

The Factors Affecting a Decision to Continue a Study at the Champasack University

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Abstract

The research aimed to 1) study the factors which affected the first-year students' decision to continue a study at the Champasack University, Lao People's Democratic Republic, and to investigate the problems and recommendations concerning the learning process of the students. Population in the study was 224 first-year students of the Champasack University in the academic year 2015. The research instrument was the questionnaire made by the researchers. The questionnaire consisted of two parts: part one was concerned with the general information of the students and part two dealt with six factors which affected the students' decision: work prospect, pride, motivation, personnel, site or location and teaching and learning. The present work was a survey research and conducted from May to June, 2015. Statistics used were percentage, means and standard deviation.

The research finding were as follows.

1. The six factors as found in the study had a moderate impact on students' decision to study at the Champasack University. As for individual aspects, it was found that the first three factors which most affected the students' decision to study at the Champasack University in the academic year 2015 were arranged in a descending order: personnel, pride and work. The three factors which least affected the students' decision were arranged from an ascending order: motivation, teaching and learning, location and site.

2. The recommendations given by the students were as follows: the sports complex should be created, expensive parking fees should be addressed, more restrooms should be provided, scholarships should be conferred to the students with

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good performance, individual faculties should be encouraged to make products, there should be a special policy on the students' fees, the teacher's teaching quality should be improved, and more attention should be given to students, a learner-centered approach should be used and more hours should be added to the major subjects.

Keywords: Factors Affecting a Decision for Further Study, Champlasack University.

Introduction

The Champasack University is divided into six faculties, each of which offers different courses. Students are admitted through both an entrance examination and a good learning performance. The study was aimed to explore the factors which influenced and affected students' decision to further their study in different faculties. A survey was conducted on the first-year students' opinions concerning the study continuance in different faculties. The result gained would lead to an improved guideline for the admission of the potential students. Furthermore, the results could be the guidelines for the students about to enter the tertiary level.

Objectives

1. To study the factors affecting the continuance of the study of the first-year students at the Champasack University.
2. To investigate the problems and recommendations concerning a learning process of the first-year students at the Champasack University.

Scope of Research

1. Population was 224 first-year students of the Champasack University in the academic year 2015.
2. The study was a survey research.
3. Duration of the study was between May 2015 and June 2015.

Definition of Key Terms

1. 'Students' means the first-year students of the academic year 2015 of the Champasack University, Lao People's Democratic Republic.

2. 'The factors which affect a decision to further study' refers to what affects a behavior to make a decision to continue a further study at the Champasack University, which covers the following:

1) 'Work prospect' means job security, a post-graduation work, and a good job.

2) 'Pride' means a social recognition, a prestigious job, and reliability on the teacher's ability to impart knowledge.

3) 'Motivation' means a family support, a desired faculty, an aptitude, cheaper tuition fees, parents' affordability to pay the fees, and scholarships.

4) 'Personnel' means the teachers' knowledge and expertise, quality and constant care on the part of the teacher, and teachers' qualifications for the job.

5) 'Place/ site' means the site being close to residences or convenient to travel to and fro, sufficient parking space, location in downtown, favorable and

beautiful environment, library and computers available, and other facilities for example dormitory, sports complex and hospital.

6) ‘Learning and teaching’ means availability of the modern equipment, suitable and adequate learning media, and quality teaching.

Expected benefits

1. It was possible to know the students’ opinions concerning the factors related to a decision to continue their study at the Champasack University.

2. The research results could be applied to develop a curricular administration in conformity with the learners’ needs.

Research Methodology

Research instruments

The research instrument was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. It consisted of two parts. Part one was concerned with general information of the students and part two with the factors which affected students’ decision to further their study. The questionnaire was divided into six aspects: job procurement, pride, motivation, personnel, site/ place and teaching and learning.

Data collection

A letter of request was sent to the university to grant permission to the researchers to collect data. Data were collected in July, 2015.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by using Microsoft Office Excel 2007. Statistics used in data analysis were percentage, mean, and standard deviation.

Results

It was found that there were the factors which affected the students’ decision to continue their study at the Champasack University. The factors were shown in table 1.

Table 1 Factors affecting a decision to continue further study

Factors affecting a decision	Mean	Interpretation
1 work	3.44	Moderate
2 pride	3.49	Moderate
3 motivation	3.06	Moderate
4 personnel	3.66	Moderate
5 place/site	3.41	Moderate
6 learning and teaching	3.30	Moderate
Total	3.23	Moderate

From table 1, it was found that all factors which affected first-year students' decision to further their study at the Champasack University in the academic year 2015 were at a moderate level. Considering individual aspects, it was found that the first three factors affecting the first-year students' decision could be arranged in a descending order of significance: personnel, pride and work respectively.

Summary

1. General information

A majority of the students in the study were females, aged over 18. Their average income was lower than 1,000,000 gibs. Their families were self-employed. A majority of them lived in Champasack. They completed a high school diploma before entering the university. They got the admission through the entrance examination. The faculty which topped the list for the students was the Agriculture and Forestry, followed by Law, Political Science, and Natural Science. The majority of them got graduated from Pakxe Political Institute, followed by Champasack Institute and Phonetong Institute.

2. Factors affecting a decision to continue study at the Champasack University

It was found that the six factors found in the study had affected the first-year students' decision to study at the Champasack University at a moderate level in the academic year 2015. As regards the individual factors, it was found that the first three factors which most affected the first-year students' decision to study at the Champasack University were as follows: personnel, pride and work. The factors which least affected the students' decision to study at the Champasack University were arranged an ascending order as follows: motivation, learning and teaching and location or site.

3. Problems and recommendations

The following were recommendations or suggestions as given by the first-year students in the academic year 2015:

1. Sports complex should be created, parking charge should be addressed, and more restrooms should be provided.
2. Scholarships should be granted to the students with good performance.
3. Each faculty should be encourage to produce its own product.
4. There should be a special policy on the students' fees.
5. Teachers should be encouraged to improve their teaching methods and give more attention to students.
6. The learning and teaching process should be improved. A learner-centered approach should be introduced.
7. More hours should be added to the major subjects.

Recommendations

1. Recommendation for application

The study showed that the factors found had a moderate impact on the first-year students' decision to continue their study. The administrators and those concerned should consider or look for strategies to encourage more entrance of students.

2. The six factors which were studied had a moderate impact on students' entrance into the university. It is possible to explore for more other factors which can affect the university study. A study can be done as to what factors affect a tertiary study.

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