



Promotion of Chinese Students from People's Republic of China to Enroll at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University

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Abstract

The research project entitled, "Promotion of Chinese Students from People's Republic of China to enroll at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University," aimed at: 1) finding ways to increase Chinese student enrollment at the university, and 2) finding ways to improve university academic services provided for the Chinese students. The research employed a mixed method to gather and to analyse data and information from 99 students, 25 instructors/advisors and 42 Thai friends of the Chinese students. In this connection the model for promotion of students' retention in a university was adopted after Tinto (1993), which fitted very well with the data collected. This model encompassed six factors, namely, student academic and social adjustment, socio-economic status of students' families, students educational experiences at the university, students' educational and career goals and students' ties to the university, leading to suggestions for ways to improve university services to the Chinese students, thus serving the purposes of the project.

Keywords: Chinese students, Promotion, Suan Dusit Rajabhat University

1. Introduction

Suan Dusit Rajabhat University is a higher education institution with students from the People's Republic of China coming to study Suan Dusit Teacher's College with officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, Yunnan Province. Later, when the Teacher's college had the status of Rajabhat Institute Suan Dusit Rajabhat Institute had begun its official cooperation with the Chinese Government in educational management to develop personnel of government agencies in Yunnan Province. The official date of a signed agreement was on 4 April 1996. Personnel who came to study Thai language included personnel of the International Affairs Office, Ministry of International Affairs, Yunnan Administration College, educational institutions and organizations from Dali, Autonomous Region, Yunnan Minority Administrative Region and the Vocational Institute 8 (Hotel and Tourism) of Yunnan etc. After that, the cooperation with Chinese educational institutions has been expanded. In the year 2004, Suan Dusit Rajabhat Institute changed its status again to Suan Dusit Rajabhat University and started accepting students from the People's Republic of China to study at the bachelor's level for the first time by using the 2 + 2 or 3 + 1 system courses in collaboration with universities in the People's Republic of China. According to a survey on June 18, 2012, from the year 2007 until the time of the study, a total of 99 people students from Guangxi and Sichuan provinces came to study Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. They were students who studied Thai language courses, Tourism Industry and Service courses (Aviation Business), Tourism Industry and Hospitality Program (Hotel Business), Business Administration course (International Business) (Bureau of Academic Promotion and Registration, 2012). While there are large number of curricula at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University with 60 degree programs in 8 faculties, students from the People's Republic of China enrolled to study in only four programs of three faculties, namely, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, School of Tourism and Hospitality, and Faculty of Management Science. However, after 5 years of operation only 99 Chinese students enrolled at the university, which was extremely marginal in number. This was a serious problem requiring immediate remedial actions. Moreover, student affair department had received complaints from students on problems regarding quality of service they received while studying at the university, which is another area that needed improvements. Consequently the policy aiming at increasing the number of enrollment in the areas of studies, particularly the highly reputable ones Suan Dusit Rajabhat University is necessary. The team of researchers conducted research which focused on



access to education, service provision, education and quality of life in schools, views of students, as well as the needs to study in various programs in Suan Dusit Rajabhat University of Chinese students to seek ways to promote students from the People's Republic of China to study in Thai universities and to use the information to improve educational services to meet the needs of the students and to raise the quality of education services to international level.

Findings will allow the research team to find ways to promote and increase the number of students from the People's Republic of China to come more to study. The data from the research will be used as a guideline to improve the quality of educational services of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in order to meet the needs of international students and to raise the quality of education of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University to enter further into the international level in future.

2. Objectives

1. To find ways to increase Chinese student's enrollment at the university
2. To find ways to improve university academic services provided for the Chinese students

3. Materials and Methods

The researchers used a mixed method approach which consisted of quantitative research and qualitative research.

1. Quantitative research aimed at exploring the "trend" in perspectives of 99 Chinese students (population) about the quality of teachers, the suitability of educational institutions, the environment, and the atmosphere of education, the quality of information technology services, the quality of other services and the convenience received, relationship with fellow students, future career needs, and needs when graduating from Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. In addition, the researcher compared the viewpoints of Chinese students on the teaching and learning of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University by classifying students' backgrounds, which consisted of the faculty of study, year of study, gender, age, Thai language experience, parents' occupation cumulative grade point average, and reasons for choosing to study at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. Using a simple random sampling method at the level of error of 5 percent, the researcher got a total of 80 samples. The data were analyzed by using mean score, standard deviation, t-test statistic, one-way analysis of variance, and paired mean difference test by the Scheffe method.

2. Qualitative research: Researchers delved into the problems and needs of Chinese students by using interview forms and in-depth interviews with 70 Chinese students, 42 Thai friends of Chinese students, and 25 instructors/advisors. In addition, the researchers conducted focus-group discussions in three programs of three faculties. The data were analyzed to answer the research questions.

The results of analysis from both quantitative data and qualitative data combined and considered together to create suggestions as answers to both research objectives.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Quantitative results / discussion

According to the overall research results, it was found that Chinese students view on the teaching management of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University ranging from high to low are as follow: 1) Relationship with fellow students ($\bar{x} = 3.94$); 2) Appropriateness of the location, environment and atmosphere ($\bar{x} = 3.90$); 3) Teacher quality ($\bar{x} = 3.79$); 4) Quality of service and convenience received ($\bar{x} = 3.78$); and 5) Quality of information technology services ($\bar{x} = 3.65$).

When comparing the results of the research of Chisakan (2011) on the study of the opinions of Chinese students on the Business Administration Program, International Business major that measures teaching-learning in Thai language of Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in 6 aspects which found that students had opinions in the "moderate" level of all items, which were arranged in descending order from high to low including factors supporting teaching and learning, measurement and evaluation of students, teacher, curriculum, and teaching-learning activities, respectively. We can see the consistency of the last 3 items with low scores. Both in this research and the research of Chisakan (2011) which is mainly related to



teaching and learning and academic services show that students see the importance more of teaching and learning, is consistent with the strategy of the promotion of student education to maintain students in the educational institutions of Tomkinson et al. (2002) in article 3 and 5, which emphasize the needs of students, supports and recommends the right ways, suitable for education, solving learning problems, and the personal well-being of students. In this case, the research found that students give a low grade score to the university's library and information technology services which from qualitative research, the researchers found the reason to appear in the next episode.

The results of the findings in each aspect can be discussed as follows from a lower level of perspective to a higher level of perspective:

1) Quality of information technology services: two of the most important services that should be improved are the Internet service and library service because they ranked lower than other items.

2) Teacher quality: From the students' point of view, it shows that the first issue that should be improved is their advisor: Advisors should also help students with the introduction of careers. Next, the advisor should open the opportunity for students to seek advice more conveniently. Next, the instructor should advise students on problem-solving, and the advisor should give advice on learning and helping students with living conditions.

3) Service quality and convenience received: there are two issues that reflect the needs of students: the improvement of welfare of international students and the convenience in contacting the university.

4) Appropriateness of the location, environment, and atmosphere. Students expressed a low level of perspective towards safety in the dormitory and traveling to the university.

5) Relationship with classmates: this is not a problem because students are of the opinion that they receive advice from friends in class at a very agreed level.

6) The needs of Chinese students: it was found that after graduation, most students preferred traders as occupation because all students were supported by parents/guardians and want to work in Thailand after graduation.

For testing hypotheses, there are 8 items, which can be summarized as follows:

1) Hypothesis 1 and 2: students who studied in different faculties or different years hold different views on teaching and learning management: The test results do not find differences. It rejected this hypothesis. It shows that other students of different years have no difference in the development of teaching and learning of various faculties in the overall and surrounding areas. This shows that the standard of teaching and learning of various faculties is in the same level.

2) Hypothesis 3: students with different genders have different views on teaching and learning management. The results showed that hypothesis is accepted. Overall, male students had a higher level of perspective and in all aspects, except the quality of information technology services, than female students. In information technology services both had similar perspectives. For other aspects, female students had a lower level of perspective because there is a higher expectation in finding solutions.

3) Hypothesis 4: students of different ages have different views on teaching and learning management. As almost all Chinese students are in the same age, age is not a variable that can be used to test.

4) Hypothesis 5: students with different experiences of learning Thai language have different views on teaching and learning management. The hypothesis is accepted in the overall picture and in only 2 aspects comprising the quality of teacher and the quality of service and convenience received. The group of students who learned Thai language for only 1 year had different views from other groups. Considering the average views, it was found that the 1 year group had an average level of view higher than other groups which mean that the group that knows Thai language better had a lower level of views. This could be because as one's understanding of language gets the deeper, they are able to notice more problems.

5) Hypothesis 6: students whose parents have different occupations, have different views on teaching and learning management. The test results showed that the overall hypothesis was accepted but for



each aspect only one aspect has been accepted which is the quality of teachers. But when analyzing by comparing the average pairs values, it does not find differences. This indicates, that the levels of influence of parents' occupation towards teaching and learning are too small to find differences.

6) Hypothesis 7: students with different grade point averages have different views on teaching and learning management. In the overall picture has been rejected, but with only one aspect accepted namely the teacher's quality. Group of students with a cumulative grade point average of B+ and B differed from group with grade point average of C and D+ It was found that the first group had a lower level of view than the second group 2. This shows that students who performed better will find problems in the teaching and learning of teachers than students who did not perform well (which is in the same direction as the comparison of female-male students with different "subtlety". My question: Why do you add this sentence here? Can you omit?).

7) Hypothesis 8: students who have different reasons for choosing to study at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University have different views on teaching and learning management. The results of the hypothesis testing found that there were differences in the overall picture and in 2 aspects, which is in the aspect of the appropriateness of the location, environment and atmosphere and the quality of the teacher. Different groups are those who chose to study at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University because parents recommended it and thus had a higher level of viewpoint than other groups. It shows that the guidance of parents has an influence on the level of view of Chinese students towards the teaching and learning of the university, and therefore, parent's views should be given great importance by University administrators. This finding corresponds to one of the strategies of the University of Louisiana System (2008) that gives attention to small groups of students that are different from general students in terms of race, nationality, culture, family background by organizing special courses to meet the needs of those students.

4.2 Qualitative discussion

The results of qualitative research from the study population of three groups, including interviewing Chinese students, Thai friends and instructors/advisors, as well as the focus group with Chinese students which may be combined to create a concise discussion to lead to the following suggestions:

1. Public relations or motivation

Based on the results from the questionnaire and individual interviews, it will be noted that Chinese universities have the most influence in public relations or motivation to make Chinese students come to study at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, followed by Chinese teachers, and Chinese friends respectively. These 3 ranks are considered important intermediaries or as a channel for Suan Dusit Rajabhat University to be able to publicize the most effective.

2. Promotion of further study of Chinese students

The study found that parents or families are important factors in helping to promote and have influence students' further education. Therefore, tuition fees or other expenses are important factors in the selection to study for students. Which Suan Dusit Rajabhat University considered to be one of the universities in Thailand that has an affordable education fee, the cost is in the criteria that can be selected, but must have clear information or publicity about the university's details. Therefore, this can be an opportunity for Suan Dusit Rajabhat University in the future.

3. Choosing to study at the university

There are factors that Chinese students choose to study in Suan Dusit Rajabhat University because the university has a MOU between other universities in China and must comply with the Chinese university educational regulations for graduation. Students like Suan Dusit Rajabhat University because they are not expensive, famous, and have a field that students want to study. This is considered to be a very positive attitude towards Chinese students and will think that the university will try to build a positive attitude in the future.



4. Being accepted of the university

From the analysis, it was found that Chulalongkorn University is the number one that Chinese students know and decide to choose. Which is regarded as one of the most famous universities in Thailand, thus Suan Dusit Rajabhat University may not be able to compete. But in second place, Bangkok University which is a private university that has other elements as factors for Chinese students to compare with Suan Dusit Rajabhat University and see advantages such as fees or other expenses which will be higher than Suan Dusit Rajabhat University, etc.

5. Relationship with friends

Having a relationship with friends in Thailand during the study was important for Chinese students. Receiving help and kindness from Thai friends while studying in Thailand was one factor in creating an impression and attracting more Chinese students to come to Thailand for their studies.

6. Excursions/Study visits

Tourist attractions in Thailand that Chinese students had visited and felt attracted are mostly seaside destinations. It was found that 53.04 percent of the total number of students surveyed visited places such as Krabi, Phuket, Hua Hin, Beach of Prachuap Khiri Khan Province, Pattaya Beach of Chonburi Province, Koh Samui of Surat Thani Province, etc.

7. Promotion in education

In promoting the education of the university to be known among Chinese students from various universities of China funding has to be provided. For example, providing scholarships for foreign students in order to do marketing in the future may be one avenue to address. For instance, in the People's Republic of China scholarships for various degree programs for international students to study in China are provided with the aim of educating international students to be proficient in language, society and Chinese culture. This is done for the purpose of public relations and future marketing.

8. Occupation

The study shows most students chose to pursue their careers in the People's Republic of China. Students had different views as to why they wished to return home for their careers. Some disliked Thai people and other aspects in Thailand. Some wanted to go back to develop their home country. This issue should be included in the next survey. Some chose to work in Thailand as language teachers teaching students or people who plan to do trade, business, or work in Chinese companies in Thailand. Of course, if the Chinese can speak Thai well, then they can take jobs away from Thai people. This is why Thai people should be prepared to cope with unemployment as Chinese companies or Thai companies that do business in China would definitely hire Chinese people. Chinese employees are not only superior to Thai people in language but also in their knowledge about society, culture, Chinese traditions which makes it much easier in doing international business.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Conclusion

1) Chinese students faced problems in academic and social adaptation. Academic problems caused by the problem of using Thai language at a low level. For the social aspect, they lacked an understanding of Thai culture.

2) Every Chinese student is funded by family and had low economic status. Therefore they face a lot of nervousness

3) The atmosphere in the classrooms was not good because students did not understand Thai and the teacher didn't know Chinese, which resulted in boredom in communication. Chinese students were interested in studying with Thai students, but only some subjects were provided.

4) Educational goals of most Chinese students were to be self-employed, such as trading and therefore wanted to gain full knowledge but did not achieve the objectives because of language barriers.

5) The relationship between Chinese students and Suan Dusit Rajabhat University is not as good as they should be, although all parties agree that Chinese students are good-natured, respectful, assertive, courageous, asking about things they don't understand and were focused in their study. There were language



and cultural barriers including accommodation, travel, and library services. Although, most students had a good attitude towards teachers, their relationship was distant and not developed as it should have been.

5.2 Recommendation

Suggestions to meet the two research objectives: 1) to find ways to increase Chinese student enrollment at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University; and 2) to find ways to improve academic services provided for the Chinese students at Suan Dusit Rajabhat University. The researchers rely on the Tinto model which has been developed to be used as a conceptual framework for maintaining students. Tinto (1993) states that there are six important factors that result in students staying or leaving the university: (1) academic adaptation; (2) social adaptation; (3) economic status; (4) educational experience; (5) educational goals; and (6) commitment to that institution. The researcher suggested the guideline to improvement of educational services of the university to attract the attention of Chinese students and increasing the number of students coming to receive an education in the university by dissolving a total of 3 issues: (1) academic adaptation and educational experience; (2) social adaptation and building relationship with educational institutions; and (3) economic status, family society and student goals. The results of the study are summarized in the following three suggestions.

1. Promotion of educational experience and academic adaptation, the university should carry out the following matters:

- Development of new courses to suit Chinese students should be adapted to be "easy" but "intensive" and clear. Additional teaching in Thai language, English and Thai culture including extra-curricular activities to suit the special needs of some groups should be provided. Providing basic courses for foreigners, developing the standard knowledge of Thai language and Thai culture that Chinese students should be prepared before entering the study; the university should test knowledge and provide supplementary teaching for those who do not pass the test; the university should arrange for Chinese and Thai students to study together and do activities and develop courses together with Chinese universities.

- Development of advisors/instructors by adjusting the understanding of the policy to accept Chinese students of the university, training to prepare for teaching/counseling Chinese students to have more knowledge of the Chinese language, select professors who can use English to teach and choose only a teacher who has compassion, loves students, and possess a love of teaching. This should be evaluated and hold a seminar to exchange knowledge and experience on a regular basis.

- Improvement in teaching media services and facilities, including high-speed internet, teaching materials, textbooks, course-books, to be distribute to students, as well as providing training services for library use; and increasing Chinese books for borrowing from library.

- Providing a system to help Chinese students in academic fields, such as Thai friends to help Chinese friends in the form of mentors or trainers as well as other supplements of academic activities.

2. Promotion of social adaptation

- Arranging for Chinese students to live with Thai families, more field trips, knowledge on travel, housing, food, attractions place for tour, supporting festive activities between Thai-Chinese students and cultural exchanges, supporting Chinese festival activities, such as organizing a Chinese New Year exhibition, cut classes, have an appropriate event venue, and promote the arrangement "International Student Corner".

- Accommodation must be safe, convenient to travel and to study. Pick-up and drop-off transportation, long-distance telephone service, banks on every campus, first-year students should arrange for a study in Bangkok, arrangement for the sale of Chinese food in the university's restaurant and Chinese cooking rooms in dormitory, with international long-distance telephone service points special job placement services for students to work outside of school hours.

3. Public relations and promotion of economic status of Chinese student families

- Provide and publicize scholarships to support the education of Chinese students

- Organize activities for introducing courses such as exchange of observational study between Thai-Chinese students



- Inquire about the opinions of parents of Chinese students, possibly through the Internet system.
- Organize courses to have a variety of elective courses and have a famous teacher responsible.
- Prepare the details of the course to be published in Thai, Chinese and English, as well as examples of mixed media teaching by cooperating closely with Chinese universities that have already made MOU together while doing public relations and may expand more of the network. There should be an evaluation of the results of the MOU every year and bring the results to make improved.

These three suggestions are mostly consistent with Tinto's six principles of student preservation.

4. Suggestions for further research

From the research results, it was found that there are important points that should be further researched as follows: 1) research and evaluation of MOU with universities in the People's Republic of China; 2) study guidelines for expanding cooperation with universities in the People's Republic of China; 3) send more Thai students to study in the People's Republic of China from the MOU that has already been done; and 4) guidelines for the development of teachers to conduct classroom research in teaching Chinese students.

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