

INFLUENTIAL FACTORS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' DECISION ON CHOOSING A FOREIGN LANGUAGE ACADEMY IN MUEANG DISTRICT, KHON KAEN PROVINCE

Lalitsa Butphan¹

Rakpong Petkam²

¹ Graduate student of Master of Business Administration program at College of Graduate Study in Management, Khon Kaen University

² Assistant Professor, Faculty of Agriculture, Khon Kaen University

Abstract

This Independent study was to determine influential factors in high school students' decision on choosing a foreign language academy in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province with specific objectives include 1) To study the behavior of upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province when choosing the foreign language school. 2) To study the market factors that influence in the decision making of the students. 3) To compare the effect of gender to the marketing factors.

The study was done through online questionnaire. It was showed that the 400 majority of high school students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province, who are the respondents there was mostly female and their ages were 17-19 years old. Most of them were in last year of upper secondary level (Mathayom suksa 6) in the Science-Mathematics program. The respondents have GPA above 3.50. A foreign language is necessary and English is the language chosen by students. The student made decision by him/herself about language school. Most of them preferred not to study with friends. The popular period of class is Saturday and Sunday during 9 - 11 am. They also choose the school that were located near their homes. Friends were the information resources about language schools. The reason why they studied in the language schools were to be advanced in a language. What they expected at the end of the course was the ability to use language for communications in daily life. In the future, if the opportunity allows, they will definitely continue studying the foreign language. Factors that influenced the decision making are in the order of importance from the most to the least; people, process, physical evidence and presentation, price, products, place and promotion respectively. Regarding with genders between male and female, the influential factor about product, price, place and process is significantly different. Promotion, people and physical evidence is not different at the level of 0.05.

Keywords: Foreign Language Academy, Language



1. Introduction

Due to the expansion of the economic today, the communication technology is developed to serve the activities because of its boundlessness. Language is the medium of the communications and one the most spoken languages is English; besides, Chinese, Japanese, French, German, Spanish, and Korean are also used widely. Since December 31 in 2015, ASEAN Economic Community has been launched, foreign languages became important in Thailand. People realize that foreign language is needed for the communication skills when negotiating with foreigners as well as in their daily life such as students need the language skills to researching information in other languages or workers in the international company. Therefore, language learning is necessary for Thai people.

Nowadays, foreign language is put in the curriculum of all educational institution for their students. Moreover, it is also available for those who need to learn outside the formal schooling in the private school such as language center. People who choose to study language with them are able to choose the preferred time and their teaching methodology.

Khon Kaen is the educational center of the Northeastern region. There is an increase of language school in Mueang district area. Some of the schools are authorized by the Ministry of Education while some schools are not. The schools are, for example, California Language Center (CLC), Penguin Language Tutorial School, Insight English School (Khon Kaen), New York City School, Kanesuan Academic Center, Krusomsri's English School, Enconcept Academy, Khon Kaen Mandarin Education School (MA-ED), Confucius Institute of Khon Kaen University and San Fran Language Academy.

Since the popularity in studying foreign languages is growing, the language school business is also rising in competition as well. Therefore, the researcher is interested to study the business of language school and choose the samples from the upper secondary students because this group of population is in the preparation for university admission exams and they study language in these schools. The study revealed the influential factors in decision making when choosing to study in the language schools. Besides, the information can be used as a guide to run the language school business in the future.

2. Objectives

This research was, to study the behavior of upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province when choosing the foreign language school, to study the market factors that influence in decision making of the students, and to compare the market factors in term of gender.

3. Methodology

This study is a quantitative research. The data was collected by using survey-research method and the tool was questionnaire. The data was used for the applied research which is to be analyzed by using descriptive-analytical method and descriptive research [1]. Descriptive

statistics were employed such as variation, frequency, and differences of means in factors as well as inferential statistics to explain the connection of data, hypothesis and inference of population representative values [2]

3.1 Conceptual Framework

The concept of this research is about the studying of influential factors when choosing the language schools of upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province regarding with their gender, age, education level, GPA, career of parents, average income of both parents, the curriculum of the chosen school, the period of study, service, and physical characteristics. The questionnaire was a research tool to collect the data. The data was analyzed by using the theory of customer behavior and theory of marketing mix. The results was the information about the influential factors for choosing the foreign language schools of upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province.

3.2 Hypotheses

Market factors that influence when choosing the foreign language schools to upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province varying from gender is not different.

3.3 Scopes, Population, and Samples

The samples in this study are the upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province from the data of Plan and Policy section of Office of Secondary Educational Service Area 25, Khon Kaen. In academic year of 2015, there were 12,449 students in this area: 4,940 are male and 7,509 are female. [3] The data were collected using Taro Yamane formula [4] at the 95% of reliability and 0.05 of error [5] after the distribution of 400 questionnaires.

3.4 Research instruments and its reliability analysis

The questionnaire was validated to find the reliability and stability with 30 samples. Coefficient Alpha of Cronbach was used to find the values and the results is 0.887 which represents the good quality of research tools according to the Likert's scale.

3.5 Data Collection

The data collection was conducted on 400 of the upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province during the period of March - May 2016 by distributing the questionnaires in the school.

After that the data was analyzed by using SPSS for Windows Version 19 and the statistics used in the study are percentage, mean, standard deviation, and variance (One-way ANOVA).

3.6 Decision-making condition in the study

The condition of decision making toward research hypotheses in the case of comparing the differences whether to accept or deny the Null Hypothesis (H_0) by comparing the Significant; accepting Null Hypothesis (H_0) when computed significant is more or equal to 0.05 and denying hypothesis when computed significant is less than 0.05.



4. Results

4.1 General Information about Questionnaire respondents

According to the general information section of the questionnaire, the data showed that the upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province, who are the respondents, are mostly female and their ages are 17-19 years old. Most of them are in Mathayom suksa 6 with the concentration in Science-Mathematics with the GPA above 3.50. The careers of their fathers are government officials, government employees, state enterprise officers while mothers are merchant or own business. The average income of both parents is 40,001-60,000 Baht per month.

4.2 Information about the behavior and attitude of upper secondary students when choosing foreign language schools

The study revealed that learning a foreign language is necessary and English is the language chosen by students. The student is the person who made decision by him/herself about language school. Most of them preferred not to study with friends. The popular period of class is Saturday and Sunday during 9 - 11 am. They also choose the school that located near their homes. Friends of them are the data resource about language schools. The reason why they study in the language schools is to be advanced in a language. What they expect at the end of the course is that the ability to use language for communications in daily life. In the future, if the opportunity allows, they will definitely continue studying the foreign language.

4.3 Information about factors that influence the decision-making of upper secondary students when choosing language schools.

Factors that influence the decision making are in the order of importance from the most to the least; people, process, physical evidence, price, products, place and promotion respectively.

People or staff is rated the most important. The instructor should be professional in teaching pedagogy, teaching techniques, being entertaining, attentive, experienced, interesting degree holder, being a native speaker. On the other hand, supporting staff should be service-minded, friendly, and polite as well as being informative about the courses.

Process is rated the most important; for example, staff give correct and complete information about the courses. Course consultation before applying. The instruction is conducted as what it is planned. The class schedule is informed in advance and the easy and fast registration is performed.

Physical Evidence features is rated very important such as cleanliness of the classroom both inside and outside as well as the restrooms. The classroom is equipped with computer and internet connection and also the air-conditioner. The class seating should be appropriate according to the number of learners. Reading or study corners should be provided. The building should be in good condition.

Regarding to the price, it is rated important whether it is reasonable with the quality, class hours, curriculum, varieties, and the payment condition on a basis of hourly, monthly, semester, or a course completion respectively.

Product is in the level of very important which is about the modern, equipped, or easily comprehensible curriculum. It should include the general skills focus such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking or university admission exam preparation course. Moreover, the curriculum should be assured by educational agency. The reputation of the school is also very important.

Place or channel of distribution is also rated very important. The location should be convenient and accessible; can be reached by public transportation, situated on the main road, can be found easily. Also there should be several channels for registration and information inquiry such as website, Facebook, Line, and Instagram. Parking space is also important respectively.

Promotion is rated very important; from discount, free class, free learning materials, and satisfaction guarantee (can-do ability after course completion). There is online advertising through website, Facebook, Line, and Instagram. Activities such as university preparation camp, language camp, or summer camp should be provided. And then billboard, flyer or brochure should be done.

4.4 Comparison of the market factors that influence the decision-making of upper secondary students in Mueang district, Khon Kaen province by genders

Regarding with genders, the influential factor about product between male and female is significantly different at the level of 0.05 in term of modern, perfect, and easily comprehensible curriculum.

The influential factor about cost is also significantly different between male and female at the level of 0.05 in term of the reasonability of cost and quality, and the cost and curriculum.

The influential factor about place or channel of distribution is significantly different between male and female at the level of 0.05 in term of location and its convenience and accessibility.

The influential factor about marketing promotion is not different between male and female.

The influential factor about the personnel or staff factor is not different between male and female.

The influential factor about service is also significantly different between male and female at the level of 0.05 in term of the correctness and completion of information inquiry.

The influential factor about physical features between male and female is not different.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The study showed that most of questionnaire respondents are mostly female with the age of 17-19 years old and they are in Mathayom suksa 6 with the concentration in Science-Mathematics with the GPA above 3.50. The careers of their fathers are government officials, government employees, state enterprise officers while mothers are merchant or business owner. The average income of both parents is 40,001-60,000 Baht per month. English is the foreign language chosen to study by most students. The student is the person who made decision by



him/herself where to study language. Most of them preferred not to study with friends. The popular period of class is Saturday and Sunday during 9 - 11 am. They also choose the school that located near their homes. Friends of them are the data resource about language schools. The reason why they study in the language schools is to be advanced in a language. What they expect at the end of the course is that the ability to use language for communications in daily life. In the future, if the opportunity allows, they will definitely continue studying the foreign language.

Regarding with the market factors that influence the decision-making; the personnel and staff has the largest mean value of 4.54, following by service at 4.53, physical features at 4.43, cost at 4.40, product at 4.38, place and channel of distribution at 4.32, and marketing promotion at 4.32 respectively. This is congruent with Monorueng (2013) which studied 399 working-age samples in Chiangrai area. Their age are 21-30 years old with bachelor degree and work in the private company which earns 5001-10,000 Baht per month. The customer behavior of the samples learn foreign language for the promotion in their job. They made decision by themselves and chose to study during the weekend (Saturday and Sunday) 9-11am. The most important factor is personnel and staff.

5.2 General Recommendation for Entrepreneur

5.2.1 The language school entrepreneur should use the modern and perfect curriculum such as a course of ASEAN Language for Communications.

5.2.2 The cost of tuition should be adjusted to be reasonable with curriculum and quality.

5.2.3 The location should be conveniently accessible by using public transportation because Khon Kaen is not developed as much as Bangkok. Most of students travel to school by themselves.

5.2.4 The curriculum should be correct and perfect such as basic Chinese focusing on all language skills not only specific one.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Studies.

5.3.1 In this study emphasized on the samples who are upper secondary students. The further studies should change group of the samples to know different aspects.

5.3.2 The setting of study could be the nearby provinces such as Mahasarakham, Udon Thani, Nakhon Ratchasima or Kalasin to collect the data of future customers.

5.3.3 To study the successful business owner of language school to find the guide of running this business.

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