

**FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTENTION TO CHOOSE A
UNIVERSITY FOR MASTER DEGREE OF GRADUATES**



**A THEMATIC PAPER SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF MANAGEMENT
COLLEGE OF MANAGEMENT
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY
2022**

COPYRIGHT OF MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY

Thematic paper
entitled
**FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTENTION TO CHOOSE A
UNIVERSITY FOR MASTER DEGREE OF GRADUATES**

was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management

on
December 18, 2022



Phannachat P.

Miss Phannachat Phoonsawat
Candidate

Randall Shannon

Assoc. Prof. Randall Shannon,
Ph.D.
Advisor

Sooksan Kantabutra

Assoc. Prof. Sooksan Kantabutra,
Ph.D.
Chairperson

Vichita Ractham

Assoc. Prof. Vichita Ractham,
Ph.D.
Dean
College of Management
Mahidol University

Juthamas Kaewpijit

Assoc. Prof. Juthamas Kaewpijit,
Ph.D.
Committee member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my thematic advisor, Assoc. Prof. Randall Shannon, Ph.D. for his kind and continuous support with my thematic paper. I am so grateful for his advices that he has been giving me throughout the time.

Secondly, I am grateful for the chairperson, Assoc. Prof. Sooksan Kantabutra, Ph.D., and the committee member, Assoc. Prof. Juthamas Kaewpijit, Ph.D., who have provided meaningful comments during my thematic paper presentation.

Finally, I would like to thank all respondents who have spent time participating and completing my online survey for this study. Without their participation, it would not be possible to complete this study. Phannachat Phoonsawat

Phannachat Phoonsawat

FACTORS THAT AFFECT INTENTION TO CHOOSE A UNIVERSITY FOR MASTER DEGREE OF GRADUATES

PHANNACHAT PHOONSAWAT 6449043

M.M. (MARKETING AND MANAGEMENT)

THEMATIC PAPER ADVISORY COMMITTEE: ASSOC. PROF. RANDALL SHANNON, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. SOOKSAN KANTABUTRA, Ph.D., ASSOC. PROF. JUTHAMAS KAEWPIJIT, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

The objective of this thematic paper is to identify the key factors that influence graduates to choose a university for Master's Degrees. The research method that has been used for this thematic paper is a quantitative method by sending an online survey with the expectation of at least 100 responses from respondents who are currently studying Master's Degrees.

The result of this thematic paper indicated that with all the factors, the most influential factors that they perceived as important for choosing university are university curriculum, university reputation, university location, and tuition fees. However, there is another factor that is not considered as significantly important for respondents and that is lecturer expertise. Thus, the understanding of the key factors would help universities to effectively consider if there should be any changes or adjustments in order to meet the needs and interests of students when they are looking for a university for Master's Degree.

KEY WORDS: University Reputation / University Curriculum / Tuition Fee /
University Location / Lecturer Expertise

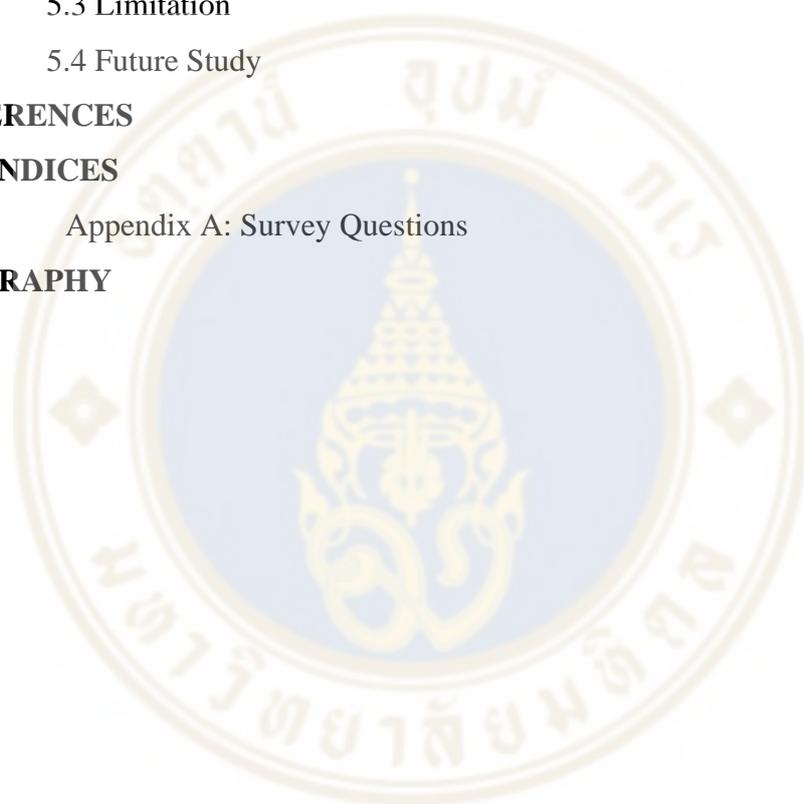
35 pages

CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Research Objectives	3
CHAPTER II LITERATURE REVIEW	4
2.1 University Reputation	4
2.2 Location	4
2.3 Tuition Fees	5
2.4 University Curriculum	6
2.5 Lecturer Expertise	6
CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	7
3.1 Sample Size	7
3.2 Quantitative Method	7
3.3 Potential Output	8
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS AND RESULTS	9
4.1 Respondent Profile	9
4.2 Factors that influence respondents in choosing a university for their Master's Degree	13
4.2.1 University Reputation	14
4.2.2 Location	15
4.2.3 Tuition Fee	16
4.2.4 Curriculum	17
4.2.5 Lecturer Expertise	18

CONTENTS (cont.)

	Page
CHAPTER V CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	20
5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations	20
5.2 Recommendation	22
5.3 Limitation	23
5.4 Future Study	23
RERERENCES	24
APPENDICES	27
Appendix A: Survey Questions	28
BIOGRAPHY	35



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
4.1 Percentage of respondents' gender	9
4.2 Percentage of respondents' age group	10
4.3 Percentage of respondents' occupation	10
4.4 Percentage of respondents' average income	11
4.5 Amount of respondents' general information regarding their Master's Degree	12
4.6 Respondents' Master's Degree Major	13
4.7 Mean scores of University Reputation Factor	14
4.8 Mean scores of University location Factor	15
4.9 Mean scores of Tuition Fee Factor	16
4.10 Mean scores of University Curriculum Factor	17
4.11 Mean scores of Lecturer Expertise Factor	18
4.12 The mean scores of all factors in order from high to low	19

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today, people tend to study for a Business Degree - Master's Degree, and Doctoral Degree more and more. It is either straight away right after finishing university or after taking a gap year. The demand for higher education is happening all across the globe for instance in China, Chinese people actually demand higher education (Wu, 2022). The reason behind people's continuation of studying is varied. It can be personal reasons as well as others. When it comes to reasons, there are many factors influencing people to choose to continue their higher level of education and one of them is their future career. Applying for a job, the very first thing that is needed to put in the resume is education. The most basic requirement is a Bachelor's Degree yet in some jobs or some companies, only a high school degree is enough. However, since we all are living in such a challenging and competitive society where the education level is quite important, it cannot be denied that a Bachelor's Degree at some point is not enough. People with a business degree have a high tendency to get a job with a competitive salary. Some people have a very clear image in their head about their future career and that is what they want to pursue which requires a higher education level and they are willing to leave their hometown for it with the belief that education would help them achieve what they need (Stone, 2021). Pursuing a dream job can be an internal need of a person as well. Having a good job or a good profession could be what one really wants and that is coming from having better education (Serrano, 2021). The desire of having a good professional can also link to personal happiness in a way. They choose what makes them happy and some people choose to study a higher level of education because of nothing but to fulfill their own happiness. They choose what they feel is right. They choose what they think or perceive will make them happy (Serrano, 2021). It is to fulfill their self-actualization in a way as well. Having been promoted and getting a better salary is the motivations why people seek higher education (Amani et al, 2022). People want to make changes in their lives to be in a better environment and that sometimes

requires something to exchange with it. When people are happy in what they are doing, there are chances they do better and that leads to success. The happier they are the higher chance of their academic success (Moussa, 2022). However, professional and personal happiness is not the only reasons people choose to study for a business degree. Looking for social connections or building a competitive workforce or business could be another reason people enroll in business degrees as well.

As mentioned, the demand for business degree education is rising and this is happening in Thailand as well. In Thailand, there are so many universities offering business degree programs. Some of them are well-known universities and some of them are not. So the key challenge for universities across Thailand is to have a strategy to fight against each other in the competitive market. According to the statistics from The Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, the number of students studying business degrees is increasing from the academic year 2019 to 2021. With the demand of students, it is crucial for universities to find their way to become top-of-mind university choices among students. Becoming a top-of-mind university might sound simple for well-known universities such as Mahidol University, Chulalongkorn University, or other top-tier ones yet it is the most challenging and most difficult task to maintain that position. In order to get students to choose one university for their business degree, a strategy is needed. To be considered students, many things need to be taken into accounts such as curriculums, course structure, teaching style, and the management system (Wu, 2022).

Although there is a lot of research about factors that motivate students to choose a university for their studies, researchers still would like to study more on this topic. The research will help identify the key influential factors that motivate graduates to choose universities for business degrees. Furthermore, this research will help universities in Thailand identify key elements that either to be changed or to be removed and better their strategy to become competitive in the market and serve what is best for both current and future students.

1.1 Research Objectives

- To identify the factors that influence graduates to choose a university for Master's Degree.
- To help university board members identify the effectiveness of the courses or facilities offered to students.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 University Reputation

The reputation of the institution is found to be an influential factor for students when they are choosing a university for their higher education (Mishra, 2021). University reputation creates an impact on students, as they perceive the reputation of the institution as something important. Most students believe that top-tier universities tend to produce better and more qualified students in society which leads to better careers or better opportunities in society (Bain, 2021). In today's society, the privileges and in this case, a better career tends to be given to those who have attended top rank universities. And even students themselves are aware of these privileges as well that if they graduated from well-known universities, there is a high tendency to get offered a better job and salary (Schettino, 2022). In addition, a university that has a good reputation tends to have exclusive programs partnered with a global partner or company. So with the special program offered by the university, it is a lot easier for students to gain more experience from those partnered companies by, for example, taking internships at that company or participating in exchange programs which would result in better opportunities in the future (Wut, 2022). From past studies, university reputation is one of the most important factors that students consider as university criteria. Reputation can have an impact on personal feelings such as believing that a well-known university would get them a better job or the confidence that they will get something special out of it.

2.2 Location

Location is one of the most important factors determining university choices (Syed, 2016). The research from Wachira also confirms the importance of location as one of the criteria for choosing a university of students. The finding of the research

shows that since the location of the university is important, students prefer a university that is easily accessed either by their own vehicles or by public transportation. Those that are located further away from the city should provide transportation services for students (Watanawongworakula, 2022). Location somehow links to costs that students need to bear. The study from Gaspar shows that there is some group of students concerned about the location if it is in the city or near their house or not (Gaspar & Soares, 2021). If the university is not so far away from the student's home then the cost of transportation is not high and they can save more time which is importantly and linked to satisfaction of the individual as well. In addition, the cost of transportation relates to the satisfaction of students resulting from the university location (Hanssen and Solvoll, (2015).

2.3 Tuition Fees

Tuition fees can create an impact on educational decision-making. The study by Chen et al. contrasts that even though higher education in China is fully developed, the government still needs to provide financial support or lower interest rate loans for students (Chen et al., 2020). From this, it can be implied that the higher the tuition fee, the less the students are willing to enroll. There is a study supporting this as well that the tuition fee should be taken into account, especially for new students. The study finds that there is some significant association between tuition fees and student's income in Istanbul and that there is a possibility that the high tuition fee, will take away the number of new students to join and that this issue should be considered (Altug et al., 2014). Tuition fee comes with expectations. The money students pay, they expect something back in return - at least the quality of the course. For instance, in Canada, if students need to pay 100% of the tuition fees, they disagree with the idea and also argue that this increasing tuition fee will lead to losses in university (Danilo et al., 2019). With this, it seems like tuition fees are one of the factors influencing the student's intention to choose a university. If what they have to pay is not worth the money then the students might choose other universities instead.

2.4 University Curriculum

Many graduate students are looking for the right curriculum that they believe would help them with their goals either in their career, their business, or their own personal reason. The curriculum could be something that is important for most graduates when they are seeking a university for their business degree. University curriculum is considered as an external motivation according to the study by Shellhouse et al. In their study, the finding mentions that graduate students think that a business degree would help them with their current and future careers, and the curriculum is perceived as one of the most important tools to help them achieve their goals (Shellhouse et al., 2020). The academic program was founded to be one of the criteria students use to make decisions about the university (Mishra et al., 2021). In addition to this, Dao and Thorpe's study also confirms the importance of the curriculum in their study, it plays the second most important factor in Vietnamese student choice of university (Dao & Thorpe, 2015). From these past studies, it can be implied that the curriculum is playing such a vital role for students when they are in the process of making decisions and they need to find what the best fit is for them.

2.5 Lecturer Expertise

The image of a university consists of many different aspects such as ranking, reputation, environment, lecturer expertise, and more. When it comes to choosing the university, the expertise of lecturers is considered as well. A student's intention to choose a university is influenced by many factors that include lecturer expertise (Cubillo et al., 2006). The study by Padlee et al. also confirms the idea that according to their study, the finding shows that the qualification of a lecturer is one of the top five factors for students to choose a university (Padlee et al. 2010). Some students believe that they would gain the best experiences during their academic period from experts - lecturers by absorbing, gaining and sharing knowledge with each other (Maringe and Carter, 2007). From these studies, it can be concluded that one of the factors influencing student choices of the university is lecturer expertise that students perceive as important. Students expect that the expertise of the lecturer would benefit them.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study uses quantitative methods as an approach to collect data in order to identify the intention to choose a university for a business degree. The factors that will be analyzed are university reputation, location, tuition fee, university curriculum, and lecturer expertise. The survey will be divided into 4 parts. Starting with screening questions that screen out non-relevant respondents. Next will be general questions asking about participants' behavior such as their major and study timetable - date and time. Next will be specific questions regarding the 5 factors that this study aims to study. The survey is designed to have 5 scales rating from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Lastly, demographic questions. In this part, the questions will be about gender, age, and income. All of the survey questions will be useful for data analysis and to provide recommendations for related parties.

3.1 Sample Size

The sample size for this study will be at least 100 respondents. The respondents are both male and female who are 21 - 40 years old. According to the respondents, since the aim of this study is to study the intention to choose a university for a Master's Degree, the respondents can be either Thai students or international students who are either living in Thailand or exchange students. They must currently attend their Master's Degree at any university in Thailand.

3.2 Quantitative Method

The questionnaires are divided into 4 different sections. The first section will be the screening question section. It is intentionally designed to screen the participants since the aim of this study is to study the factors that influence Master's

Degree students to choose a university for their Master's Degrees, so this section, it will screen out unqualified participants. The question will be asked about whether the participants are studying for a Master's Degree or not. If the answer is yes, the survey will continue in the next section. Yet if the answer is no, then the participant will be directed to the end section. Next is the general questions section. This section, it is basically about their studies such as university, program, and major. The participants will be given multiple choices for each question in this section. Third, a specific question section where the participants will be asked to complete sets of questions for each factor. There are 5 factors - University Reputation, University Location, Tuition Fees, University Curriculum, and Lecturer Expertise. The participants will be asked to give a scale to the statements whether they agree or disagree to it. The scale will be from 1 to 4 where 1 is strongly disagree and 4 is strongly agree. Lastly, the demographic section. In this section, the questions will be about gender, age, occupation, and monthly income.

3.3 Potential Outcome

- To understand the factors or criteria that affect students' decision-making when choosing a university for their Business Degree.
- To get board members of the university to be aware of the factors affecting their university.
- To help board members of the university to improve or enhance their courses, facilities, and services in order to gain more students to enroll.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND RESULTS

There were 123 respondents that responded back to the survey distributed using Google form. Among those numbers, there are 15 respondents whose answers were *no, I am not currently studying for a Master's Degree*. So these 15 respondents were excluded from the eligible samples. However, 108 respondents answered *Yes, I am currently studying for a Master's Degree*. Thus these 108 respondents' answers will be used for the analysis of this study as it is aimed to study the factors that influence people in choosing a university for their Master's Degree.

4.1 Respondent Profile

The result has been analyzed as the frequency and the percentage of the respondents' demographics including gender, age, occupation, and income. The detail of respondents is shown below

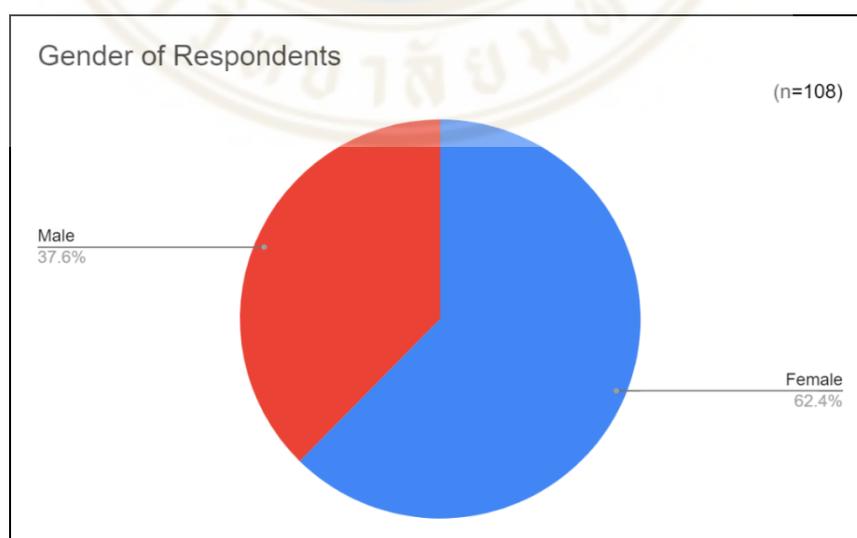


Figure 4.1 Percentage of respondents' gender

According to figure 4.1, it can be seen that there is a significant difference among the gender of respondents. Of all 108 respondents, over 62% of respondents were female while only 37.9% were male respondents.

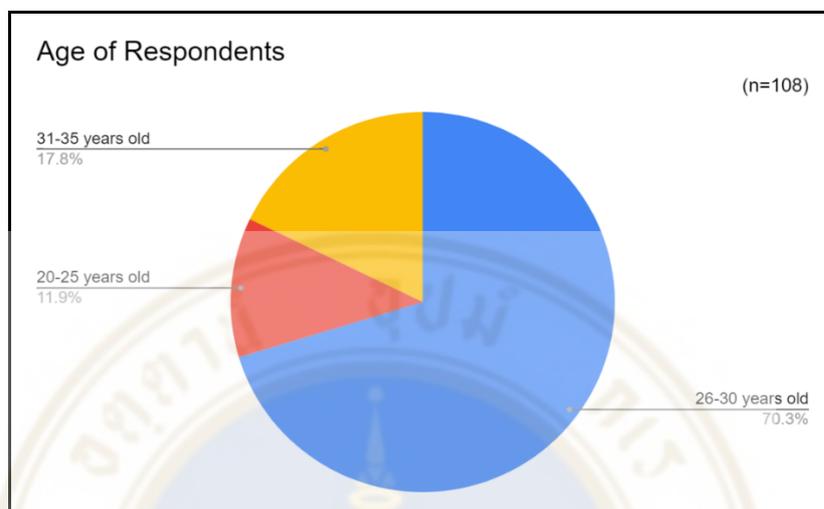


Figure 4.2 Percentage of respondents' age range

Similar to the gender of respondents, there is a significant difference among the age group of respondents. With 108 respondents, the age group of 26-30 years old gains the most significant portion followed by 31-35 years old and 20-25 years old respectively.

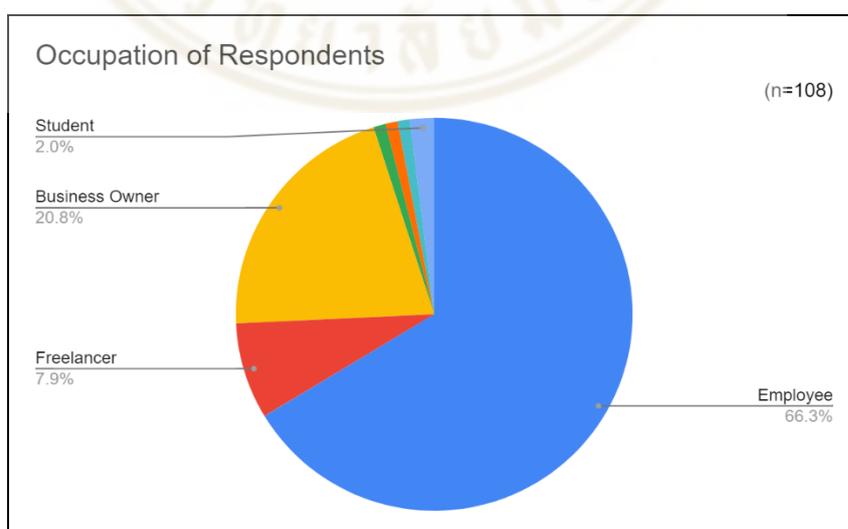


Figure 4.3 Percentage of respondents' occupation

For the occupation, it can be seen that employees seem to have the largest portion compared to other occupations. Employees have over 65.3% while business owners account for 21%. The bottom two occupations that have the least percentage are freelancer and student, which account for 8.4% and 2.1% respectively.

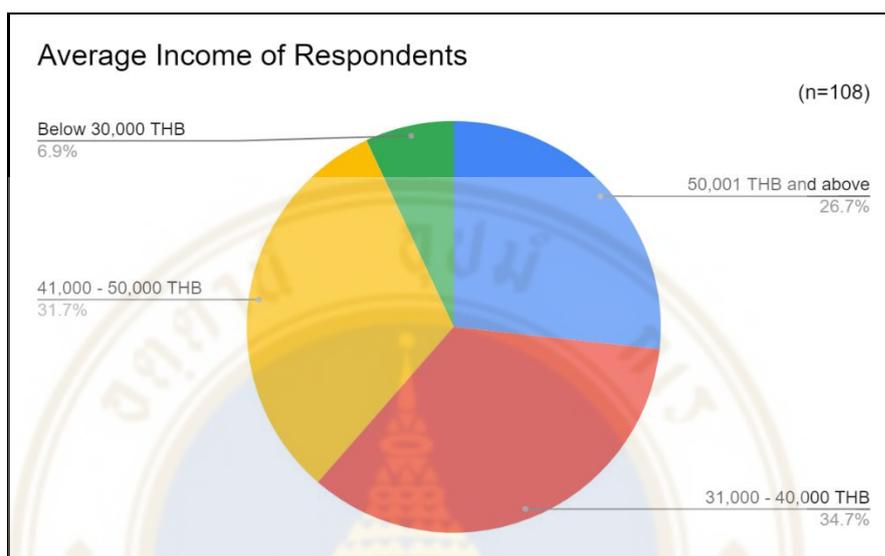


Figure 4.4 Percentage of respondents' average income

Regarding the figure 4.4, the pie chart that represents the average income of respondents, it can be seen that the majority of respondents' average income is 31,000 - 40,000 THB as it takes 34.7% - the highest percentage compared to other income ranges. The second rank is 41,000 - 50,000 THB as it is 31.7% followed by 50,001 THB and above (26.7%) and below 30,000 THB as the lowest percentage (6.9%) of average income respectively.

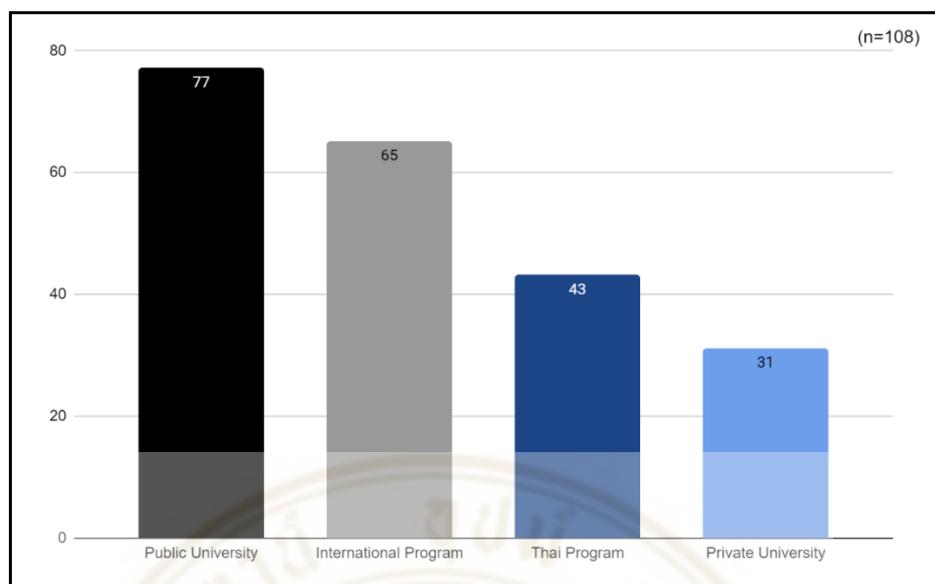


Figure 4.5 Amount of respondents' general information regarding their Master's Degree

According to the respondent's profiles regarding their Master's Degrees, it can be seen comparing public and private universities, most of the respondents attend public universities over private universities. The number of respondents attending public universities is 77 and 31 for private universities. In addition, for the program, since most universities offer students both Thai and International programs, it can be seen that still, the majority of the respondents are studying in International Programs. The total number of respondents who are studying an International program is 65 while there are 43 respondents who study a Thai program.

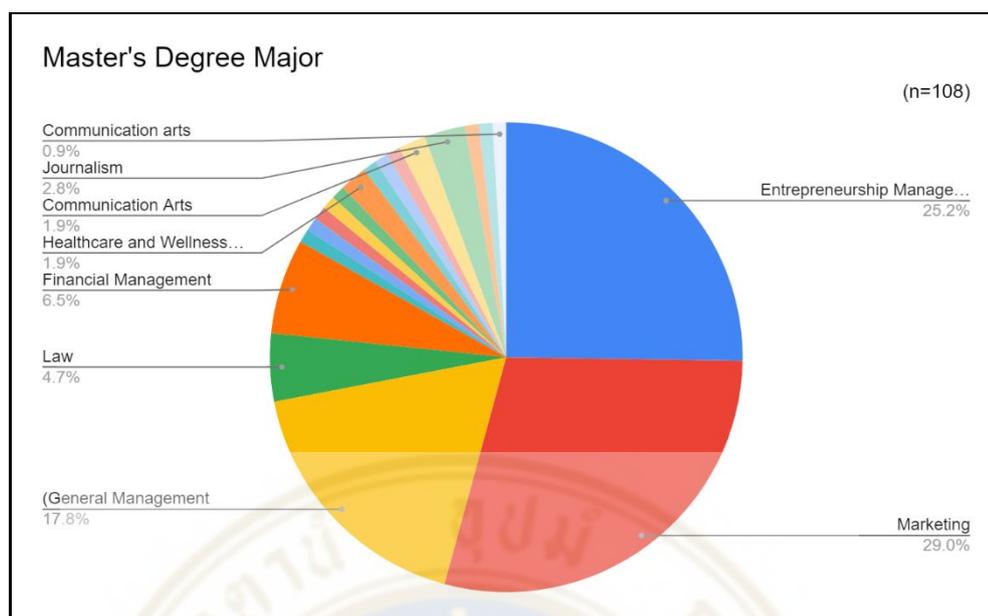


Figure 4.6 Respondents' Master's Degree Major

According to the pie chart, there are varieties of respondents' majors. However, there are 2 significant majors that contain a high percentage. The 2 majors are Marketing which accounts for 29% and Entrepreneurship Management which has 25.2%. The third significant is General Management that accounts for 17.8%. Then the rest will be in a similar percentage. Starting with Financial Management (6.5%) followed by Law 4.7%, Journalism 2.8%, Communication Arts 2.8%, and Healthcare and Wellness 1.9% respectively.

4.2 Factors that influence respondents in choosing a university for their Master's Degree

There are many factors that people take into consideration when it comes to the decision-making process. Since there are so many good universities for people to choose from, it is not an easy decision to make. They all need the best for themselves yet fit with the criteria that they have in mind as well. Thus, in this study, there are 5 factors that will be analyzed. What is the most influential one that has a huge impact on respondent's decision-making on their university choices. Since the scale of the survey is out of 4, so in this part, all the mean scores are calculated and the statements that have

mean scores over 3, it means those statements are important to the respondents while the ones that have less than 2 will be considered as factors that are not really important to the respondents.

4.2.1 University Reputation

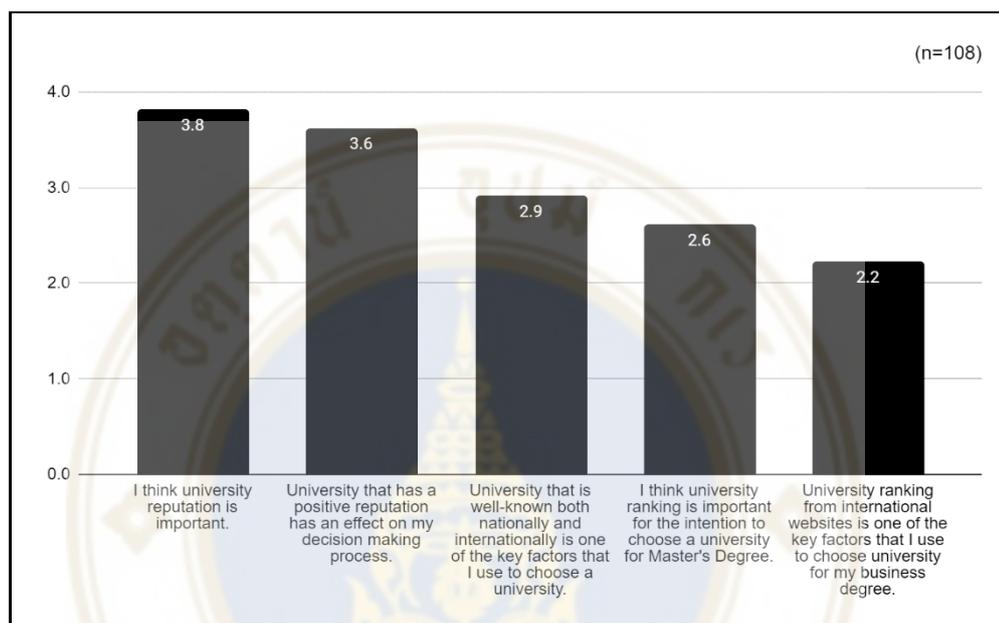


Figure 4.7 Mean scores of University Reputation Factor

For the first factor, university reputation, according to the bar chart (Figure 4.7), represents the mean scores of university reputation statements that the respondents answered. So, from the bar chart, it can be seen that out of 109 respondents, the highest mean score is 3.8 while the lowest is 2.2. The highest mean score is on *'I think university reputation is important statement.'* and the lowest mean score is on *'University ranking from international websites is one of the key factors that I use to choose university for my business degree'*. However, when looking at it closely, *'University that has a positive reputation has an effect on my decision making process'* statement is also having a high mean score at 3.6 which is only 0.2 difference from the highest one. Then it is followed by *'University that is well-known both nationally and internationally is one of the key factors that I use to choose a university'* and *'I think university ranking is important for the intention to choose a university for Master's Degree'* which get 2.9

and 2.6 as mean scores respectively. Thus, from the mean scores and the bar chart, it can be interpreted that respondents think that university reputation is the important and positive reputation of the university is affecting their decision-making process are important to them as these 2 statements get high mean scores of over 3.

4.2.2 Location

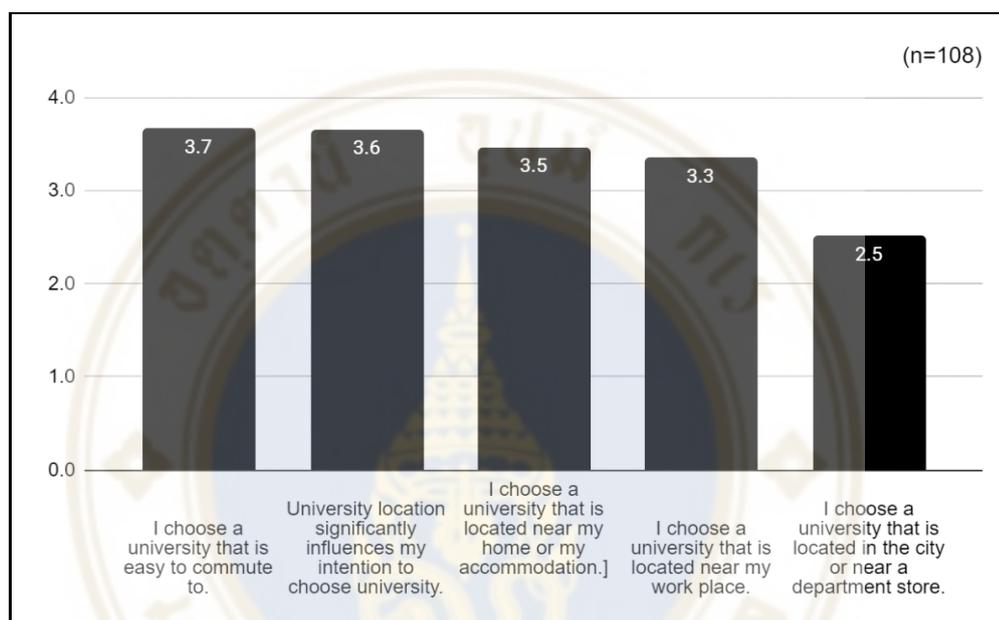


Figure 4.8 Mean scores of University location Factor

For the university location factor, according to figure 4.8 above, the bar chart shows the mean score of all statements under university location factor. There are 5 statements in total and 4 out of 5 statements have the mean scores over 3 while there is only one statement with the lowest mean score of 2.5. The highest mean score is 3.7 on 'I choose a university that is easy to commute to' followed by 'University location significantly influences my intention to choose university.' (3.6), 'I choose a university that is located near my home or my accommodation' (3.5), and 'I choose a university that is located near my work place' (3.3) respectively. With regards to this, it means that respondents take these 4 statements into account when they choose university for their Master's Degree. However, the least important one for this study is 'I choose a university that is located in the city or near a department store' with a mean score of 2.5.

4.2.3 Tuition Fee

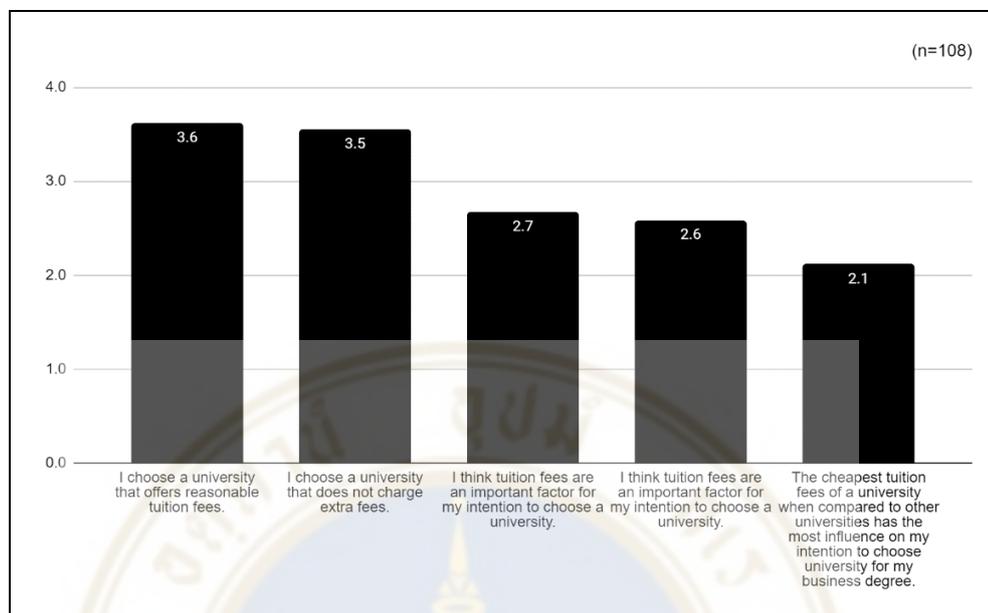


Figure 4.9 Mean scores of Tuition Fee Factor

The bar chart in figure 4.9 shows the mean scores of all statements from the tuition fees factor that respondents have answered from the online survey. The highest mean score is 3.6 on *'I choose a university that offers reasonable tuition fees'* while the lowest is 2.1 on *'The cheapest tuition fees of a university when compared to other universities has the most influence on my intention to choose university for my business degree'*. The difference between the highest and the lowest score is 1.5. The second high mean score is at 3.5 on *'I choose a university that does not charge extra fees'* followed by *'I think tuition fees are an important factor for my intention to choose a university.'* is 2.7 and *'I choose a university that offers tuition fees that I can afford.'* is 2.6 respectively. From the result, it is implied that respondents consider universities that offer reasonable prices and do not charge extra fees as important factors for them when they choose university for their Master's Degree.

4.2.4 Curriculum

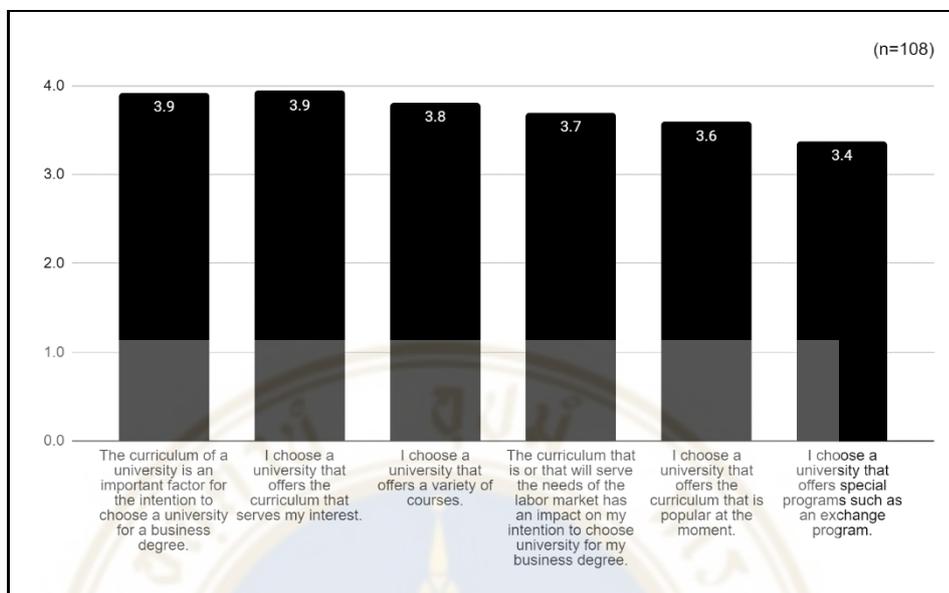


Figure 4.10 Mean scores of University Curriculum Factor

Looking at the mean score of the university curriculum factor from figure 4.10, the bar chart shows the overall mean score of all statements of the factor. From the figure, of all statements, the mean scores are quite similar to each other as they are over 3 meaning that respondents think that these 6 statements are impacting their university choices. Looking closer at each of the statements, the highest score is 3.9 and the lowest score is 3.4. There is no highlighted difference among these statements since the mean score is quite the same. However, according to the highest mean score, there are 2 statements that got the same number which is 3.9. They are *'The curriculum of a university is an important factor for the intention to choose a university for a business degree.'* and *'I choose a university that offers the curriculum that serves my interest.'* Then followed by *'I choose a university that offers the curriculum that is popular at the moment.'* (3.8), *'The curriculum that is or that will serve the needs of the labor market has an impact on my intention to choose university for my business degree.'* (3.7), and *'I choose a university that offers the curriculum that is popular at the moment.'* (3.6) respectively. The lowest mean score is 3.4 on *'I choose a university that offers special programs such as an exchange program'*. Consequently, respondents for this research

perceive university curriculum factor is important for them when it comes to their Master's Degrees and a university.

4.2.5 Lecturer Expertise

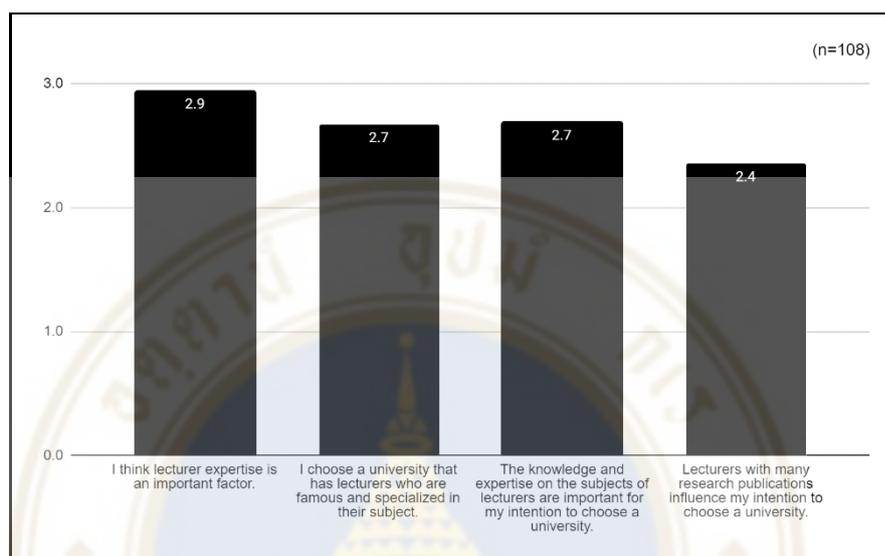


Figure 4.11 Mean scores of Lecturer Expertise Factor

However, when it comes to the lecturer expertise factor, as of figure 4.11, the bar chart presents the mean scores of all statements under the lecturer expertise factor. From this, it can be seen that the overall mean score is in the same range of 2.4 - 2.9 scores with the highest one of 2.9 and the lowest one of 2.4. The highest mean score is 2.9 on '*I think lecturer expertise is an important factor.*' while the lowest mean score is 2.4 on '*Lecturers with many research publications influence my intention to choose a university.*'. The difference between the highest and the lowest score is 0.5 points. On the other hand, there are 2 same medium mean scores which is 2.7 points on '*I choose a university that has lecturers who are famous and specialized in their subject.*' and '*The knowledge and expertise on the subjects of lecturers are important for my intention to choose a university.*'. As mentioned, the scale that has been used for this research is out of 4 where 4 is strongly agree while 1 is strongly disagree, for the lecturer expertise's mean scores, it seems like the respondent do not consider the expertise of lecturer as important as other factors such as university reputation or university location. The overall ranking from high to low can be seen in the figure 4.12 below.

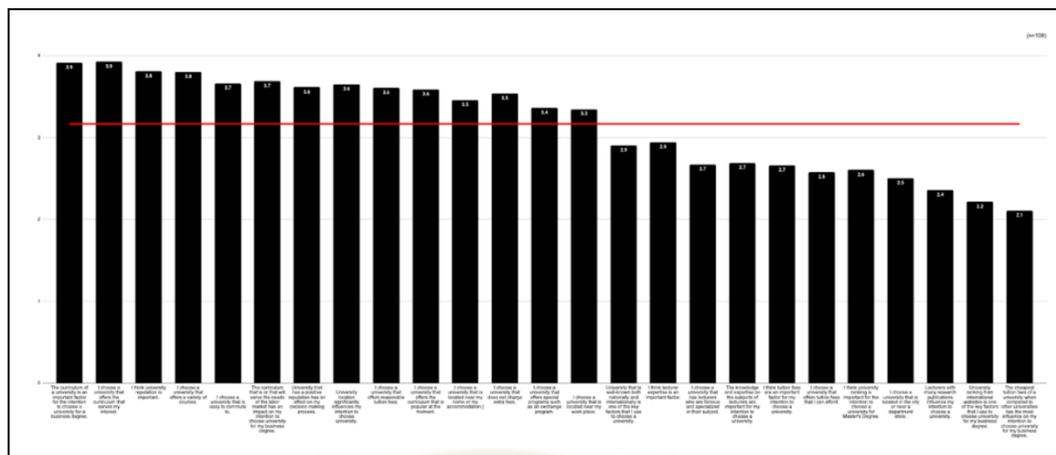
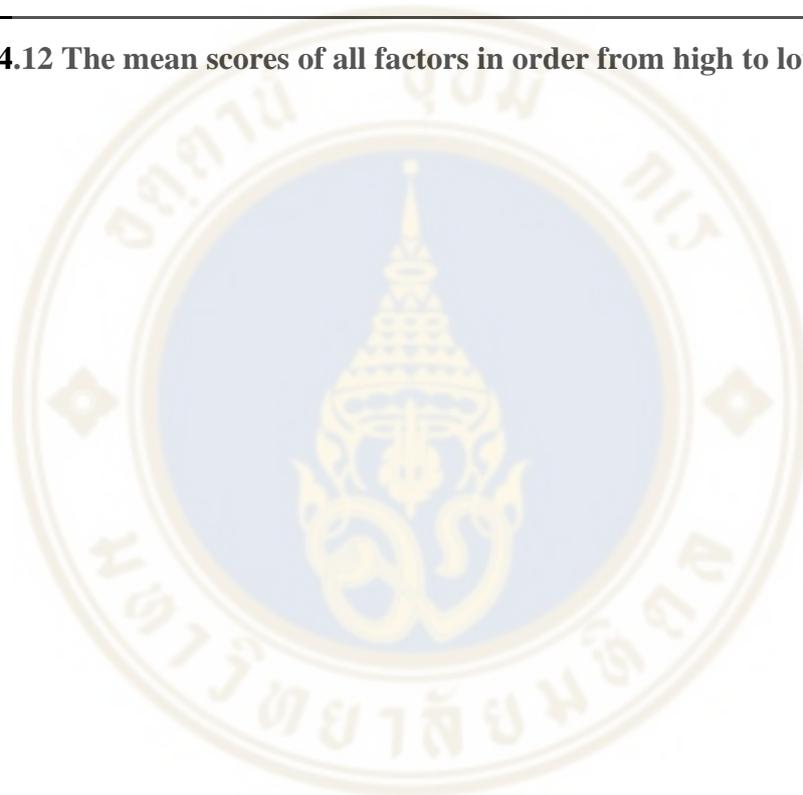


Figure 4.12 The mean scores of all factors in order from high to low



CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The main objective of this study is to identify factors that influence the intention to choose a university of students who study Master's Degree. To achieve the objective, this study conducted an online survey in order to collect data from the respondents. This chapter will begin with the conclusion of the results and findings followed by the practical recommendation. Then the final part will discuss the limitations of this study.

5.1 Conclusion and Recommendations

From the study's results, there are so many factors that have an impact on the intention to choose a university among students for their Master's Degree. The researcher was able to collect the data from 108 respondents and the result shows that among 108 respondents, the majority of respondents are female over male respondents. The largest age group for this study is 26-30 years old while the highest income range is 31,000-40,000 THB. As most Master's Degree classes are in the evening session, it seems to link with respondents' occupation profile as well as the majority of respondents are employees followed by business owners and freelancers respectively. Moreover, from the information that respondents have given, the top 3 Master's Degree majors are Marketing, Entrepreneurship Management, and General Management. However, according to the result, there are some interesting majors such as Communication Arts, Law, or Finance as well. Thus, for the factors, the result, as mentioned, indicates that there are so many factors that are considered to be important for respondents of this study as shown in figure 5.1.

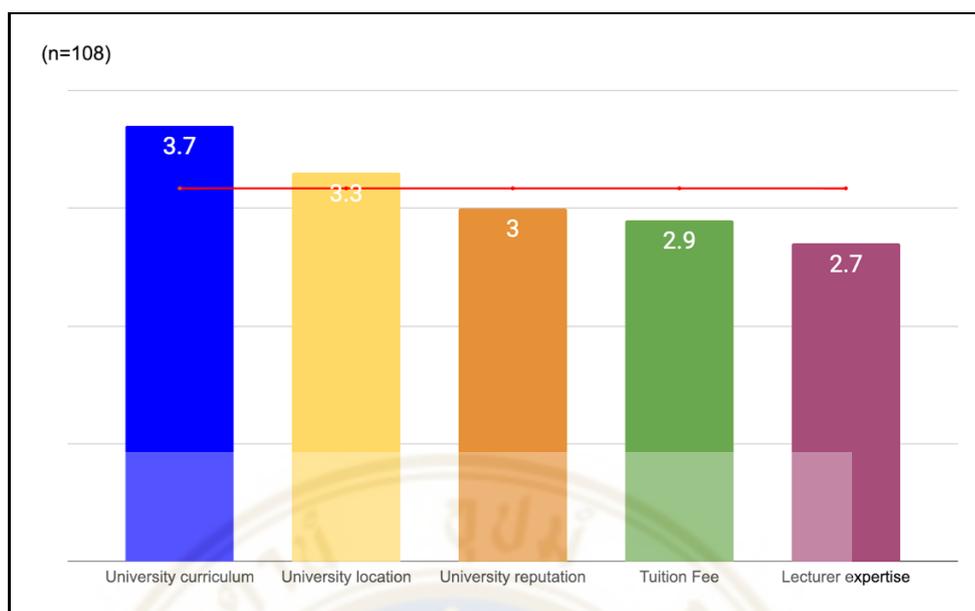


Figure 5.1 The mean scores of all factors in order from high to low

As the scale in the survey is 1-4 where 1 is strongly disagree and 4 is strongly agree, those factors that get more than 3.1 will be considered as influencing factors while those that get a mean score below 3.1 will be considered as non-relevant factors affecting intention to choose a university for Master's Degree of respondents. There is a mean score line to indicate that all the factors that are below the mean score line which is 3.1 will be considered as not important as it is shown in the bar chart above.

In addition, according to figure 5.2, out of all factors that is more than 3.1 points, university curriculum is the most influential factor. This study's result is similar to the study from Shellhouse et al., (2020) which agrees on the importance of university curriculum. Apart from the curriculum, another interesting factor is the university location. In addition, traveling from and to the university is something to be considered as well and as the result of this study, university location seems to be another important factor. Respondents agreed with the university that it is easy to commute to as well as the one that is located near their place or their workplace. Lastly, university reputation, tuition fee, and lecturer expertise are not considered as important factors since the result is less than 3.1. It seems like respondents do not consider lecturer expertise as important as curriculum or location of university.

5.2 Recommendation

The findings of this study indicates that the influential factors towards the intention to choose a university for a Master's Degree are the university curriculum in which there is a variety of courses as well as it serves students' and labor market needs. The recommendation for this is that universities should provide students with a variety of courses. Those courses should be something that is needed in the market or will be needed in the future. For example, since the trends along with the advancement of technology change our world, with those changes, there will be a need for new skilled labor in the market. Those who are specialized will be given the advantage over those who are not. Moreover, universities should provide special programs such as exchange programs or onsite visit programs for students. The exchange program, most universities might have this program already yet they should probably consider the period of the program or offer choices for students to choose from. The program could be from 3 months up to 6 months so that students could choose and be able to study abroad gaining some experience. Apart from exchange students, another recommendation is to have an on-site program for students in a particular subject. For instance, there could be some real company or factory that allows students to visit to really learn from it. By proving this and if the university could really do it, it would increase the reputation of the university as well.

Another recommendation regarding the result of this study is related to the university location. Commuting to class at 5 pm. for 6 pm. class can be so hectic sometimes because of the heavy traffic, especially during rush hours every day. Thus the recommendation for this is that universities should provide a free shuttle bus for students from and to the nearest public transportation stations. Furthermore, as BTS and MRT are one of the main public transportation for everybody, another recommendation is promotion. Universities could do this by partnering with BTS or MRT and barter with them to give special promotions just for students and the promotion is valid from the first day of the academic year until the last term. The promotion is only for students who sign up for it only and others cannot use it. Moreover, a university could use this as another USP to promote as well.

5.3 Limitations

There are several limitations found in this study. First, the survey could take up to 15 minutes to complete due to the length of the questions that mostly are quite long. It requires respondents to read and answer. Taking so much time to complete the survey could be a barrier since the respondents might lose their focus and concentration on the survey, which might affect the result. If the respondents do not focus, they might not read the questionnaires thoroughly and they might answer them untruthfully. Secondly, due to time constraints, the respondents that participated in this online survey are those who are already studying for their Master's Degrees. So they already know too well about their university and their satisfaction. Thus the answers might be biased since they already know and probably their satisfaction is met already. As the aim of this study is to understand and to identify the key factors of students when they choose a university for their Master's Degree, it might be better for the future study to send out the survey to those who just get accepted from their choice of university. Moreover, it will be better to send out the survey to those who have the intention to study Master's Degree. It could be done by screening questions asking them if they are planning to study for a Master's Degree or not as well as asking, them if they just applied for one already.

5.4 Future Study

This study is to identify the factors that influence graduates in choosing university for their Master's Degree. In order to continue the study to acquire more in depth knowledge or information, the recommendations for future research are:

- As this study used quantitative methods as a methodology to acquire the information, it might be better to use the qualitative method to gain more insight from respondents.
- For this study, it is focusing only on respondents who are currently studying their Master's Degree so for future research, it is better to get information from respondents who are deciding to study Master's Degree. With this, there will be another useful insight to identify as well.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, Syed & Buchanan, F. Robert & Ahmad, Norita. (2016). Examination of students' selection criteria for international education. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 30. 1088-1103. 10.1108/IJEM-11-2014-0145.
- Altug, F., Sumer, K. K., & Ozekicioglu, S. (2014). The Impacts of Economic Variables on Higher Education Tuition Fees: Case of Istanbul. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Educational Studies*, 9(1), 1–9.
- Amani, J., Myeya, H., & Mhewa, M. (2022). Understanding the Motives for Pursuing Postgraduate Studies and Causes of Late Completion: Supervisors and Supervisees' Experiences. *SAGE Open*, 12(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221109586>
- Bains, S., & Rani, N. (2021). Impact of university reputation and ranking among the students of the university of jammu: A survey. *Library Philosophy and Practice*, , 1-13. <https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/impact-university-reputation-ranking-among/docview/2506600291/se-2>
- Carvalho, L., Brandão, A., & Pinto, L. H. (2021). Understanding the importance of eWOM on Higher Education Institutions' brand equity. *Journal of Marketing for Higher Education*, 31(2), 261–279. <https://doi-org.ejournal.mahidol.ac.th/10.1080/08841241.2020.1788196>
- Corrales Serrano, M., Sánchez-Martín, J., Moreno Losada, J., & Zamora Polo, F. (2021). The Role of the Social Sciences When Choosing University Studies: Motivations in Life Stories. *Education Sciences*, 11.
- Cubillo, Jose & Sánchez, Joaquín & Cerviño, Julio. (2006). International students' decision-making process. *International Journal of Educational Management*. 20. 101-115. 10.1108/09513540610646091.
- Dao, M. T. N., & Thorpe, A. (2015). What Factors Influence Vietnamese Students' Choice of University? *International Journal of Educational Management*, 29(5), 666–681.

REFERENCES (cont.)

- Gaspar, A. M. da C. e S., & Soares, J. M. A. C. (2021). Factors Influencing the Choice of Higher Education Institutions in Angola. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 13(1), 23–39.
- Gutiérrez-Villar, B., Alcaide-Pulido, P., & Carbonero-Ruz, M. (2022). Measuring a University's image: Is reputation an influential factor? *Education Sciences*, 12(1), 19. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12010019>
- Hanssen, T.-E.S. and Solvoll, G. (2015), "The importance of university facilities for student satisfaction at a Norwegian University", *Facilities*, Vol. 33 No. 13/14, pp. 744-759. <https://doi-org.ejournal.mahidol.ac.th/10.1108/F-11-2014-0081>
- Mantur, M., & Susanto, S. (2020). Determining factors that influence the z generation students in selecting a private University in Manado City. *International Journal of Management IT and Engineering*, 10(12), 1–40.
- Maringe, F. and Carter, S. (2007), "International students' motivations for studying in UK HE: Insights into the choice and decision making of African students", *International Journal of Educational Management*, Vol. 21 No. 6, pp. 459-475. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513540710780000>
- Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation
- Mishra, N., & Gupta, S. L. (2021). Factors and Influences Contributing to the College/University Selection: A Study of Private Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) in Oman. *TEM Journal*, 10(2), 908-915.
- Moussa, N. M., & Ali, W. F. (2022). Exploring the Relationship Between Students' Academic Success and Happiness Levels in the Higher Education Settings During the Lockdown Period of COVID-19. *Psychological Reports*, 125(2), 986–1010. <https://doi-org.ejournal.mahidol.ac.th/10.1177/0033294121994568>

REFERENCES (cont.)

- Padlee, Siti Falindah & Kamaruddin, Abdul & Baharun, Rohaizat. (2010). International Students' Choice Behavior for Higher Education at Malaysian Private Universities. *International Journal of Marketing Studies*. 2. 10.5539/ijms.v2n2p202.
- Schettino, G., Marino, L., & Capone, V. (2022). The impact of university-related variables on students' perceived employability and mental well-being: An Italian longitudinal study. *Sustainability*, 14(5), 2671. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14052671>
- Shellhouse, J. A., Spratley, S. L., & Suarez, C. E. (2020). Influencing Factors on the Pursuit of Graduate Degrees in Agricultural Social Sciences. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(1), 74–91.
- Stone, A. N., & Évora, K. A. (2021). From Country to Concrete: Motivators for Rural Students Choosing an Urban University. *College Student Affairs Journal*, 39(2), 150–164.
- Tai-Ming Wut, Jing (Bill) Xu, & Lee, S. W. (2022). Does university ranking matter? choosing a university in the digital era. *Education Sciences*, 12(4), 229. <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci12040229>
- Wu C. Research on the Internationalization Strategy of Higher Education under the Background of Network Education. *Applied Bionics & Biomechanics*. April 2022:1-5. doi:10.1155/2022/9352275
- Yuanyuan Chen, Quanlin Liu, & Kun Wu. (2020). Tuition Fees for Higher Education and Intergenerational Mobility in China. *Frontiers of Economics in China*, 15(3), 396–432. <https://doi-org.ejournal.mahidol.ac.th/10.3868/s060-011-020-0016-1>



Appendix A: Survey Questions

Section 1: Screening Question

1. คุณกำลังศึกษาระดับปริญญาโทอยู่หรือไม่ (Are you currently studying Master's Degree?)

ใช่ (Yes)

ไม่ใช่ (No) (End of the questionnaire)

Section 2: General Questions

1. คุณกำลังศึกษาอยู่ที่มหาวิทยาลัยรัฐบาลหรือเอกชน (Are you studying at Private or Public University?)

มหาวิทยาลัยรัฐ (Public University)

มหาวิทยาลัยเอกชน (Private University)

2. หลักสูตรที่คุณกำลังศึกษา (What is your program?)

หลักสูตรไทย (Thai Program)

หลักสูตรนานาชาติ (International Program)

3. สาขาที่คุณกำลังศึกษา (What is your major?)

การตลาด (Marketing)

การจัดการผู้ประกอบการ (Entrepreneurship Management)

การเงิน (Financial Management)

สาขาการจัดการธุรกิจสุขภาพ (Healthcare and Wellness Management)

กฎหมาย (Law)

การจัดการ (General Management)

อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ (Other, please specify)

Section 3: Specific Questions

University Reputation

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Agree	Dis agree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4
1. ฉันคิดว่าชื่อเสียงของมหาวิทยาลัยเป็นสิ่งที่สำคัญ (I think university reputation is important.)				
2. ฉันคิดว่าการจัดลำดับมหาวิทยาลัยเป็นสิ่งสำคัญสำหรับการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยเพื่อศึกษาต่อ (I think university ranking is important for the intention to choose a university for a business degree.)				
3. มหาวิทยาลัยที่มีชื่อเสียงด้านบวกส่งผลอย่างมากต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัย (University that has a positive reputation has an effect on my decision making process.)				
4. การจัดลำดับมหาวิทยาลัยจากเว็บไซต์การศึกษาต่างประเทศเป็นปัจจัยในการเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยเพื่อศึกษาต่อ (University ranking from internal websites is one of the key factors that I use to choose university for my business degree.)				
5. มหาวิทยาลัยที่เป็นที่รู้จักทั้งในประเทศและต่างประเทศมีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยของฉัน (University that is well-known both nationally and internationally is one of the key factors that I use to choose a university.)				

Location

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4
1. ที่ตั้งของมหาวิทยาลัยส่งผลอย่างมากต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยของฉัน (University location significantly influences my intention to choose university.)				
2. ฉันจะเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่เดินทางไปเรียนสะดวก (I choose a university that is easy to commute to.)				
3. ฉันจะเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่ตั้งอยู่ใกล้ห้างสรรพสินค้า หรือ ใจกลางเมือง (I choose a university that is located in the city or near a department store.)				
4. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่อยู่ใกล้ที่พักของฉัน (I choose a university that is located near my home or my accommodation.)				
5. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่อยู่ใกล้ที่ทำงาน (I choose a university that is located near my work place.)				

Tuition Fees

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4
<p>1. ค่าธรรมเนียมการศึกษาถูกที่สุดเมื่อเทียบกับมหาวิทยาลัยอื่น ๆ มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยของฉัน</p> <p>(The cheapest tuition fees of a university when compared to other universities has the most influence on my intention to choose university for my business degree.)</p>				
<p>2. ฉันคิดว่าค่าธรรมเนียมการศึกษาของมหาวิทยาลัยเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญในการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัย</p> <p>(I think tuition fees are an important factor for my intention to choose a university.)</p>				
<p>3. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีค่าธรรมเนียมการศึกษาที่ตัวฉันสามารถจ่ายได้</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers tuition fees that I can afford.)</p>				
<p>4. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีค่าธรรมเนียมการศึกษาที่สมเหตุสมผล</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers reasonable tuition fees.)</p>				
<p>5. ฉันจะเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่ไม่มีค่าใช้จ่ายเบ็ดเตล็ดอื่น ๆ เพิ่มเติมนอกจากค่าธรรมเนียมการศึกษา</p> <p>(I choose a university that does not charge extra fees.)</p>				

University Curriculum

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4
<p>1. หลักสูตรที่เปิดสอนเป็นปัจจัยสำคัญในการตัดสินใจเลือกมหาวิทยาลัย</p> <p>(The curriculum of a university is an important factor for the intention to choose a university for a business degree.)</p>				
<p>2. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีหลักสูตรที่เป็นที่นิยมในสังคมปัจจุบัน</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers the curriculum that is popular at the moment.)</p>				
<p>3. ฉันจะเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่เปิดสอนหลักสูตรที่เกี่ยวข้องกับสิ่งที่ฉันต้องการ</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers the curriculum that serves my interest.)</p>				
<p>4. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีหลักสูตรให้เลือกเรียนหลากหลาย</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers a variety of courses.)</p>				
<p>5. ฉันเลือกมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีโปรแกรมพิเศษอื่นๆ ให้กับนักศึกษา เช่น โครงการแลกเปลี่ยน</p> <p>(I choose a university that offers special programs such as an exchange program.)</p>				
<p>6. หลักสูตรที่เปิดสอนตรงกับตลาดแรงงาน ส่งผลต่อการตัดสินใจของฉัน</p> <p>(The curriculum that is or that will serve the needs of the labor market has an impact on my intention to choose university for my business degree.)</p>				

Lecturer Expertise

Questionnaires	Strongly disagree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly agree
	1	2	3	4
<p>1. ฉันคิดว่าความเชี่ยวชาญของอาจารย์เป็นปัจจัยสำคัญ (I think lecturer expertise is an important factor.)</p>				
<p>2. ฉันเลือกศึกษาต่อในมหาวิทยาลัยที่มีอาจารย์ที่มีชื่อเสียง และมีความชำนาญในวิชานั้นๆ (I choose a university that has lecturers who are famous and specialized in their subject.)</p>				
<p>3. อาจารย์ที่สอนมีความรู้ ความชำนาญตรงกับวิชาที่สอนเป็นปัจจัยในการตัดสินใจของฉัน (The knowledge and expertise on the subjects of lecturers are important for my intention to choose a university.)</p>				
<p>4. อาจารย์ที่มีผลงานด้านวิชาการจำนวนมาก ส่งผลต่อการตัดสินใจของฉัน (Lecturers with many research publications influence my intention to choose a university.)</p>				

Section 4: Demographic Questions

1. โปรดระบุเพศของคุณ (Please identify your gender)
 - ผู้หญิง (Female)
 - ผู้ชาย (Male)
 - อื่นๆ (Other)
2. คุณอายุเท่าไร (What is your age?)
 - 20 - 25 ปี (20-25 years old)
 - 26 - 30 ปี (26-30 years old)
 - 31 - 35 ปี (31-35 years old)
 - 36 - 40 ปี (36-40 years old)
 - 41 ปีขึ้นไป (41 years old and above)
3. กรุณาระบุอาชีพของคุณ (What is your profession?)
 - พนักงานบริษัท (Employee)
 - เจ้าของธุรกิจ (Business Owner)
 - ฟรีแลนซ์ (Freelancer)
 - อื่นๆ โปรดระบุ (Other, please specify)
4. คุณมีรายได้เฉลี่ยต่อเดือนเท่าไร (What is your average monthly income?)
 - ต่ำกว่า 30,000 บาท (below 30,000 THB)
 - 31,000 - 40,000 บาท (31,000 - 40,000 THB)
 - 41,000 - 50,000 บาท (41,000 - 50,000 THB)
 - 50,001 บาทขึ้นไป (50,001 THB and above)