audience. Channels of information exposure play a crucial role in shaping people's knowledge, perceptions, and decision-making processes. **Traditional Media:** Television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are traditional channels through which information is exposed to a wide audience. **Social media:** Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and others provide channels for businesses and individuals to share information and engage with their audience. **Email Marketing:** Email is a direct channel for communicating information to a targeted audience. It is often used for newsletters, promotions, and updates. **Content Marketing:** Content creation through blogs, articles, videos, podcasts, and other formats serves as a channel for providing valuable information and engaging with the audience. **Events and Experiential Marketing:** Hosting events, conferences, webinars, and experiential marketing campaigns provide direct channels for information exposure and audience interaction. **Public Relations (PR):** PR efforts, including press releases, media interviews, and other communication strategies, contribute to information exposure in the media and public sphere. **Word of Mouth:** Recommendations and discussions among individuals serve as informal channels of information exposure. Positive word of mouth can significantly impact brand perception. **Search Engines:** Search engine results pages (SERPs) act as channels through which users discover information based on their search queries. **Mobile Apps:** Apps on smartphones and tablets provide a channel for businesses to communicate information directly to users. (Ren et al.,2019), (Yao, 2020), (Kurdi, 2022).

1.2 Decision Making

Customer decision-making refers to the process through which consumers identify, evaluate, and choose among alternative products, services, brands, or courses of action. It involves a series of mental and behavioral stages that individuals go through when making a purchase or selecting a solution to meet their needs or wants. Understanding customer decision-making is crucial for businesses and marketers seeking to influence and support consumers in their journey towards a purchase. The decision-making process typically consists of several key stages: (Pahasing,2023), (Mishra, 2021), (Pop et al.,2022).

1. **Problem Recognition:** The process begins when a consumer recognizes a need or problem that requires a solution. This need can arise from internal factors (such as a desire for personal satisfaction) or external factors (such as a change in circumstances or the influence of marketing messages).

2. **Information Search:** Once the need is identified, consumers actively seek information to gather options and alternatives. This information can be obtained from various sources, including personal experiences, recommendations from friends and family, online reviews, advertising, and other marketing communications.
3. **Evaluation of Alternatives:** Consumers assess the available options based on various criteria, such as price, quality, features, brand reputation, and personal preferences. This stage involves comparing alternatives to determine the best fit for their needs.
4. **Purchase Decision:** After evaluating the alternatives, consumers make a decision to purchase a specific product or service. This decision is influenced by factors like perceived value, brand loyalty, promotional offers, and the overall alignment with their needs and preferences.
5. **Purchase:** The consumer takes action by making the actual purchase. This stage involves selecting the product, completing the transaction, and obtaining the chosen solution.
6. **Post-Purchase Evaluation:** After the purchase, consumers assess their satisfaction with the chosen product or service. If expectations are met or exceeded, it reinforces positive feelings. If there is dissatisfaction, it may lead to post-purchase dissonance or regret.
7. **Post-Purchase Behavior:** Consumers may engage in post-purchase behaviors, such as sharing their experiences through reviews, recommendations, or social media. Positive post-purchase experiences can lead to customer loyalty and repeat business.



Figure 1: The research framework

METHODOLOGY

2.1 Population and Sampling

The research focuses on bachelor's degree students who study in College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, constituting a population that cannot be precisely determined. The researcher employed W.G. Cochran's (1953) formula, establishing a sample size of 200 units at a 95% confidence level, utilizing a multi-stage sampling method.

2.2 Data Collection

The research instruments employed for data collection comprised a tailored questionnaire aligned with the operational definition and characteristics to be assessed. To ensure the accuracy of research outcomes and the fulfillment of stated objectives, the researcher conducted a rigorous

assessment of the questionnaire's validity and reliability. A preliminary pre-test involving 40 participants was administered, and the confidence check results indicated values ranging from 0.7 to 1.00 for each question and the overall questionnaire. Furthermore, the questionnaire successfully passed the content review conducted by the advisor. Consequently, it was determined that the questionnaires were suitable for collecting data.

2.3 Data Analysis

Statistics used in data analysis to answer the objectives of this research are descriptive statistical analysis used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample, the statistics used were frequency and percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

RESULTS

3.1 Descriptive Analysis

The general information of sample group were students who study in college of innovation and management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, amounting to 200 samples. Most of them were male, 41 %, Higher education is high school, 77.5%, Programs highest participants is e-sport management programs as shown on Table 1.

Item		Number (units)	Percentage
Gender	Male	118	59 %
	Female	82	41 %
	SUMMARY	200	100 %
Higher Education Level	Higher School Certificate	155	77.5 %
	Vocational Certificate	36	19 %
	High vocational Certificate	9	4.5 %
	SUMMARY	200	100 %
Programs	Innovation Quality Management	21	10.5 %
	e-Sport Management	49	24.5 %
	Digital Marketing	32	16 %
	International trade Business	14	7 %
	Innovation Management (bilinguals)	39	19.5 %
	Sport Management (Long-distance Educational)	18	9 %
	Security Management (Long-distance Education)	27	13.5 %
	Summary	200	100

Table 1: The amount and percentage of participant General information of demographic

Channels of information exposure	Participants	Percentage
Traditional media (poster/ newspapers/ tv)	0	0 %
Events and experiential (school visit)	68	34 %
Social media platforms (Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok)	94	47 %

Digital media (website, blog)	17	8.5 %
Recommendation from acquaintance	21	10.5 %
Summary	200	100 %

Table 2: The amount and percentage of channels of information exposure

According to Table 2, it is evident that the quantity and proportion of how students studying in the College of Innovation and Management perceive channels of information exposure vary. Social media platforms are considered the most effective, constituting 47% of responses, followed by events and experiential activities at 34%, recommendations from acquaintances at 10.5%, and digital media at 8.5%

Questionnaire	Mean	Standard deviation	Opinions' level
Diverse activities and public relations approaches contribute to your decision to pursue higher education.	4.38	0.60	Extremely High
The search and comparison of information regarding courses and educational institutions impact the decision to pursue higher education.	4.70	0.46	Extremely High
The consistently contemporary public relations activities for the program have an impact on the decision to pursue higher education.	4.54	0.50	Extremely High
The characteristics and aesthetic quality of public relations media influence the decision to pursue higher education	4.10	0.61	High
The clarity of public relations media contributes to your decision to pursue higher education	4.38	0.60	Extremely High
Good relationships through public relations activities will help you decide to pursue higher education.	4.24	0.62	Extremely High
Overall	4.39	0.6	Extremely High

Table 3: The average and standard deviation of students' decision-making in choosing a course of study

According to table 3 indicates that the average and standard deviation of students' decision-making in choosing a course of study. show that all aspects have the highest standard mean ($\mu = 4.39$, $\sigma = 0.60$). Examining each aspect, it is found that the most influential factor on students' decision-making in choosing a course of study is The search and comparison of information regarding courses and educational institutions ($\mu = 4.70$, $\sigma = 0.46$), The consistently contemporary public relations activities for the program ($\mu = 4.54$, $\sigma = 0.50$), Diverse activities and public relations approaches ($\mu = 4.38$, $\sigma = 0.60$), The clarity of public relations media ($\mu = 4.38$, $\sigma = 0.60$), good relationships through public

relations activities ($\mu = 4.24$, $\sigma = 0.62$), The characteristics and aesthetic quality of public relations media ($\mu = 4.10$, $\sigma = 0.61$) respectively.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

4.1 Conclusion

The general information of sample group were students who study in college of innovation and management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, amounting to 200 samples. Most of them were male, 41 %, Higher education is high school, 77.5%, Programs highest participants is e-sport management programs.

It is evident that the quantity and proportion of how students studying in the College of Innovation and Management perceive channels of information exposure vary. Social media platforms are considered the most effective, followed by events and experiential activities, recommendations from acquaintances and digital media. It shown that most of student in college of innovation and management is the social media such as Facebook and Instagram, the impact of social media on information exposure in choosing higher education is significant, influencing prospective students in various ways. Here's an exploration of how social media affects the decision-making process for higher education: Increased Visibility of Institutions: Social media platforms provide universities and colleges with an opportunity to showcase their campuses, programs, and achievements. Prospective students can easily discover and explore institutions they might not have considered through targeted advertising, posts, and sponsored content. Insights into Academic Programs: Universities use social media to share information about academic programs, faculty achievements, and research initiatives. Prospective students gain insights into the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and the overall academic environment. Information on Scholarships and Financial Aid: Universities use social media to disseminate information about available scholarships, financial aid, and tuition assistance. Prospective students can easily access and share information about financial support, impacting their decision to apply. Engagement with Admissions Teams: social media facilitates direct communication between prospective students and university admissions teams. Queries about admissions processes, requirements, and application deadlines can be addressed promptly, enhancing the overall experience.

In line with the research objectives aimed at understanding the current landscape of information exposure channels and their impact on students' decision-making, the findings reveal that all aspects exhibit the highest standards. A detailed examination of each aspect underscores that the paramount factor influencing students' decisions in selecting a course of study is the search and comparison of information concerning courses and educational institutions. This process, involving the evaluation of the pros and cons of various courses at different universities, empowers students to explore diverse options. Furthermore, if a university's offerings stand out as exceptional and sufficiently valuable, it significantly contributes to students' decisions to enroll in that particular institution. The consistently contemporary public relations activities for the program, when consistently and regularly presented, play

a vital role in shaping the perception of consumers. This consistent presentation not only keeps the university in the forefront of students' minds but also facilitates better recall and recognition during the enrollment process. Diverse activities and public relations approaches, encompassing a wide array of formats and methods, serve to expand the avenues through which students receive information. This diversity enhances the overall effectiveness of public relations efforts, ensuring that information reaches students through multiple channels. The clarity of public relations media, characterized by comprehensive and detailed information, proves instrumental in minimizing student inquiries. A clear and comprehensive communication strategy fosters confidence in the program, providing students with the necessary information to make informed decisions about their educational journey. Finally, fostering good relationships through public relations activities, characterized by prompt responses and an avoidance of delays, contributes to an increased desire among students to enroll. This positive interaction builds trust and engagement, making the university a more appealing choice for prospective students.

4.2 Recommendation

Recommendations derived from the research findings emphasize the need for focused development in social media, particularly in expanding channels for students' awareness of pursuing higher education. The emphasis should be on creating noticeable distinctiveness, encouraging students to compare information and highlighting the valuable differences they would experience by studying at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Furthermore, diverse activities contribute to a varied public relations approach, ensuring accessibility to a diverse student audience. Clear and contemporary media design not only enhances student comprehension but also fosters critical thinking and awareness.

4.3 Recommendation for Future Research

For future research endeavors, it is advisable to delve into the design of public relations media that caters to the evolving needs and preferences of students. This involves exploring effective communication channels and identifying suitable time frames for public relations activities, aligning them with the specific needs of the target audience. The research should also consider studying and developing media that addresses the appropriate timing and intervals, maximizing the impact of promotional activities. In summary, the research suggests continuous exploration and adaptation of media strategies to meet the dynamic requirements of students and to create effective communication channels. This approach not only facilitates the decision-making process but also contributes to a positive and engaging university experience for prospective students.

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