

Factor influencing Secondary School Students' Decision to Study for a Bachelor's Degree at Champasak Province, Lao PDR

Houmpheng Moonphoxay¹, Mexay Tornkham², Noukay Sihathep³,
Chanthasone Vannavong⁴, Oudtakone Singthong⁵

¹Team leader, Champasak University
^{2,3,4,5}Champasak University

Abstract

This research is a study on the factors that influence the decision of high school students to study for a bachelor's degree in Champasak province, with the purpose of studying the factors that influence the decision to study for a bachelor's degree in Champasak province. A questionnaire survey method was used to collect data from 410 students from 9 districts and 1 city in Champasak Province, Laos. A logistic regression model was used to analyze the data. The research results show that factors influence the decision of high school students to attend Champasak University in Champasak Province. There are a total of nine important factors that affect the decision to choose Champasak University. First of all, there is the problem of the Lao ethnic group. Second, religious beliefs, especially Buddhism. In addition, parents' scholarship support, family members' educational level, parents' occupation, household monthly income, major in marketing, and access to university courses all affect enrollment decisions. Finally, students' expectations about job opportunities after graduation have a positive effect on their decision to enroll in Champasak University, which indicates the importance of providing education in accordance with the needs of the labor market.

Keywords: Secondary School, Decision to Study.

1. Introductions

The education system in Laos has recently shown substantial improvement (MOES, 2018). Laos's net enrollment rate for elementary education increased significantly, according to 2018 research by the Ministry of Education and Sport. The rate showed a significant increase over prior years, reaching an amazing 98.8%. Various causes, such as government attempts to encourage access to education and infrastructural upgrades, might be ascribed to this rise in enrollment (MOES, 2018). Additionally, the government has worked to raise the standard of education in the nation. The MOES introduced the Education Strategic Plan (MOES, 2018) in 2017, with the goal of enhancing the system of education as a whole by means of a number of programs, such as teacher preparation, curriculum reform, and infrastructure development (MOES, 2018). The Gender Parity Index (GPI) for elementary education in Cambodia is currently close to 1, indicating a virtually equal enrolment rate for both boys and girls. These initiatives have helped to reduce the gender gap in education Bualaphet, K., & Goto, H. (2019).

The COVID-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges and disruptions to university student registration in Laos. The closure of educational institutions and the implementation of remote learning measures have impacted enrollment. According to agreement No. 3361/MOES. LA (2023), on the approval and announcement of the results of the high school graduation exams for the 2022-2023 academic year, there are 49,926 students all over the country who have completed their last year of high school (23,297 females) and 49 students (46 females) who performed well in all subjects. Meanwhile, the number of high school students registering for four university exams all over the country was 8,416. This is an imbalance in the number of students "registered for university exams and the ability to support or need in the academic year 2023-2024, 4 universities." Souphanouvong registered 484 students (they desired 1566 students), the National University of Lao registered 7440 students (they desired 6,688 students), Savannakhet University registered 271 students (they desired 1,516 students), and especially Champasak University registered 221 students (they desired 1405 students). There is a significant discrepancy between the number of students who enroll in four institutions and the number of students who graduate from high school. From an academic perspective, the imbalance between the number of students who finish high school and the number of students who enroll at Champasak University is a red signal to the education system. This discrepancy is a significant concern for the education system and poses a challenge for public universities to prevent students from halting their studies at Champasak University. The 2022-2023 academic year high school graduation exams reveal a significant student enrollment imbalance. 49,926 students completed their final year, with 23,297 females and 46 performing well in all subjects. Meanwhile, 8,416 final upper secondary school students registered for four university exams, posing a challenge for public universities to prevent students from halting their studies.

The aim of study was to find: 1). Exploring the factors that influence secondary school students' decisions to study for a bachelor's degree

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Research Design

In this study will be use the quantitative methods. For the quantitative data, a questionnaire will be drafted following our research objectives for use in collecting data and providing input to the analysis process.

2.2. Research Population and Sampling

According to the data from the Champasak Provincial Education and Sports Division Service Report 2023, there were 13,240 students who finished upper secondary within 9 Districts and 1 City as target groups for this study. Using Taro Yamane's equation (1973) to determine the sample size in this study, according to the results of the calculation, the size of the sample group is 389 people. In order for the data to be accurate, the research team determined 410 samples by dividing them according to the quota and using a random data collection method by determining the proportion of the sample group according to the number of schools in 9 districts and 1 city.

2.3. Data analysis

An Analysis of Factors Influencing Secondary School Students' Decision to Study for a Bachelor's Degree in Champasak Province by using a statistical model that uses a logit model to examine the factors influencing secondary school students' decision to study for a bachelor's degree at Champasak within 9 districts and 1 city by reviewing the theoretical documents and related research papers, the model can be determined by referring to the modeling curve of the logit model as follows:

Based on the model of A Skatova, E Ferguson (2014).

$$\begin{aligned}
 \ln\left(\frac{P_i}{1-P_i}\right) &= \text{Prob}(dec = 1) \\
 &= \alpha + \beta_1(gen) + \beta_2(age) + \beta_3(eth_gr) + \beta_4(relig_st) + \beta_5(scho_sp) \\
 &+ \beta_6(pers_de) + \beta_7(soure_fst) + \beta_8(educ_fm) + \beta_9(occ_g) + \beta_{10}(\lnincome) \\
 &+ \beta_{11}(field_st) + \beta_{12}(career_opp) + \beta_{13}(acade_ru) + \beta_{14}(get_wage) \\
 &+ \beta_{15}(acc_cur) + \beta_{16}(lndista_uh) + e_{ij}
 \end{aligned}$$

3. Results

Table 1: Factor influencing Secondary School Students’ Decision to Study for a Bachelor's Degree at Champasak Province, Lao PDR

Definition of Independent Variable	Marginal Effect		
	dy/dx	Z	P> z
Gender of student	-0.0014	-0.03	0.979
Age of student	0.0121	0.37	0.713
Ethnic group of student	0.3264***	4.23	0.000
Religions of student	0.2785***	3.21	0.001
Scholarship support	0.1516**	2.29	0.022
Person who influences decisions	0.0271	0.43	0.669
A source of knowledge about the field of study	0.0521	0.9	0.370
Education of family member	0.1119**	2.08	0.037
Occupation of guardian	0.1233*	1.84	0.066
Household monthly Income	0.4594***	7.83	0.000
Field of study	0.1078**	2.04	0.041
Career opportunity	0.1516*	1.79	0.073
Academic reputation of university	0.018	0.29	0.774
Get more wages after graduation	0.0355	0.34	0.732
Access to the curriculum of the university	0.1152*	1.77	0.077
Distance from home to university	-0.0242	-0.94	0.347
Constant			
Number of obs	=	= 410	
LR Chi2 (16)	=	= 239.51	
Prob > chi2	=	= 0.0000	
Pseudo R2	=	= 0.4573	
Marginal effects after logit			
y =pr(dec) (predict)			
=0.7718			

Source: The field survey and researcher results, 2024. Sign indicates: *, **, and *** confidence levels at 90%, 95%, and 99% respectively.

Factors that determine the decision to study at Champasak University for high school students in Champasak province. In testing the factors that determine the decision to study at Champasak University for high school students in Champasak province, a logit model is used, which is analyzed by the maximum

likelihood method and followed by the marginal effect. Before the analysis, the problem of multicollinearity was checked among the independent variables to be used in the model, and it was found that the correlation coefficient of the pair of independent variables was 0.2691, which is lower than 0.80, which shows that there is no multicollinearity problem (Gujariti, 1995). See results in Table 1 the test's results also indicate that Factors that determine the decision to study at Champasak University for high school students in Champasak province.

1. The ethnicity of students in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province, which is consistent with the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 99%, meaning that the Lao ethnicity of students in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has an coefficient value of 0.3264, by setting other factors constant, meaning: students with 32.64 percent of the Lao people will have more opportunities to decide to study at Champasak University than other ethnic groups because most of the Lao people have more opportunities to access education because they live in areas that are conducive to education, such as students in Pakse City, xanasomboun District, PhonThong District, Champasak District, Pathumphon District, etc. While other ethnic groups, such as the Yaru, Yayen, Rawen, and Xuay ethnic groups, most of them still maintain a way of life that is connected to nature and traditions that have been inherited.
2. The religious belief of students in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province, which corresponds to the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 99%, meaning that the Buddhist religious belief of students in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient value of 0.2785, with other factors held constant, What: Buddhist students will have more opportunities to study at Champasak University than students with other religious beliefs 27.85 percent. Because most students who follow Buddhism will have more opportunities to access education. This is because most Buddhists live in areas that are the economic, social and educational focus of the community And in this study, the researcher used the research concepts of P. Jafari, A. Aliesmaili (2013), Sarkodie, et al. (2020) using the chi square and OLS methods of study. The results of the study show that religion has an effect on the decision to enroll, which is consistent with the results of this study.
3. The parents' scholarship support in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province. Which is consistent with the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 95%, meaning that the parents' scholarship support in Champasak province has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient value of 0.1516 with other factors held constant, which means that students who are supported by parents will have more opportunities to decide to study at Champasak University than students who are supported by other sources up to 15.16 percent. Because the parents are the main force of the family within Lao society, it means that the family will give priority to the parents in raising and managing, supporting education funds, etc. throughout the counseling and planning of the future of the child. At the same time, the child himself has an education, learns from the success of the guardian, and considers the parents an important role in pushing oneself in the field

of education. Especially the funding for education is very important for them. This is consistent with research conducted by Tanapat Intawee (2021) and Khowchernklang (2021), the findings of which demonstrate the critical role parents play in supporting education.

4. Education of family members who have completed a bachelor's degree has an effect on the students' decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of the students at high school in Champasak Province, which corresponds to the hypothesis set with a 95% confidence level, meaning that the level of education of household members who have completed a bachelor's degree has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University. Which has a coefficient value of 0.1119, with other factors held constant, which means that the education level of household members who have completed a bachelor's degree will have a greater chance of deciding to study at Champasak University than the education level of household members who have completed other degrees, up to 11.19 percent. Due to the fact that the majority of students will be influenced by the education of family members who have the highest level of education, such as parents, siblings, and graduates who can offer advice on the university experience, career paths, and educational success, this has become a significant motivator for students to continue their studies to benefit from the benefits after graduation. Which is consistent with the research of Ž Cepar, Š Bojnec (2012), Studied about Probit model of higher education participation determinants and the role of information and communication technology. Using research methods by Probit model, the results of the study found that there are positive results.
5. The occupation of the guardian who does business and trade has an effect on the student's decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province, which corresponds to the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 90%, meaning that the occupation of the guardian who does business and trade has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient value of 0.1233. By determining other factors to be constant, it means: the occupation of the guardian who does business and trade will give more opportunities to decide to study at Champasak University than other occupations up to 12.33 percent. In addition, students will recognize their significant potential when their guardian has a good income and is very flexible with their income from work, which will lead them to decide to pursue a bachelor's degree in the future. This is because the role of guardian is considered to be an important part of an important economic society. If the parents have a stable career and a variety of incomes, this will mean the opportunity to send them to get a higher education.
6. Household monthly income has an effect on students' decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak Province, which corresponds to the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 99%. It means that if the monthly income of the household increases, it has a greater effect on the decision to study at Champasak University. Which has a coefficient of 0.4594, by determining other factors to be constant, which means: the monthly income of the household increases by 1 percent, and the opportunity to decide to study at Champasak University increases by 0.45 percent. Income has a big impact on funding decisions for student education, especially when higher education is taken into account. When determining whether to pursue a bachelor's degree, money frequently becomes a crucial concern for students due to the significant financial expenditure required for school. People's decisions about continuing their

education are greatly influenced by financial factors, including living expenses, tuition costs, and prospective wages in the future. Therefore, access to and participation in bachelor's degree programs are significantly influenced by economic levels. This is consistent with the research of Ž Cepar, Š Bojnec (2012), Study about Probit model of higher education participation determinants and the role of information and communication technology. Using research methods from the Probit model, the results of the study found that personal income affects the decision to continue studying and In line with the research of P. Jafari A. Aliemaili (2013), Study about Factors Influencing the Selection of a University by High School Students, the results of the study found that economic factors affect the decision to continue studying.

7. The field of marketing has an effect on the students' decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province, which is consistent with the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 95%, meaning that the field of marketing has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient of 0.1078, with other factors held constant, meaning: Champasak more than other branches up to 10.78 percent, Due to the need for businesses to build brand identity, make income, communicate with their target audience, raise consumer awareness, carry out market research, and offer goods and services that satisfy consumer demand, marketing is an essential tool. By efficiently positioning firms and articulating unique value propositions, it also gives them a competitive advantage. Furthermore, since companies need to continuously improve their business success and adjust to shifting consumer preferences and market developments, marketing is crucial for sustained growth. Today, marketing is the era's fever. By creating a marketing model through online social media influencers in various ways, marketing has become a modern tool for everyone to easily access the profession, but the profession must be trained in skills and learn some important principles, which makes them want to study for a bachelor's degree in the field of marketing more than other fields.
8. The expectation of students that if they complete their studies, they will have the opportunity to get a job after graduation has an effect on the students' decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak province. Which is consistent with the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 90% means that the expectation of students if they complete their studies will lead to job opportunities after graduation has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient of 0.1516, with other factors held constant, meaning that if they think that when they complete their studies will lead to job opportunities after graduation, they will have a chance to decide to study at Champasak University more than those who did not study up to 15.16 percent. Social reality behavior in the past has demonstrated that people with professional or university-level educations will have more employment opportunities and will be able to increase their income stream through their studies. These people have also lived in a variety of communities. In addition to being a social trend and role model for success in the community, they have also gained conceptual influence over the education of younger people. Success in this context is defined as advancement in one's career, financial gain, and personal growth. On the other hand, the needs of the labor market itself have already shown that current recruitment requires a bachelor's degree as the basis for skilled workers and higher wages. As well as the research of Nguyen Chi Hai1, et al. (2022), Study about Factors Affecting the Decision to Choose a University of High School Students: A study

in An Giang Province, Vietnam, using research methods by Exploratory Factor analysis (EFA) and linear regression models, the results of the study found that the factors of future job opportunities have the most influence on the decision to choose a university or high school student. And the research of Calvin Cheng et al. (2022) study about what determines logistics sub-degree students' decision to pursue a bachelor's degree found that job opportunities and job starting salary were determinants of their attitude. And the research of J. Khowchernklang et al. (2021) Study about Factors Influencing High School Students' Decision in the Eastern Economic Corridor Area (EEC) to Choose Vocational School over University: Binary Logistic Regression Analysis showed that the influential factor in the decision is labor market demand.

9. Access to the courses of Champasak University has an effect on the students' decision to study at Champasak University, which has a positive sign (+) or has a relationship in the same direction with the decision to study at Champasak University of high school students in Champasak Province, which is consistent with the hypothesis set with a confidence level of 90%. It means that access to the courses of Champasak University has an effect on the decision to study at Champasak University, which has a coefficient value of 0.1152, by determining other factors to be constant, meaning that access to the courses of Champasak University will make it more likely to decide to study at Champasak University than those who do not know the course of Champasak University up to 11.52 percent. Because the connection between the needs of the labor market and the construction of personnel is a mechanism that must create a balance between quantity and demand, many educational institutions now produce courses to support the needs of the labor market. But this thing, if there is a lack of communication and understanding for those who will come to study, it will cause them to be uncertain in the result of learning that what they expect and the reality of the course that is presented are consistent at what level and will make them capable in what field and that ability is in accordance with the needs of the labor market or not. Therefore, access to the course is another important factor in students' decision to enroll, which is in line with the research of Calvin Cheng et al.'s (2022) study about what determines logistics sub-degree students' decision to pursue a bachelor's degree using research methods by partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM). The results of the study found that the factors perceived difficulty, were found to significantly influence logistics sub-degree students' attitude towards pursuing a bachelor's degree program.

4. Discussion

This is mainly because this group of people is considered to be the main group that has better access to education than other groups in Pakse and other districts, because they are considered to be the main group of people who have been close to most educational institutions in the past. It can be seen that many studies by researchers have not yet determined how many variables of ethnicity and religion have been included in the study, especially in Laos and Pasak province itself, which makes the results of the research not as clear as they should be. Therefore, this answer has opened a new dimension in researching the factors that affect the decision of students to continue their studies at the university. One step.

Parental support is indeed pivotal in shaping students' educational pathways. However, it's imperative to delve into the accessibility of parental scholarship support across different socio-economic backgrounds. While parental support is crucial, not all families may have equal access to financial resources or awareness about scholarship opportunities. By exploring these disparities, policymakers and educational institutions can devise targeted interventions to ensure equitable access to educational resources and

opportunities. Moreover, addressing financial barriers through scholarship support can mitigate the impact of socio-economic disparities on educational choices, fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational landscape. Which is consistent with the research of Nguyen Chi Hai et al. (2022). Study the factors affecting the decision to choose a university for high school students: A study in An Giang Province, Vietnam, and Jafari, P., & Aliesmaili, A. (2013). Study the factors influencing the selection of a university by high school students and the research of Sarkodie, A Asare, D Asare (2020). Study the factors influencing students' choice of tertiary education. The results of the study show that family and economic factors play an important role in the decision to enroll.

The influence of family members, especially those with a high level of education, will affect the desire of those students to continue their education. Because they want to be the same successful person as the most educated member of the family. This may be related to the opportunity to get a good job in their own future, which is in line with the research of Calvin Cheng¹, Simon S.M. Yuen¹ (2022) what determines logistics sub-degree students' decision to pursue a bachelor's degree. Also there is a research of Ž Cepar, Š Bojnec (2012) Probit Model of Higher Education Participation Determinants and the Role of Information and Communication Technology. And the research of the result of the study is in the same direction, namely the high level of education of household members and guardians plays an important role in decision making.

The positive influence of guardian occupation, especially in business and commerce, indicates the importance of economic stability in students' educational decisions. While economic stability is certainly an important factor in decision-making as well as employment opportunities and higher income opportunities including opportunities to develop technical knowledge which is consistent with the research of J Khowchernklang, et al, (2021) and the research of NA Sarkodie, A Asare, D Asare (2020). Including the research of Calvin Cheng¹, Simon S.M. Yuen¹ (2022) and Nguyen Chi Hai...al (2022) who conducted a study on the factors that affect the entry of high school students into undergraduate studies. The results of the study show that employment opportunities, higher income and knowledge development, including the career of parents, are important to the decision to continue studying at an undergraduate level.

Household income plays a critical role in determining students' access to educational opportunities. However, it's essential to consider the broader socio-economic context and potential income distribution disparities within Champasak Province. While higher household income may alleviate some financial constraints associated with pursuing higher education, disparities in income distribution may still persist, limiting access to educational resources for economically marginalized communities, which is consistent with the research of Ž Cepar, Š Bojnec (2012) Probit Model of Higher Education Participation Determinants and the Role of Information and Communication Technology. The results of the study show that household income plays an important role in students' decision to continue their education.

5. Conclusion

In summary, various factors significantly influence high school students' decisions to enroll at Champasak University in Champasak Province. Firstly, ethnicity plays a crucial role, with Lao descent students being 32.64% more likely to choose the university, possibly due to better educational opportunities available in Lao communities. Secondly, religious beliefs, particularly Buddhism, influence students' choices, with Buddhist students being 27.85% more inclined to enroll. Additionally, parental scholarship support, education level of family members, guardians' occupations, household monthly income, and access to university courses all impact enrollment decisions. Lastly, students' expectations of job opportunities post-

graduation significantly affect their decision to study at Champasak University, indicating the importance of aligning educational offerings with labor market needs. These findings underscore the multi-faceted nature of decision-making processes and emphasize the importance of considering various socio-economic factors in shaping educational choices.

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