

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEMAND FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION IN THE MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM IN ESPORTS AND ENTERTAINMENT BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AT SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to study students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University regarding their demand for pursuing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) program in Esports and Entertainment Business Management at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. It also examines the influence of these attitudes on the desire to pursue a master's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. This is a quantitative study, with a sample consisting of 400 students enrolled in the first semester of the academic year 2024 at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. A questionnaire was used as the research instrument. The statistical methods employed include percentages, means, standard deviations, and mean comparisons. The findings revealed that students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University significantly influence their desire to pursue a master's degree, as follows: 1) Institutional Factors: Differences were found in perceptions of the university's image, faculty, and management. However, there were no significant differences in curriculum, teaching methods, or the use of technology and equipment, with statistical significance at the .05 level. 2) Career-Related Factors: Differences were observed in perceptions of the curriculum, faculty, and management. However, no significant differences were found in teaching methods or the use of technology and equipment, with statistical significance at the .05 level. 3) Personal Reasons: Differences were found in perceptions of the university's image, curriculum, management, and technology and equipment. However, there were no significant differences in perceptions of faculty or teaching methods, with statistical significance at the .05 level. 4) Comprehensive Institutional Factors: Significant differences were observed in all aspects, including the university's image, curriculum, faculty, teaching methods, management, and technology and equipment, with statistical significance at the .05 level.

Keywords: Demand for Further Education, Program, Esports and Entertainment

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, where technology and online media play a significant role in daily life, the esports and entertainment industries have emerged as rapidly growing business sectors with high revenue potential. Professional video game competitions, or esports, have gained global popularity, alongside entertainment businesses connected to music, film, and live performances. This growth has created a demand for skilled professionals with specialized knowledge in managing related businesses. The esports industry is not limited to gaming competitions but also encompasses marketing management, online streaming, community building, and creative content development, attracting greater participation. Similarly, the entertainment industry has adapted to changing consumption patterns by emphasizing digital platforms such as Netflix, Spotify, and YouTube to meet modern consumer demands (Zhang, 2024) [1].

Recognizing the importance of developing professionals to meet the needs of these industries, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has launched the Master of Business Administration program in Esports

and Entertainment Business Management. This program is designed to equip students with diverse skills such as business planning, project management, and digital marketing (Gentile, 2024) [2], which are critical components for success in rapidly evolving industries. However, despite the program's high potential, questions remain regarding the factors influencing students' decisions to pursue this program. These factors include the university's image, curriculum, faculty, teaching methods, management, and learning technologies (Schroeders, 2023) [3]. This information is crucial for developing the program and aligning its marketing strategies with student needs. (Pahasing,B. and et al., 2022) [4].

This research aims to examine the factors influencing the demand for continuing education in the Master of Business Administration program in Esports and Entertainment Business Management at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The findings will be utilized to refine the program to better align with student expectations, develop promotional strategies, and provide learning support to enhance students' confidence and career success in the future.

OBJECTIVE

To Study Students' Attitudes Toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and Their Influence on the Demand for Pursuing a Master's Degree in the Business Administration Program, Specializing in Esports and Entertainment Business Management at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Conceptual framework

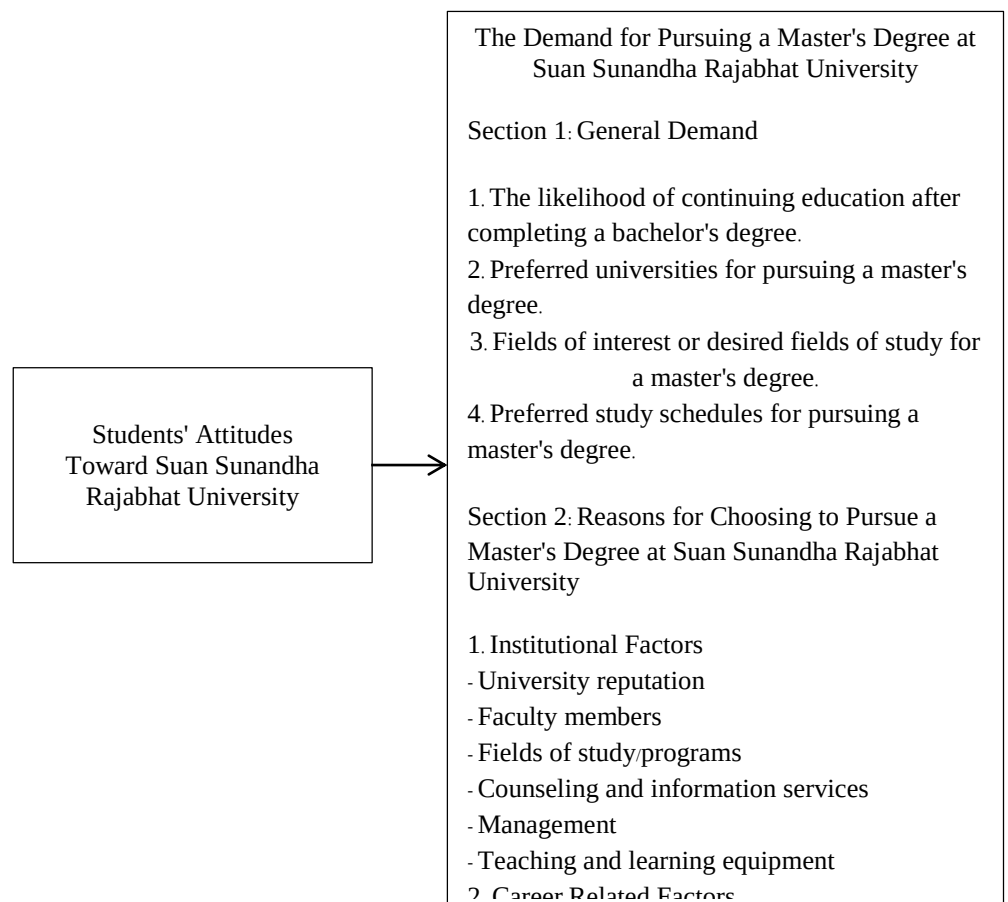


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

1) Research design

This study is survey research.

2) Population and samples

This study employs a quantitative research methodology. The population for this research comprises 26,190 students enrolled at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University during the first semester of the academic year 2024 (Office of Registration and Evaluation, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2024) [5].

3) Research Instrument

The research instrument applied for this study is a questionnaire divided the inquiries into 4 section; Section 1: Questions regarding general information about the respondents, including gender, age, cumulative GPA, and academic semester. These questions are a mix of open-ended and closed-ended formats.

Section 2: Questions about students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, presented on a 5-point Likert scale, consisting of 30 items. Section 3: Questions about the demand for pursuing a master's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Topics include the likelihood of continuing education after completing a bachelor's degree, preferred universities for master's studies, fields of interest or desired programs, preferred study schedules, and interest in the Esports and Entertainment Business Management program. These questions are a combination of open-ended and closed-ended formats. Section 4: Questions about the reasons for choosing to pursue a master's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, presented on a 5-point Likert scale, consisting of 45 items.

4) Testing quality of research instrument

4.1) Content validity

The researcher submitted the questionnaire being reviewed and revised as suggested by the advisor to three experts to validate whether the questions are congruent with the research objectives or not. Item-objective Congruence Index (IOC), ensuring a value greater than 0.5.

4.2) Reliability

The questionnaire, reviewed by experts, underwent a pilot study using a homogeneous sample group to assess reliability. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.861, indicating acceptable reliability.

4.3) Data Collection

Data collection was undertaken through 3 steps; (1) request for informant cooperation with explanation on details of the questionnaire and how to answer the questions, (2) posting the questionnaire on the defined social media; Facebook, and directly send it to the requesting informants, and (3) collection of questionnaires and inspection on completion of answers and whether the collected numbers reach 400 sets.

4.4) Data Analysis

The descriptive statistical analysis was applied based on the values of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation through the statistical package to find out statistical values as follows; *Section 1: Analysis of respondents' demographic characteristics using descriptive statistics to explain their data through frequency and percentage calculations. Section 2: Analysis of students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) calculations. Section 3: Analysis of students' general demand for pursuing a master's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University using descriptive statistics to explain their data through frequency and percentage calculations. Section 4: Analysis of students' reasons for choosing to pursue a master's degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University using mean ($\bar{x}$) and standard deviation (S.D.) calculations. Section 5:

Hypothesis testing to compare differences in students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and their demand for pursuing a master's degree at the university using a T-test to analyze mean differences.

After data collection and verification, all collected questionnaires were filled in a coding form for data processing by the statistical package to obtain results for further discussion.

RESULTS

1) General Information of Respondents

The majority of respondents were male (258 individuals), aged between 15–25 years, with a cumulative GPA ranging from 2.51 to 3.50, and were enrolled in the regular program. From Table 1.

Table 1
The number and percentage of respondents based on demographic characteristics can be presented as follows

No.	Characteristics	Number	Percentage
1. Gender	Male	258	64.50
	Female	142	35.50
2. Age	15 - 25 years	237	59.25
	26 - 35 years	68	17.00
	36 - 45 years	55	13.75
	Over 45 years	40	10.00
	Below 2.00	45	10.00
3. Cumulative GPA	2.00 - 2.50	117	29.25
	2.51 - 3.50	187	46.75
	Above 3.50	56	14.00
	Regular Program	269	67.25
4. Type of Enrollment	Special Program	131	32.75

2) Analysis of Students' Attitudes Toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Most respondents expressed a high level of agreement. Specifically: University Image: Students expressed pride in studying at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Curriculum: The university's curriculum was perceived as comprehensive and suitable for developing future skills. Technology and Equipment: The university was praised for its modern classrooms, laboratories, tools, and equipment, which were deemed sufficient for current learning needs. Teaching Methods: The use of modern technology in teaching was highlighted. Management: The university's management of spaces and environment was viewed as conducive to a supportive learning atmosphere. Faculty: Teachers were commended for their dedication and attentiveness in helping students achieve optimal learning outcomes. From Table 2.

Table 2
Mean and Standard Deviation of Students' Attitudes Toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Students' Attitudes Toward the University (Scale 1-5, n=400)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1. University Image	3.91	0.59	High
2. Curriculum	3.77	0.53	High
3. Faculty Members	2.74	0.50	Moderate
4. Teaching Management	3.30	0.66	Moderate
5. Administrative Management	3.06	0.80	Moderate
6. Technology and Learning Equipment	3.70	0.75	High
Overall Average	3.41	0.32	High

3) Analysis of Demand and Reasons for Pursuing a Master's Degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Most respondents indicated a strong tendency to continue their studies after completing a bachelor's degree. The preferred university for master's studies was their current institution. The majority showed interest in business administration programs and regular study schedules, with 377 respondents expressing interest in the Esports and Entertainment Business Management program. From Table 3.

Table 3
Number and Percentage of General Demand for Pursuing a Master's Degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Characteristics	Number	Percentage
1. Tendency to Continue Education After Completing a Bachelor's Degree		
- Pursuing a Master's Degree	312	78.00
- Not Continuing Education	72	18.00
- Studying Abroad	16	4.00
2. Preferred University for Pursuing a Master's Degree		
- Current University	297	74.25
- Other Public Universities	87	21.75
- Other Private Universities	16	4.00
3. Fields of Interest or Desired Master's Programs		
- Law	32	8.00
- Political Science	30	7.50
- Engineering	16	4.00
- Applied Thai Medicine	8	2.00
- Education	30	7.50
- Architecture	8	2.00
- Business Administration	133	33.25
- Economics	16	4.00
- Public Administration	40	10.00
- Information Science	40	10.00
- Science	32	8.00
- Liberal Arts	7	1.75
- Fine Arts	8	2.00
4. Preferred Study Schedule		
- Regular Program	220	55.00
- Special Program	180	45.00
5. Interest in the Esports and Entertainment Business Management Program		
- Yes	377	94.25
- No	23	5.75

4) Analysis of Reasons for Pursuing a Master's Degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Most respondents expressed a high level of agreement. Specifically: Programs: The prominent national reputation and academic excellence of the university were significant reasons for choosing the master's program. University Reputation: The expertise of the faculty in specialized fields attracted students to the university. Faculty: Programs offered matched students' interests and career goals. Advisory and Information Services: University staff were praised for their expertise and efficiency in answering inquiries about master's programs. Management: The university's support for master's studies, such as resource allocation and administrative assistance, was highly regarded. Teaching Equipment: Modern and appropriate learning equipment was seen as a key strength of the university's graduate programs. From Table 4.

Table 4
Mean and Standard Deviation of Reasons for Students Choosing to Pursue a Master's Degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Reasons for Students Choosing to Pursue a Master's Degree (Scale 1-5, n=400)	$\bar{x}$	S.D.	Level of Opinion
1. Institutional Factors	3.68	0.42	High
2. Career-Related Factors	3.92	0.64	High
3. Personal Reasons	3.68	0.82	High
4. Social Factors	3.92	0.76	High
Overall Average	3.80	0.44	High

5) Hypothesis Testing

The analysis revealed differences in students' attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University and their demand for pursuing a master's degree, as follows: Institutional Factors: Differences were observed in university image, faculty, and management. However, no significant differences were found in curriculum, teaching methods, and learning technology, with statistical significance at the .05 level. Career- Related Factors: Differences were found in university image, curriculum, faculty, and management, but not in teaching methods and learning technology, with statistical significance at the .05 level. Personal Reasons: Differences were observed in university image, curriculum, management, and learning technology. However, there were no differences in faculty and teaching methods, with statistical significance at the .05 level. Overall Institutional Factors: Differences were identified in university image, curriculum, faculty, teaching methods, management, and learning technology, with statistical significance at the .05 level. From Table 5.

Table 5
Summary of Hypothesis Testing
Students with different attitudes toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University have different demands for pursuing a master's degree at the university

Reasons for Choosing to Study at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University	Students' Attitudes Toward Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University					
	University Image	Curriculum	Faculty Members	Teaching Management	Administrative Management	Technology and Learning Equipment
1. Institutional Factors	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
2. Career-Related Factors	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
3. Personal Reasons	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓
4. Social Factors	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Overall	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓

Note: ✓ = Hypothesis supported, ✗ = Hypothesis not supported

DISCUSSION

Research Findings on Hypotheses Testing: Factors Influencing Students' Attitudes and Their Demand for Pursuing a Master's Degree at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

Hypothesis 1: Students with different attitudes toward the university's image have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: Students' differing perceptions of the university's image significantly influenced their decision to pursue a master's degree ($p < 0.05$). The reasons include the university's reputation, academic excellence, and its commitment to fostering intellectual and moral development while providing an equal opportunity for regional education.

Hypothesis 2: Students with different attitudes toward the university's curriculum have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: Differing attitudes toward the curriculum significantly influenced students' decisions ($p < 0.05$). This may be due to the curriculum's flexibility, modernity, and alignment with current professional and academic needs.

Hypothesis 3: Students with different attitudes toward the faculty have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: Attitudes toward faculty significantly influenced students' decisions

($p < 0.05$). Faculty members' teaching abilities, interpersonal relationships, and willingness to guide students were key reasons for these differences.

Hypothesis 4: Students with different attitudes toward teaching management have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: No significant differences were found in the demand for master's programs based on attitudes toward teaching management.

Hypothesis 5: Students with different attitudes toward administrative management have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: Differences in attitudes toward administrative management significantly influenced students' decisions ($p < 0.05$). Key factors included the university's resource allocation, convenient location, and infrastructure, including parking, dining facilities, and safety measures.

Hypothesis 6: Students with different attitudes toward technology and learning equipment have varying demands for pursuing a master's degree. Finding: Students' differing perceptions of technology and learning tools significantly influenced their decisions ($p < 0.05$). Modern classrooms, e-Learning platforms, and access to electronic resources were noted as critical components.

The findings support most hypotheses, highlighting how factors such as the university's reputation, curriculum, faculty, and technology play pivotal roles in influencing students' decisions to continue their studies. These insights are essential for refining academic programs and enhancing the university's overall offerings to meet students' expectations.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

1) Recommendations

Institutional Aspect: Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University should focus on managing expenses to ensure affordability, conducting widespread promotional campaigns, and improving the campus landscape to enhance its appeal and accessibility for students. These efforts aim to foster positive attitudes toward the university. Additionally, the university should modernize its teaching methods and curricula to better align with current trends, thereby producing graduates who can effectively meet the demands of the labor market.

2) Recommendations for Future Research

Research should be conducted on the expectations and needs of students both before and after completing graduate studies to evaluate alignment with their initial expectations. Additionally, it should explore students' requirements for teaching and learning management and compare the motivations for pursuing graduate education between Thai and international students. This data will serve as a foundation for improving curricula and teaching processes to enhance their effectiveness.

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