

University Image Affecting Establishments' Decision Making for Selection of Cooperative Education Students

Assist. Prof. Saifon Bucha¹, Warisara Sukumolchan²
Montchatry Ketmuni³, Wannaya Chaloeypach⁴

^{1,2,3,4} Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi, Thailand,

¹ saifon_b@rmutt.ac.th, ² warisara_s@rmutt.ac.th, ³ montchatry@rmutt.ac.th

⁴ wannaya_c@rmutt.ac.th

Abstract

This research was funded by the Faculty of Liberal Arts, Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT). The objectives of this survey research were 1) to study student image affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students, and 2) to study factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students. The university image was based on the Faculty of Liberal Arts, and the data were collected from 84 establishments participating in cooperative education of the Faculty of Liberal Arts by using a questionnaire ($\alpha = 0.95$) and were analyzed by frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, and multiple regression. The research results revealed that the level of student image affecting the establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students was at a highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.36$, S.D. = 0.64). The factors affecting the establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students indicated that the factors of reputation ($\bar{x} = 4.20$, S.D. = 0.57) and public relations ($\bar{x} = 3.97$, S.D. = 0.83) were at a high level; moreover, the factors of curriculum ($\bar{x} = 4.30$, S.D. = 0.58), activities ($\bar{x} = 4.24$, S.D. = 0.63), and location and environment ($\bar{x} = 4.22$, S.D. = 0.69) were at a highest level. The level of establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students was high ($\bar{x} = 3.57$, S.D. = 0.61). The results from multiple regression analysis for predictive power showed that the factors of university image affecting the establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students were activities, and location and environment at .05 statistically significant level. The predictive model was: $Y_{(Decision)} = 0.104 + 0.305_{(Activities)} + 0.474_{(Location)}$.

Keywords— University Image, Cooperative Education, Decision-Making, Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

Cooperative Education is an educational system with real-life work experience with the cooperation of the educational institutes and establishments in order to let cooperative education students make use of their education in the workplaces. According to the work-based learning concept, cooperative education students are required to do a cooperative education project to improve work, increase efficiency, or solve a problem at work. During the 4 months of cooperative education, the cooperative education students will gain work

experience and then improve themselves to meet the establishment's needs. [1] To do these, the cooperative education students will work at the establishments as temporary employees. They will broaden their work experience that cannot be taught in the classroom. Not only do they have work experience, but also they can improve their skills of critical thinking, decision making, evaluation, etc. as well as they can find themselves and the direction of their future career. At the end of the semester, they have to present their reports based on their real work experience reflecting the integration between

theory and practice. On account of work-based learning, they are qualified and meet the needs of the labor market. Moreover, cooperative education promotes the close collaboration between the universities and establishments. Faculty of Liberal Arts, RMUTT as a part of educational institutes produces work-ready graduates by letting RMUTT cooperative students work as full-time employees. Multidisciplinary approach is integrated with teaching and learning to pursue academic excellence with research and curriculum development. In addition, the Faculty instructors are required for self-improvement supported by the Faculty of Liberal Arts, especially, opportunities to go abroad. Technology and modern information systems are applied for administration and management at the faculty level to cope with the changing world in order to create new knowledge and produce capable graduates of tourism, hospitality, and English for communication. Cooperative education is a part of the Faculty of Liberal Arts to prepare students in terms of career development, working experience, and self-development; to collaborate with public and private sectors for student potential development and curriculum development; and to build a good relationship with establishments. So, the university image plays an important part leading to acceptance of establishments that can increase the graduates' chance of employment. Students should improve their image to meet the establishments' needs because a good image is very important for every organization to increase competitiveness by attracting customers as well as investors and business partners. For example, some companies are concerned with the environment, innovations, or education that make the companies recognized. A good image also leads to credibility and opportunities of getting good cooperation from many sectors [2]. Researchers as a part of the institute, an instructor, an advisor, and a cooperative education advisor realized the importance of the university image in various aspects, such as student image, reputation, and so on that affected the establishment's decision making

for selection of cooperative education students to work in their workplace. The results would be used as guidelines for future development based on the needs of the establishments, and used for improving student quality toward excellence of the university in Thailand.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this survey research were 1) to study student image affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students, and 2) to study factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students of Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi (RMUTT), Thailand.

RESEACH METHODS

Research Design

The university image was based on the Faculty of Liberal Arts, and the data were collected from 84 establishments participating in cooperative education of the Faculty of Liberal Arts during the 2nd semester in academic year 2020. The research instrument of this survey research was a questionnaire approved by 3 experts and the content validity of the questionnaire assessed by using Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was 0.67 - 1.00. The questionnaire was improved and then tried out to find the reliability by using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient ($\alpha = 0.95$). The collected data were analyzed by frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Regression with Enter method.

Research Process

This research was divided into 5 steps as shown in Fig. 1. The research process consisted of 1) identifying the research topic by defining the research problems or issues, setting the research questions, and reviewing the related literature about university image; 2) creating the research design by designing and trying out a questionnaire; 3) collecting the data by distributing the questionnaire; 4) analyzing the data and summarizing the results; and 5)

presenting the results with discussions and conclusions.

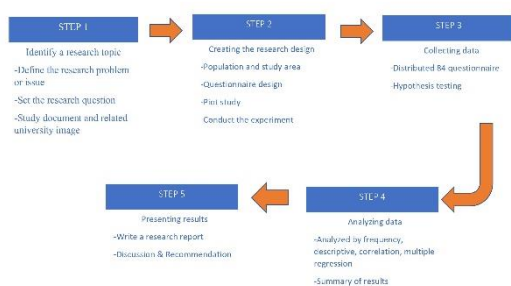


Fig. 1 Research Process

RESULTS

The research findings were divided into 5 sections:

1) the demographic information; 2) the university image; 3) factors affecting establishment's decision making; 4) the correlation between the student image and establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students; and 5) the data analysis from Multiple Regression with Enter method between the student image and factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students.

1. The demographic information: there were 60 females (71.43%) and 24 males (28.57%). Most respondents aged between 25-34 years old (50.00%), and most respondents were from the private sector ($n=44$, 52.38%). Most respondents had a bachelor degree ($n=64$, 76.19%), and the information exposure about the Faculty of Liberal Arts of most respondents were from the RMUTT website ($n=63$, 75.00%).

2. The student image of the Faculty of Liberal Arts: overall opinions of the establishments toward the cooperative education students were at the highest level ($\bar{x}=4.36$, S.D. =0.64). When considering each aspect of the student image, the opinions of the establishments were at the highest level in all aspects. The results could be presented in order as follows: the students always volunteered ($\bar{x}=4.50$); the students strictly adhered to their professional ethics ($\bar{x}=4.48$); the students had a pleasant personality with trustworthiness, reliability, honesty, and

good discipline ($\bar{x}=4.45$) following by the quality of graduates ($\bar{x}=4.42$); willingness and enthusiasm to work and provide services ($\bar{x}=4.38$); ability in job analysis, giving good advice, calm, and not expressing irritability when asked ($\bar{x}=4.32$); being a good role model ($\bar{x}=4.32$); being keen on using professional equipment ($\bar{x}=4.30$); giving professional advice to colleagues ($\bar{x}=4.30$); contributing to the enhancement of the university's reputation by participating national activities ($\bar{x}=4.30$); working actively with no mistakes ($\bar{x}=4.27$) including professionalism and keeping the clean and tidy working environment ($\bar{x}=4.21$).

3. Factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students could be divided into 5 parts: reputation, curriculum, activities, public relations, and location and environment.

3.1 Regarding the factors of reputation, the overall university image based on the Faculty of Liberal Arts was at the highest level ($\bar{x}=4.20$). When considering each aspect of the factors of reputation, the research results revealed that the specialization of the Faculty of Liberal Arts was at a high level ($\bar{x}=4.26$) following by providing professional services ($\bar{x}=4.25$); knowledge of using professional equipment ($\bar{x}=4.21$); providing clean and modern professional equipment ($\bar{x}=4.20$); providing the professional equipment with international standard ($\bar{x}=4.14$); and providing the specialized equipment and technology ($\bar{x}=4.14$).

3.2 Overall factors of curriculum in the Faculty of Liberal Arts were at the highest level ($\bar{x}=4.30$). Each factor of curriculum could be ordered as follows: hands-on students ($\bar{x}=4.37$), the qualification of instructors ($\bar{x}=4.36$); learning and teaching activities to foster students' creativity ($\bar{x}=4.35$); the abilities of instructors to impart knowledge and experience to students ($\bar{x}=4.35$); students' satisfaction toward teaching quality ($\bar{x}=4.33$); learner-centered learning ($\bar{x}=4.33$); adhering the professional ethics of the instructors ($\bar{x}=4.32$); the ability of instructors to cope with changing world and technologies ($\bar{x}=4.32$); the students' satisfaction toward learning resources provided

($\bar{x} = 4.32$); the teaching activities to support students' autonomous learning ($\bar{x} = 4.32$); clear and fair assessment and evaluation system ($\bar{x} = 4.30$); providing curriculum consistent with the needs of establishments ($\bar{x} = 4.29$); modern library system, computers, and information center adequately provided ($\bar{x} = 4.29$); the availability of RMUTT' teaching and learning materials ($\bar{x} = 4.29$); providing standard curriculum ($\bar{x} = 4.26$); the instructors holding academic rank ($\bar{x} = 4.26$); the instructors holding doctoral degree ($\bar{x} = 4.24$); and the number of students assigned per an advisor ($\bar{x} = 4.17$).

3.3 Overall factors of activities provided were also at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.24$). The results of each factor could be shown as follows: the activities for morality, ethics, and maintaining national values, custom, tradition, arts, culture, and identity ($\bar{x} = 4.32$); the activities to enhance the students' tradition and art experiences ($\bar{x} = 4.27$); the activities to motivate students' creativity ($\bar{x} = 4.25$); the activities to enhance the students' academic experiences ($\bar{x} = 4.24$); the activities for the students' mental and physical development including sport skills ($\bar{x} = 4.19$); and the activities for volunteering ($\bar{x} = 4.18$).

3.4 Overall factors of public relations were at a high level ($\bar{x} = 3.97$). Each factor could be considered as follows: clear information ($\bar{x} = 4.15$); widely spreading information ($\bar{x} = 4.10$); information services ($\bar{x} = 4.08$); up-to-date information ($\bar{x} = 4.07$); providing the information on the website ($\bar{x} = 4.07$); having a good media image ($\bar{x} = 4.06$); providing information on posters ($\bar{x} = 3.99$); providing information through newsletters ($\bar{x} = 3.99$); the Faculty of Liberal Arts in the media regularly ($\bar{x} = 3.99$); public relations about the Faculty of Liberal Arts in journals ($\bar{x} = 3.94$); public relations about the Faculty of Liberal Arts on TVs ($\bar{x} = 3.93$); public relations about the Faculty of Liberal Arts in magazines ($\bar{x} = 3.83$); public relations about the Faculty of Liberal Arts on electronic sign boards ($\bar{x} = 3.89$); public relations about the Faculty of Liberal Arts in newspapers ($\bar{x} = 3.79$); and public relations

about the Faculty of Liberal Arts in the radio broadcast ($\bar{x} = 3.76$).

3.5 Overall factors of location and environment of the Faculty of Liberal Arts were at the highest level ($\bar{x} = 4.24$). The analysis of each factor was shown as follows: ease of contact ($\bar{x} = 4.32$); suitable location ($\bar{x} = 4.25$); easily accessible by many routes of public buses ($\bar{x} = 4.20$); direction signs ($\bar{x} = 4.20$); adequate parking and security guards ($\bar{x} = 4.15$); beautiful interior decoration ($\bar{x} = 4.15$); spaciousness ($\bar{x} = 4.15$).

4. The correlation between the university image and establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students was positively correlated at the statistically significant difference of .05. The data were analyzed as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1 the correlation between the student image and establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students

Factors	Student Image	Reputation	Curriculum	Activities	Public Relations	Location and Environment	Decision making
Student Image	1						
Reputation	.451**	1					
Curriculum	.572**	.755**	1				
Activities	.533**	.615**	.849**	1			
Public Relations	.365**	.475**	.501**	.486**	1		
Location and Environment	.434**	.534**	.665**	.621**	.723**	1	
Decision making	.572**	.553**	.665**	.669**	.405**	.655**	1

As can be seen in Table 1 above, there were six factors at a moderate correlation: the student image ($r = 0.522$), reputation ($r = 0.553$), location and environment ($r = 0.655$), curriculum ($r = 0.665$), and activities ($r = 0.669$); however, the factor of public relations was at a low correlation ($r = 0.405$).

5. The data analysis from Multiple Regression with Enter method between the student image and factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students showed the statistical significance at the level of .05 ($F = 18.585$, $p < .05$) as shown in Table 2. The predictive power was 59.20 ($R = 0.769$, $R^2 = 0.592$). The analysis also provided the regression coefficients of factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students, namely, activities ($\beta = .305$); and location and environment ($\beta = .000$) that were at the statistically significant difference of .05. In addition, the predictive equation could be

formulated as $Y_{\text{Decision}} = 0.104 + 0.305_{\text{Activities}} + 0.474_{\text{Location}}$

Table 2 The data analysis from Multiple Regression with Enter method between the student image and factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students

University image	establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students				
	B	S.E.	β	t	P
(Constant)	.104	.441		.235	.815
Student Image	.203	.106	.172	1.913	.059
Reputation	.167	.133	.143	1.257	.213
Curriculum	-.012	.221	-.009	-.053	.958
Activities	.318	.146	.305	2.169	.033**
Public Relations	-.167	.085	-.212	-1.971	.052
Location and Environment	.444	.115	.474	3.860	.000**

R = 0.769 R² = 0.592, Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.376 F = 18.585, P = 0.000

DISCUSSIONS

1. The student image affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students

The result was found that the establishments' opinions toward overall student image were at the highest level, and the factor of volunteering were at the highest level among other factors. This is because the establishments realize the importance of volunteering that leads to a good society. [3] studied seven desirable characteristics of cooperative students: 1) virtue and ethics ; 2)knowledge; 3) intelligence skills; 4) personal relation skills and responsibility; 5) Logic analysis, communication and technology application; 6) personality; and 7) human relations. Overall results were at a high level and these characteristics were applied to develop cooperative students effectively before working.

2. Factors affecting establishment's decision making for selection of cooperative education students could be divided into 5 parts: reputation, curriculum, activities, public relations, and location and environment.

2.1 The factors of reputation were at a high level; and when considering each aspect, it found that the most important factor was specialization of the Faculty of Liberal Arts. As Boulding [4] stated, the desirable characteristics of the organization were the corporate identity based on 'Good Corporate Citizen', for example, image of business owners' knowledge and moral; business stability and growth; technological advancement including

employees' working efficiency and human relations; social responsibilities. Harrison [5] also said that reputation was the perception of reliability, quality, and production and service standards. Reputation was the important factor that made the organizations successful, and it could represent corporate identity, standing out organization, physical indicator as well as values and ethics of the organizations. Leblanc and Nguyen [5] said that corporate identity was related to image of the organization in terms of reputation, logo, price, services, and advertisements that could be used for benchmarking. Organizational image was from the customers' impression that the quality of services was assessed until it got famous, and reliable from customers. Also, it was involved with internal management, leadership, personality, atmosphere, and services by customer requirements.

2.2 The factors of curriculum were at the highest level both overall and in each aspect. This was consistent with the research of [6] that showed the image of Burapha University at a good level that the lecturers had the ability to transfer knowledge and experience; and Burapha University had regular activities with the community and was an educational institution with a proud community. These results were compared by gender, program studies, domicile province and faculty of interest in Burapha University, and no difference was found.

2.3 The factors of activities were at the highest level that was consistent with [6] study that Burapha University had regular activities with the community and was an educational institution with a proud community.

2.4 The factors of public relations were at a high level. However, the research results showed that the public relations in the radio broadcast had the lowest average. This could be a guideline for future development because the radio is still an active medium, covers many areas, and is able to create immediacy with high psychological effects because voice and tone stimulates the listeners' imagination. Compared to other media, radio advertising is inexpensive, so it can increase frequency and broaden

customer reach. Radio advertising is flexible because it can target specific demographic and market segments; and even illiterates can get the message. Leblanc and Nguyen [5] referred to service offering that there should be primary service and supplement service to support customers without waiting for a long time that could affect the negative image.

2.5 The factors of location and environment were at the highest level. Leblanc and Nguyen [5] mentioned that physical environment was the image that customers could perceive, and motivate employees to provide excellent services and to establish interpersonal communication. The nature of customers has to be perceived and services should be provided by individual customer requirements. Interpersonal communication is established by behaviors and attitudes that indicate the quality of services and motivate customer satisfaction.

3. The guidelines for the students image improvement to meet the establishments' needs

3.1 Teaching and learning for academic and professional skills should be improved by encouragement and development of instructors and collaboration with the establishments to develop the quality of graduate students.

3.2 Teaching process and environmental management for each curriculum should be studied and developed in order to support the needs of the labor market.

3.3 Public relations for the student image should be done via a variety of media both online and offline.

3.4 The student preparation should cover English communication skills, social etiquette, teamwork skills, and self-confidence. The previous research of [7] about entrepreneurs' attitude toward English proficiency of the RMUTT interns found that the English language skills were at a moderate level and it was suggested that the students should practice using all four English skills with confidence.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for Practices

1. Students should get ready for work with a good personality and positive attitudes.

2. Students should be eager to learn new things and have English language competence as well as Thai language in order to effectively carry out the tasks.
3. Students should be dedicated, hardworking, and volunteering in order to find the best direction for their future career.
4. The Faculty might provide students with

The experience in the foreign country to study the native speaker's culture and increase the students' communication skills with self-confidence.

Recommendations for Further Research

The research might be conducted by interview to get more understanding of the needs of the establishments as well as the students' problems in the workplace in order to find the right tools to prepare and support the students with the real-world working skills.

CONCLUSION

According to the research results, the establishments' attitudes toward RMUTT image were recognized at a high level with student image, reputation, location and environment, curriculum, and public relations. The universities produce the potential graduates to the establishments, so the reflections from them are the best tool in higher education to use as a guideline to produce the graduates based on the needs of the establishments.

REFERENCES

1. The Center for Cooperative Education and Career Development, Suranaree University of Technology, "Principle and Reason", Retrieved On 12 April, 2021, from <http://coop.sut.ac.th/index.php?sec=rational>
2. "The importance of creating a corporate image," Retrieved on 12 April, 2021, from <https://bantumweb.com/v2>
3. B. Piphop, S. Buaban, & B. Teksanguan, "The Desirable of Characteristic of Cooperative Student for Cooperative Ordination Enterprise",

- Journal of Industrial Education, Vol.10, No.1,pp.74-85, 2016.
4. S. Patsa, "Foreigner's Image of Thai Airways International Public Company Limited", Master's dissertation, Thammasat University, Thailand, 2015.
 5. P. Boonklang, "The Effect of Corporate Image on Customer Loyalty: Case of Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Cooperatives in Dankhunthot District, Nakhornratchasima Province", Master's dissertation, Rajamangala University of Technology Isan, Thailand, 2017.
 6. T. Muangklai, "Image of Burapha University from Grade Twelfth School Students Piboonbumpen Demonstration School", Master's dissertation, Burapha university, Thailand, 2013.
 7. M. Ketmuni, & P. Sawatyothin, "Entrepreneurs' Attitude toward English Proficiency of Interns of Rajamangala University of Technology Thanyaburi", *Psychology and Education Journal*, Vol.58, No.1, pp.1478-1483, 2021.
doi: <https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v58i1.932>