

GUIDELINE FOR PROACTIVE CURRICULUM PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE DIGITAL AGE TO MULTIPLY THE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN THE BACHELOR OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM IN INNOVATION SPORT MANAGEMENT (DISTANCE EDUCATION)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research were to study 1) guideline for proactive curriculum public relations in the digital age and 2) factors influencing the decision to study the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education) is a mixed research. This research was conducted using qualitative research and quantitative research methods. Key informants are Administrators of the College of Innovation and Management, 2 people. Digital marketing expert, 1 people from a specific selection method and students of the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education), 50 people using by interview and questionnaires methods. The data were analyzed using by content analysis and the determination of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The research results revealed that 1) guidelines for public relations for the curriculum in the digital age were: 1.1) marketing public relations should be divided into 2 parts: proactive and commercial. 1.2) public relations model should focus on creating engagement in terms of creating content that meets the needs of the target audience and focusing on the use of technology in online more. 2) factors relating to channels for receiving various news and information that influence the decision to study the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education), including university image factors, curriculum factors and the channel factors for receiving various information overall were at a highest level in all aspect.

Keywords: Proactive Public Relations, Student Decision-Making, Digital Age

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, educational institutions are diversified. Therefore, there is a high degree of competition in the education market in both public and private institutions to increase the number of students. Because it is in an age of great change. This is caused by digital technology, which has played a role in nearly 100% of the activities. Modern transformation leads to different ideas about people's life behavior, work, and study. People began to have reasons to choose goods and services that meet their individual needs. (Pahasing, B.,Girdwichai, P., Kulwanich, A. & Siriyanun, S.,2022) Including the decision to study further has changed as well. However, people tend to turn to short-term courses and emphasize the development of specialized skills instead of

studying in long-term courses, probably because of technology. This may be because technology is increasingly playing a role in education management. The case study platform 4.0 integrates information and communication technologies. It is applied to the teaching development of interactive learning, which enables learners to control learning and create self-knowledge. For example, Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) is an online teaching system for the public. Students can study anywhere anytime. Therefore, Distance Learning and online learning have become new choices for those who want to increase their knowledge. Self-education can be well carried out outside the campus wall in normal times, forming a new type of Thai education (New normal of education). When learners have more opportunities and educational options, every institution is trying to develop strategies to increase the number of students. There are many strategies to motivate and establish identity. To increase the number of students who are considered important customers. Many institutions focus on advertising and marketing. By using advertisement media and public relations that are suitable for the target groups of each institution. These two types of media have expectations of the target audience. Advertising media is a kind of media aimed at influencing the thoughts of the target audience. According to the public relations media that aims to create a good identity for the institution, make the decision of choosing to study, and let the target group remember and recognize the importance of institutions.

Therefore, the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education), College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University has conducted teaching and learning in the online format.

For this reason, the researcher aims to examine 1) guidelines for proactive curriculum public relations in the digital age and 2) factors influencing the decision to study the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education). In this regard, there will be information as a guide for promoting courses through social media in the digital age to increase the number of students in the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education).

Research Objective

This Research aims to examine the relationships between proactive public relations and student decision-making applying to the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education). the following research objective included.

1. Guideline for proactive curriculum public relations in the digitalization age.
2. Factors influencing the decision to study the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education).

Research Framework

Population Framework

The target population for this research is the student and academic staff related to the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education) at a college of innovation and management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Location Framework

College of Innovation and Management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Sindhushree (2021) the major aim of advertising is to impact student decision-making. However, this impact on the academic program is changed or strengthened frequently through applying for academic programs while a poor-quality advertisement will do the opposite. Si & Kapoor (2014) states that advertisements are sometimes spoken of as the nervous system of the business world. As our nervous system is constructed to give us all the possible sensations from objects, so the advertisement which is comparable to the nervous system must awaken in the reader as many kinds of images as the object itself can excite. So,

advertisement helps organizations to create awareness in their target customers and shape the perception of the customers either positively or negatively. students can perceive the quality of the academic programs by gathering the information which they usually get through advertisements. Such perception of the quality, awareness of the product, and consumer opinion drive student decision-making.

Student decision-making

Understanding a student's decision-making process plays an important role in academic programs' advertisements strategy which brings influenced factors to achieve the goal of the academic program. Generally, a decision is a choice that one makes after a student compares the choice with criteria such as curriculum, price, opportunities, etc. The student decision-making process becomes a strategy used by academic programs to identify and track the student decision-making process of students' journey from start to finish. Millwood (2021) informs that the student decision-making process is the process by which students become aware and identify the students' needs; collecting information is the best way to solve students' needs; evaluate alternative available options; and make a student's decision-making.

In higher education institutes, student decision-making refers to a student who chooses one of the higher education programs from the alternative recommended by higher education programs on social media and public relations advertisements. Kim and Gasman (2011) stated that the students considered their social networks, especially family and peers, to be most important for deciding on applying and attending during their program's choosing process. Also, it is reported that high school guidance counselors and external sources of information provided by various media outlets are relied upon by the students. Review research conducted by Hussin et al., (2019) to get an overview of the factors that encourage students to choose certain courses in higher education programs in Malaysia. The findings concluded that future career, passion, parental influence, and peer influence are the determinant factors in selecting academic programs for higher studies students. The concept of the student decision-making process has 6 components which need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, university image, program identity, and proactive public relations. (Moogan & Baron, 2003), (Leach & Zepke 2005), (Germeijs et al., 2012).

1. Need recognition refers to the phenomenon that occurs when a student becomes aware of a disparity between their actual circumstances and those, they consider ideal or desirable. Before students can begin looking for an academic program, they must first acknowledge that they have a problem, to begin with. A need is a specific requirement that must be fulfilled to maintain one's current state of existence or to participate in social life.

2. Information Search refers to the stage of a student's decision-making process in which the student is aroused to search for more information; the student may simply have heightened attention or may go into an active information search. The prospectus is a crucial starting point for many students and where a prospectus seemed colorful and interesting, there was an increased chance of a pupil picking it up to read.

3. Evaluation of alternatives refers to the stage of the student decision-making process in which the student uses the information to evaluate alternative academic programs in the choice set. This incorporates students assessing the different academic programs' characteristics and through visiting them and learning about their environment's procedures better decisions.

4. University Image refers to the sum of all the beliefs an individual has towards the university emphasizing the need for organizations to have a visual identity, as a way to protect their self-image. Elements like its name, logo, tagline, color palette, facilities, former students, course offer, academic reputation, and university's public behavior, are some of the elements that contribute to university image representation. (Wilkin & Huisman, 2015)

5. Program Identity refers to having a distinctive identity of the academic program, visible, tangible, and memorable, which makes the target students know about the academic program. The essence of the academic program builds a student's memory of the programs such

as professor, teaching style, academic service, and teaching activity including all program characteristics so that the target student can be remembered and separated clearly from other academic programs.

6. Proactive Public Relations refers to the process of communicating, clarifying, providing information, and generating immediate access to the target audience, focusing on innovating new ways to create a relationship and a good attitude from the public and can be recognized accurately and quickly in order to effectively respond to the target group.

Conceptual framework

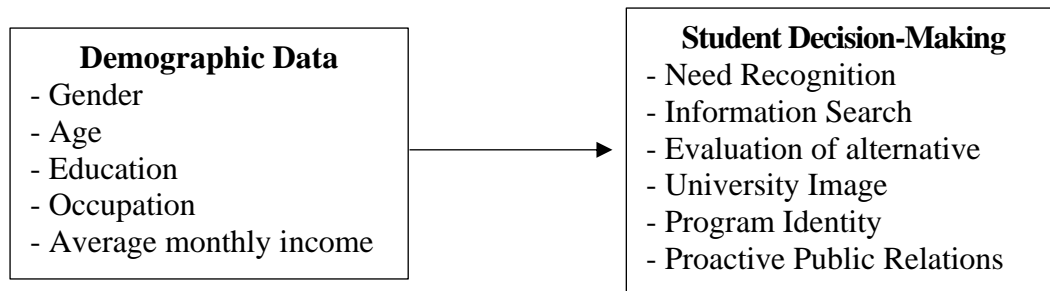


Figure 1: The conceptual framework of guideline for proactive curriculum public relations in the digital age to multiply the number of students in the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This study is mixed research using qualitative research and quantitative research methods.

Population and sampling

The target population for this research is the student and academic staff who are related to the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education) at a college of innovation and management, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

Qualitative Sampling Methods

The Sample was chosen from the students and academic staff who have 3 - 5 years of proactive public relations experience. The number of samples was 3 units.

Quantitative Sampling Methods

The sample was picked up by random sampling technique from the students and academic staff who related to the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education). The researcher used the number of samples as 50 units.

Data collection

Research tools used to collect is a generated questionnaire in accordance with the definition of the operation according to the characteristics to be measured. The researcher tested the validity and reliability of the questionnaire to obtain accurate research results and achieve the stated objectives. In this regard, the researcher provided 30 preliminary pre-test and the results of the confidence check revealed that the confidence values of each question and the total confidence values are between 0.7-1.00. In addition, the questionnaire generated has passed the content review by the advisor. Therefore, it was concluded that the questionnaires could be used to collect data.

Data analysis

Statistics used in data analysis to answer the objectives of this research are Content analysis for analyzing the key message which is related to the research objective. and also,

descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe the demographic characteristics of the sample, the statistics used were frequency and percentage, mean, and standard deviation. Then using the difference obtained to determine the criteria for measuring the opinion level as follows:

- 4.21-5.00 indicates an extremely high level
- 3.41-4.20 indicates a high level
- 2.61-3.40 indicates a moderate level
- 1.81-2.60 indicates a low level
- 1.00-1.80 indicates an extremely low level

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

Descriptive Analysis

Most respondents were male (86%), 20 - 29 years of age (42%), undergraduate (92%), students (30%), and gained monthly income of approximately 10,001 – 20,000 baht per month (40%).

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation of Student Decision-Making Rating Scale in General

(N = 50)

Student decision-making	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
Need Recognition	4.23	0.67	Extremely High	5
Information Search	4.32	0.56	Extremely High	4
Evaluation of Alternative	4.39	0.60	Extremely High	3
University Image	4.21	0.61	Extremely High	6
Programs Identity	4.64	0.51	Extremely High	1
Proactive Public Relations	4.51	0.52	Extremely High	2
Total	4.38	0.60	Extremely High	-

As shown in table 1, a mean and standard deviation of opinions' level towards student decision-making overall was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.38$, $\sigma = 0.60$). Considering each aspect separately, it was found that the aspect with the highest mean was program identity ($\mu = 4.64$, $\sigma = 0.51$), followed by proactive public relations ($\mu = 4.51$, $\sigma = 0.52$). next, evaluation of alternative ($\mu = 4.39$, $\sigma = 0.60$). then Information search ($\mu = 4.32$, $\sigma = 0.56$) after that was need recognition ($\mu = 4.23$, $\sigma = 0.67$) and the lowest was University image ($\mu = 4.21$, $\sigma = 0.61$).

Table 2: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level towards Need Recognition

(N = 50)

Student decision-making Need Recognition	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
The program gives you a better job.	4.40	0.53	Extremely High	3
The program gives you reasonable knowledge.	4.60	0.49	Extremely High	1
The program gives you an opportunity for a future career.	3.78	0.68	High	5
The program gives you credibility.	4.50	0.54	Extremely High	2
The program gives you an academically recognized.	3.86	0.64	High	4
Total	4.23	0.67	Extremely High	-

Table 2 showed that the mean and standard deviation of the opinion level towards need recognition in Student decision-making was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.23$, $\sigma = 0.67$).

When considering each aspect, it was found that the aspect with the highest mean was the program that gives reasonable knowledge ($\mu = 4.60, \sigma = 0.49$), followed by the program that gives credibility ($\mu = 4.50, \sigma = 0.54$). The aspect with the lowest mean was the program gives an opportunity for a future career ($\mu = 3.78, \sigma = 0.68$).

Table 3: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level toward Information Search

(N = 50)

Student decision-making Information Search	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
You searched for information about the program from family members, relatives, friends, and acquaintances.	4.12	0.52	High	4
You searched for information about the program on the University website.	4.32	0.51	Extremely High	2
You searched for information about the program on a social media platform.	4.58	0.50	Extremely High	1
You searched for information about the program from guidance activities.	4.24	0.62	Extremely High	3
Total	4.32	0.56	Extremely High	-

Table 3 showed that the mean and standard deviation of the opinions' level toward student decision-making in terms of information search was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.32, \sigma = 0.56$). Considering each aspect separately, the search for information about the program from a social media platform received the highest mean ($\mu = 4.58, \sigma = 0.50$), followed by a search for information about the program on the University website ($\mu = 4.32, \sigma = 0.51$). the lowest mean score was searching for information about the program from family members, relatives, friends, and acquaintances ($\mu = 4.12, \sigma = 0.52$).

Table 4: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level towards Evaluation of Alternative

(N = 50)

Student decision-making Evaluation of Alternative	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
You pay attention to the name of the degree and the course programs for further study at the undergraduate level.	4.38	0.60	Extremely High	3
You pay attention to teachers in courses for further study at the undergraduate level.	4.70	0.46	Extremely High	1
You pay attention to teaching style for further study at the undergraduate level.	4.54	0.50	Extremely High	2
You are interested in the cost-effectiveness of pursuing a bachelor's degree.	4.10	0.61	High	5
You are interested in the value of the opportunity to obtain a bachelor's degree.	4.38	0.60	Extremely High	3
You are interested in having famous people studying for undergraduate studies.	4.24	0.62	Extremely High	4
Total	4.39	0.60	Extremely High	-

As shown in Table 4, the mean and standard deviation of the opinions' level towards the evaluation of alternative was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.39, \sigma = 0.60$). The findings were found that the aspect with the highest mean was paying attention to teachers in courses for further study at the undergraduate level ($\mu = 4.70, \sigma = 0.46$), followed by paying attention to teaching style for further study at the undergraduate level ($\mu = 4.54, \sigma = 0.50$), while the aspect with the lowest average interested in the cost-effectiveness of pursuing a bachelor's degree ($\mu = 4.10, \sigma = 0.61$).

Table 5: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level toward University Image

(N = 50)

Student decision-making University Image	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
You apply to study in the program because it is a curriculum of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.	4.56	0.50	Extremely High	1
You apply to study in the program because educational institutions have complete learning support facilities.	4.40	0.49	Extremely High	2
You apply to study in the program Because educational institutions have high-quality professors.	4.22	0.55	Extremely High	3
You apply to study in the program because educational institutions have appropriate student development activities.	4.00	0.61	High	4
You apply to study in the program because educational institutions have a suitable environment.	3.86	0.64	High	5
Total	4.21	0.61	Extremely High	-

As shown in Table 5, the mean and standard deviation of the opinions level towards the University Image was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.21$, $\sigma = 0.61$). The findings were found that the aspect with the highest mean was applying to study in the program because it is a curriculum of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. ($\mu = 4.56$, $\sigma = 0.50$), followed by applying to study in the program because educational institutions have complete learning support facilities ($\mu = 4.40$, $\sigma = 0.49$), while the aspect with the lowest average was applying to study in the program because educational institutions have a suitable environment ($\mu = 3.86$, $\sigma = 0.64$).

Table 6: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level toward Program Identity

(N = 50)

Student decision-making Program Identity	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
The program is a different curriculum.	4.82	0.39	Extremely High	1
The program has a different teaching method.	4.64	0.48	Extremely High	3
The program has a different teaching style.	4.82	0.39	Extremely High	2
The program has different in-depth knowledge transfers.	4.38	0.60	Extremely High	5
The program has different teaching and learning support activities	4.52	0.50	Extremely High	4
Total	4.64	0.51	Extremely High	-

Table 6 showed that the mean and standard deviation of opinions' level towards the program identity in student decision-making was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.64$, $\sigma = 0.51$). Considering each aspect separately, the program is a different curriculum received the highest mean at ($\mu = 4.82$, $\sigma = 0.39$), followed by the program has a different teaching style ($\mu = 4.82$, $\sigma = 0.39$). The lowest mean score was the program has different in-dept knowledge transfer ($\mu = 4.38$, $\sigma = 0.60$).

Table 7: Mean and Standard of the Opinions' Level towards Proactive Public Relations

(N = 50)

Student decision-making Proactive Public Relations	μ	σ	Opinions' level	Ranking
The program has various public Relations channels.	4.52	0.50	Extremely High	3
The program has publicity that meets the target group.	4.34	0.48	Extremely High	5
The program has an appropriate public relations period.	4.24	0.56	Extremely High	4
Advertise media the program has the necessary content, accuracy, and completeness.	4.82	0.39	Extremely High	1
Advertising media the program must be current and up-to-date	4.64	0.48	Extremely High	2
Total	4.51	0.52	Extremely High	-

Table 7 showed that the mean and standard deviation of the opinions' level towards the proactive public Relations was at an extremely high level ($\mu = 4.51$, $\sigma = 0.52$). The findings were found that the aspect with the highest mean was advertised media about the program has the necessary content, accuracy, and completeness. ($\mu = 4.82$, $\sigma = 0.39$), followed by advertising media about the program must be current and up-to-date ($\mu = 4.64$, $\sigma = 0.48$), while the aspect with the lowest average was the program has an appropriate public relations period ($\mu = 4.24$, $\sigma = 0.56$).

CONCLUSION

This research found that the factor which affected student decision-making was at an extremely high level, followed by programs identity, proactive public relations. next, evaluation of alternative. Then information search, need recognition and the lowest opinion's level was university image. This research also the first step that applied the highest-level factor for successful proactive curriculum public relations in the digital age to multiply the number of students in the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education).

DISCUSSION

Nowadays, educational institutions are diversified. Therefore, there is a high degree of competition in the education market in both public and private institutions to increase the number of students educational institutions focus on the factor that influences student decision-making. This research found that the factor which affected student decision-making was at an extremely high level followed by programs identity, proactive public relations, evaluation alternative, information search, need recognition and university image respectively. the three most influential factors on students' decision-making are the program identity, proactive public relations, and alternative evaluation variables. when considering each aspect separately, all when considering each aspect separately, all student decision-making was summarized in descending order as follows:

1. Program identity: Program identity refers to the having a distinctive identity of the programs, something that is visible, tangible, and memorable, which makes the target know who the programs are the essence of the organization and builds a consumer's memory of the

organization. The key factor in the program identity aspect is the difference in curriculum, teaching style, and teaching methods compared to the other programs in sport management fields which are related to the expert's recommendation that the clear program characteristic and program key memorable is the main point to influence the students to apply for higher education. Freed & Wong (2019) and Ivy (2001) support that program identity is the main reason to support the student decision making same as Chaokongjak & Bangthamai (2020) show that the positive and memorable programs characteristics can improved the student application levels to reach the goal.

2. Proactive public relation: Proactive public relations refers to the dissemination of information about programs using the defense type of distribution channels such as online media or on-site media to present programs information that can reach the target group of students. The results for proactive public relations from this research showed that advertising media and distribution channels play an important role in increasing the student's decision-making process. The accuracy, completeness, and up-to-date information in advertisement media is the focal point for the public relation staff to pay attention to the information and the variety of distribution channels can be reaching a wide range of target students. The expert recommends that comfortable and simple advertisement media is the key point for reaching the student because there are many advertisements media pass through the students, attractive and understandable media will be the advantage to hook up the students that related to Chaokongjak & Bangthamai (2020) result which shown that the main proactive public relations is to carry out the programs information to the students with alternative social media platform and difference kind of media.

3. Evaluation of alternative: Evaluation of alternatives can be referred to the stage of the student decision-making process in which the students use the information to evaluate alternative programs in the choice set. The research shows that the academic staff, teaching style, and university ranking play an important factor in influencing the students' making. Well-known academic professor in sport management fields has the highest score for attracting students and the alternative teaching style that allows students to manage their schedule according to their convenience. The expert gave a consistent opinion about the evaluation of alternatives. The famous professor in sport management fields not only gave clear and up-to-date knowledge but also showed previous experience which is tacit knowledge that is important for future career opportunities which related to the results of Leach & Zepke (2005) and Germeijs et al. (2012) the well-known professor and memorable university is the main point for student decision to apply the academic programs.

The reason mentioned above, understanding student decision-making factors and applying public relation strategies to promote the academic program for the students. The strategies should focus on improving the program identity to be memorized by the students by improving intangible teaching style to fit the student needs especially, the programs target students. Building program identity and increasing awareness from proactive public relations are the main strategies to improve students-decision making and reach the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education) applicant number. Supported by Chaokongjak & Bangthamai (2020) Affecting the success of increasing student numbers depends on a number of factors that students consider when making public relations decisions to build credibility, build acceptance of Institutions and faculties inevitably take time for the name of the institute to sit in one's mind. Public relations for students to decide to come to study. The course content, teaching staff teaching style Time and cost play a role for student decision making Therefore, strategy formulation, direction planning, presenting information to reach Both short-term and long-term, in various forms, therefore, it is necessary to set policies to be consistent, to make a decision which will result in adding the number of students meets the target.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation of guideline for proactive curriculum public relations in the digital age to multiply the number of students in the Bachelor of Business Administration Program in Innovation Sport Management (Distance Education) is to apply the key factor into the public Relations strategies for improving the clear program identity, find out the proactive public relations ways, improve evaluation alternative and increase the other factor can help sport management programs reach the student's applicants goal.

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