

Factors Affecting Secondary School Students' Choice of High School in Tra Vinh Province, Viet Nam

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ABSTRACT: *This study aimed to investigate some main factors affecting secondary students' choice of high school in Tra Vinh province. A group of 777 participants including 440 urban and 337 rural secondary students in Tra Vinh city and some districts of Tra Vinh province was selected to answer the questionnaire. The results from the questionnaire revealed that three groups of factors (educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions) had nearly equal overall mean scores and influenced students more than the three remaining factors (social network, extra activities and location-transportation) in choosing their high school. In addition, no significant difference was found between urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school. Based on the findings above, some possible recommendations were suggested to the executive boards of high school, secondary school teachers and secondary school students in order to assist them in choosing their appropriate high school.*

KEYWORDS: educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions, social network, extra activities and location-transportation

INTRODUCTION

In students' academic life, high school selection plays an important role since it affects their vocational orientation in the future. Secondary students can choose a high school by themselves or with the consultation from the others such as parents, teachers, relatives or friends. There are various reasons for choosing a high school. According to Napompech (2011), parents want to choose a school with good education for their children so that they can have stable jobs with high income. Chen (2007, as cited in Walea and Koyongian, 2018) found out that students wanted to choose a high school with good facilities, campus security and effective management. Up to now, there have been some studies about factors affecting parents or students' choice of junior or senior high school conducted by Anyan (2010), Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013), Amonoo (2014), Walea and Koyongian (2018).

In Vietnam, the enrolment to high school attract the interest of the whole society. According to Circular 11/2014/TT-BGDĐT dated on April 18, 2014 and Circular

05/2018/TT-BGDĐT dated on February 28, 2018 issued by the Ministry of Education and Training. Once a year, the Departments of Education and Training enroll students in secondary schools and high schools. The admission to high schools is organized by one of the following three ways: The first method is to consider the admission based on the training and learning results of the students' 4 years of secondary school; the second way is the entrance exam and the last one is the combination of the entrance exam with the training and learning results.

In Tra Vinh province, there are 100 secondary schools in eight districts, one town and one provincial city. They are located in almost every ward, town or village within the province. After finishing a secondary school, students optionally enroll in one of the 45 public high schools including normal high schools, special high schools (high school for the gifted, boarding school for the ethnic minorities, Tra Vinh University Laboratory School) or centers for continuing education, vocational orientation and training. The special schools, centers and dominant schools of districts are usually located in the provincial city and towns, while the other high schools are settled in villages.

This survey aims at investigating the factors affecting secondary students in choosing a high school to enroll, so it would be of great value for high schools in promoting their enrolment of grade 10 students yearly. The current study addresses the following issues:

1. What factors affect urban and rural secondary students' choice of high school?
2. Is there a difference between urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The general education in Vietnam

According to the Vietnam Law on education (2019), the general education in Vietnam consists of:

- Primary education, which is conducted for five school years, from the first to the fifth grade. The age of entrance to the first grade is six;
- Lower secondary education, which is conducted for four school years, from the sixth to the ninth grade. Pupils entering the sixth grade must complete the primary education program, at the age of eleven;
- Upper secondary education, which is conducted for three school years, from the tenth to the twelfth grade. Pupils entering the tenth grade must have a lower secondary education diploma, at the age of fifteen.

Objectives of upper secondary education

Upper secondary education aims to help pupils consolidate and develop the outcomes of lower secondary education, complete the general education and acquire common understanding about techniques and vocational orientation, as well as conditions to develop their personal ability in order to choose a development direction, to enter universities, colleges, professional secondary education schools, vocational training schools or the work force (The Vietnam Law on education, 2019).

Factors affecting parents'/ students' choice of junior/senior high schools

Anyan (2010) identified 4 factors affecting students' choice of high schools consisting of:

- the controlled social atmosphere of the school,
- the parental guidance/individual needs of students,
- the quality of education the school offers
- the location of the school.

Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) suggested the 5 factors parents considered when choosing a junior high school for their children as follows:

- educational environment
- campus and facilities
- extra-curricular activities
- school specialties
- location and transportation

Amonoo (2014) pointed out the following elements parents were concerned when they chose a senior high school for their children:

- being in favor of boarding and public single-sex education
- schools with qualified teachers
- excellent academic record
- appropriate support services
- institutional factors
- parents' socio-economic status
- social network

Walea and Koyongian (2018) discovered the six factors influencing students' choice of their senior high schools:

- variety of school programs
- teachers' discipline in teaching
- good school environment.
- academic quality
- spiritual aspect
- sport facilities

Related studies

Hsu and Yuan-fang (2013) carried out the research on “ An analysis of factors affecting parents' choice of a junior high school”. The purpose of the study was to identify factors affecting parents' choice of junior high schools. The finding proved that there was a high positive correlation between parents' school choice and the following factors such as educational environment, campus and facilities, extra-curricular activities, school specialties, location and transportation. The researchers also had some suggestions for school administrative staff and teachers. For administrative staff, they should emphasize on educating students' morality and behavior to build good school spirit as well as create the educational environment which is safe and excellent to facilitate students to learn better. For teachers, they should have positive interactions with students' parents, increase their quality teaching and management effectively to attract more students.

Anyan, Gyebil, Inkoom and Yeboah (2013) carried out a study on “ Examination of factors that influence the choice of senior high school by junior high school students in Ghana: A case study of Nungua Basic Schools. The study explored factors affecting junior high school students in choosing their senior high school. 510 respondents were chosen to participate in the survey. There were 4 main factors influencing students’ choice of their high school. The result proved that the controlled social atmosphere of the school was the most important factor. The second vital one was related to the parental guidance/individual needs of the students. Ranking the third position was the quality of education offered at the school and the last one belonged to the location of the school.

Amonoo (2014) did a study on “ Factors influencing parents’ choice of a senior high school for their children”. The study aimed to examine the kinds of schools parents in the Cape Coast Metropolis choose for their children and some major factors parents consider in choosing a particular senior high school for their children. The study found out that parents were in favor of boarding and public single-sex education. Also, they preferred schools with qualified teachers, excellent academic record and appropriate support services. Besides, institutional factors, parents’ socio-economic status and social network factors also contributed significantly to parents’ choice of a particular senior high school. From the findings above, the researcher had some following recommendations for the administrative staff. Headmasters have to make sure that teachers should have positive attitudes towards students. In addition, heads of senior high schools should pay attention to various institutional factors to meet the needs of parents in their communities if they want to attract more students’ enrollments.

Walea and Koyongian (2018) did a study on “Factors affecting students’ selection of senior high school”. The study aimed to find out the factors influencing students’ choice of high schools. The results indicated that variety of school programs was the most influential factor. The second important one was teachers’ discipline in teaching. The third factor focused on school environment. The fourth factor contributing to the students’ preference in selecting senior high school was academic quality. The fifth factor mentioned spiritual aspect and the last influential factor was sport facilities.

All the four related studies above mentioned various factors affecting parents or students’ choice of junior or senior high schools. In this study, the researchers investigated six groups of factors which were adapted from those studies to find out which groups have more effects. Besides, the researchers wanted to know if there is a significant difference between urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school in Tra Vinh province.

METHODOLOGY

Participants of the study

The participants of the study were 777 students consisting of 440 urban and 337 rural secondary students in Tra Vinh city, Cau Ngang district, Tra Cu district and Duyen Hai district of Tra Vinh province.

Research Instrument

The research instrument employed to collect data for this study was the questionnaire which was adapted from Anyan (2010), Hsu & Yuan-fang (2013), Amonoo (2014) and Dao & Thorpe (2015). It covers six different categories and one open question as below:

- Category A: Educational environment (items 1-10)
- Category B: School distinctions (items 11-20)
- Category C: Extra activities (items 21-26)
- Category D: Social network (items 27- 31)
- Category E: Location and transportation (items 32-35)
- Category F: Personal conditions (items 36-39)

All the statements from categories A to F were designed by using a five-point Likert-scale, ranging from completely unimportant (1), unimportant (2), rather important (3), important (4) to very important (5).

Procedures

The questionnaire was designed and delivered to 777 participants. The data collected from the questionnaire was analyzed by using the software SPSS version 25 (Statistic Package for the Social Sciences).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The reliability of the questionnaire

Table 1. Reliability Statistics of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.940	39

The questionnaires are fully completed by a group of 777 students. All the data collected from the questionnaires are computed to check the frequency and the internal reliability coefficient. The result in table 1 shows that the questionnaire employed in this study is reliable with very significantly high Cronbach Alpha's coefficient of 0.940 for 39 items in total. Key findings of the current research are discussed in depth in the following sections.

Educational environment

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of educational environment

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school is a fully-equipped educational institution.	4.14	.87
The campus is nice and clean with beautiful mini scenes.	3.68	.92
The school equipment is repaired and upgraded regularly.	3.99	.90
The school has boarding facilities.	2.89	1.05
The school has day care facilities (medical staff and clinics).	4.09	.86
The school deals with students' problems with positive and friendly approach.	4.31	.81
The school regularly keeps parents informed about their children's academic performance.	3.51	1.06
Discipline is high in the school.	4.00	.89
The school and the community have a perfect interaction.	4.13	.82
The school organizes a lot of social activities for a better community.	4.07	.87
Overall mean	3.88	.54

By running the descriptive statistics for all the items related to educational environment, the data shown in table 2 indicate that most participants affirm the school deals with students' problems with positive and friendly approach showing the highest mean score (M= 4.31, SD= 0.81). This helps students be satisfied and comfortable if their difficulties are solved reasonably. Next, the two other outstanding items: The school is a fully-equipped educational institution and the school and the community have a perfect interaction account for nearly similar mean scores (M= 4.14 and M= 4.13) respectively. It is evident that schools with sufficient teaching and learning facilities will contribute greatly to the quality of training. Besides learning in class, students can do experiments, practice language, read or search information in the labs or computer rooms to gain more knowledge. Moreover, the interaction between the school and the community well will help the school get the sponsorship from different organizations or companies to raise funds for school activities. In addition to these items, students are concerned about day care facilities and organizing a lot of social activities for a better community with (M= 4.09, SD= 0.86) for the former and (M=4.07, SD= 0.87) for the latter. Clearly, students should receive good health care services so that they can learn more effectively. Furthermore, school is the place where meetings or sports clubs can be held for the community. The overall mean score of educational environment is (M= 3.88, SD= 0.54). This mean score is rather high, so we can conclude that this educational environment factor really affects students' choice of their high school.

School distinction

Table 4.3. Descriptive statistics of school distinction

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The admission score is high, so it is prestigious to attend the school.	3.14	1.08
The school has good academic records	3.51	1.02
The school has high expectations and standards for students.	3.03	1.05
Students' learning outcomes are high.	3.65	1.01
The school has good academic activities like contests, practicums, science research clubs.	3.80	.98
Students have chance to develop their talent, not only in scientific and social sciences, but also in arts and music, etc.	4.02	.92
Teachers are dedicated and earnest.	4.29	.88
The school can cultivate students' character of optimism and self-confidence.	4.27	.82
The school can combine fundamental and special curricula properly.	4.21	.81
The school offers plenty of scholarships to outstanding and disadvantaged students.	4.16	.85
Overall mean	3.81	.59

In terms of school distinction factor, the data in table 3 reveals that teachers are dedicated and earnest occupying the highest mean score ($M=4.29$, $SD=0.88$). It is true that the roles of teachers are extremely important to students' learning since they inspire students to try their best. Also, teachers should be serious to be good examples for their students. Ranking the second position is that the school can cultivate students' character of optimism and self-confidence with ($M=4.27$, $SD= 0.82$). With students' character and their self-confidence, they can have lot of imagination, creativity in learning. The next item is that the school offers plenty of scholarships to outstanding and disadvantaged students with ($M=4.16$, $SD= 0.85$). It is true that scholarships make students work harder by competing with their friends to receive these rewards. Besides, students with poor financial conditions can get scholarships to spend on their study. The total mean score of schools distinction is also rather high ($M=3.81$, $SD=0.59$),. This proves that students pay more attention to this factor when they choose their high school.

Extra activities

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of extra activities

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school has abundant and attractive extra curricular activities.	3.90	.95
The school has modern facilities for playing sport, doing scientific experiments, creating new learning products, and so on.	4.05	.92
Students' performance are outstanding in competitions of sports and arts.	3.56	.97
The school organizes exciting field trips out of the province yearly.	3.77	1.11
Foreign teachers and volunteers are invited to help students study English and train soft skills.	3.80	.98
The school has plenty of sports and art teams to take part in and to compete with other schools.	3.53	1.04
Overall mean	3.77	.76

Concerning extra activities, the data in table 4 indicate that most participants want to choose a school which has modern facilities for playing sport, doing scientific experiments, creating new learning products, and so on ($M= 4.05$, $SD=0.92$). This illustrates that students also focus on developing other activities besides learning theories in class. In addition, students are in favor of choosing the school which can provide them with attractive extra-curricular activities and there are foreign volunteer teachers to teach students English as well as useful soft skills with $M= 3.90$ and $M= 3.80$ respectively. The overall mean score for extra activities is also rather high ($M= 3.77$, $SD= 0.76$).

Social network

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of social network

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am recommended by my teachers.	3.40	.98
I am advised by my parents or a relative.	3.45	1.01
I am recommended by an alumnus of that school (e.g. my parent, my brother or sister, my neighbor, etc.)	3.21	1.03
Lots of my friends have chosen that school.	3.13	1.10
The school is well-known.	2.85	1.11
Overall mean	3.21	.85

With regard to social network, the result shown in table 5 demonstrate that students have a tendency to choose their high school by their parents ($M= 3.45$, $SD=1.01$) or relatives' advice and their teachers' recommendations ($M= 3.40$, $SD= 0.98$). The total mean score of this factor is just above the average level ($M=3.21$, $SD= 0.85$).

Location and transport

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of location and transport

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
The school is not far away from home.	3.03	1.13
The school is in a town where a relative lives.	2.87	1.14
The school is located in a developed and modern area.	3.23	1.08
I just want to attend the school which is outside my region of residence.	2.53	1.14
Overall mean	2.91	.87

Regarding location and transport, the data in table 6 show that the participants prefer their school in a developed and modern area ($M=3.23$, $SD= 1.08$). With such a good location, it is more convenient for students to study and live comfortably. Moreover, they want to study in a school which is near their house so that they can travel easily ($M= 3.03$, $SD= 1.13$). However, the overall mean of this factor is below the average level ($M=2.91$, $SD= 0.87$).

Personal conditions

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics of personal conditions

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
My learning results at secondary school are qualified to allow me to take the entrance exam to the school.	3.95	.94
My learning achievements at secondary school make me be more self-confident to study at the school.	3.73	.95
The school fees are affordable.	3.92	.91
My parents' income facilitates me to choose the school.	3.67	1.05
Overall mean	3.82	.75

The last factor is related to personal conditions and its findings are presented in table 7. Most students assert that their learning results at secondary school are qualified to allow them to take the entrance exam to the school constituting the highest mean score ($M=3.95$, $SD= 0.94$). It is evident that if students want to study in a high school they choose, they must take the entrance exam. This item will depend on individual efforts and their learning achievement in secondary school. Next, they also tend to school which their parents can afford to pay the fees ($M=3.92$, $SD=0.91$). The overall mean score of this factors is as high as those of “school environment” and “school distinction”.

The impact of six groups of factors in comparison:

Table 8. Descriptives of six groups of factors

VAR00001								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		MIN	MAX
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Educational environment	777	3.88	.54	.01942	3.8431	3.9193	2.00	5.00
School distinction	777	3.81	.59	.02125	3.7652	3.8487	1.20	5.00
Extra activities	777	3.77	.76	.02715	3.7173	3.8239	1.00	5.00
Social network	777	3.21	.85	.03054	3.1496	3.2695	1.00	5.00
Location and transport	777	2.91	.87	.03104	2.8528	2.9747	1.00	5.00
Personal condition	777	3.82	.75	.02676	3.7663	3.8714	1.00	5.00
Total	4662	3.57	.82	.01205	3.5432	3.5904	1.00	5.00

The descriptives in table 8 indicate the mean score for “educational environment” (M=3.88, SD=0.54). This mean score is higher than the mean scores of the five remaining factors: “personal condition” (M=3.82, SD=0.75), “school distinction” (M=3.81, SD=0.59), “extra activities” (M=3.77, SD=0.76), “social network” (M= 3.21, SD= 0.85) and “location and transport” (M= 2.91, SD=0.87).

Table 9. ANOVA

VAR00001					
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	633.776	5	126.755	234.234	.000
Within Groups	2519.589	4656	.541		
Total	3153.365	4661			

A one-way between subjects ANOVA is conducted in table 9 to compare the influence of six different factors such as educational environment, personal conditions, school distinction, extra-curricular activities, social network, location and transport on urban and rural students in choosing their high school. The data in the table show that there is a statistically significant effect of these factors on students’ choice of their high school [F(5, 4656)=234.234, p=0.000].

Table 10. Multiple Comparisons of six groups of factors

Dependent Variable: VAR00001						
Tukey HSD						
(I) Total mean	(J) Total mean	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Educational environment	School distinction	.07426	.03732	.348	-.0321	.1807
	Extra activities	.11064*	.03732	.036	.0042	.2170
	Social network	.67169*	.03732	.000	.5653	.7781
	Location and transport	.96744*	.03732	.000	.8610	1.0738
	Personal condition	.06236	.03732	.551	-.0440	.1688
School distinction	Educational environment	-.07426	.03732	.348	-.1807	.0321
	Extra activities	.03638	.03732	.926	-.0700	.1428
	Social network	.59743*	.03732	.000	.4910	.7038
	Location and transport	.89318*	.03732	.000	.7868	.9996
	Personal condition	-.01190	.03732	1.000	-.1183	.0945
Extra activities	Educational environment	-.11064*	.03732	.036	-.2170	-.0042
	School distinction	-.03638	.03732	.926	-.1428	.0700
	Social network	.56104*	.03732	.000	.4546	.6674
	Location and transport	.85680*	.03732	.000	.7504	.9632
	Personal condition	-.04829	.03732	.789	-.1547	.0581
Social network	Educational environment	-.67169*	.03732	.000	-.7781	-.5653
	School distinction	-.59743*	.03732	.000	-.7038	-.4910
	Extra activities	-.56104*	.03732	.000	-.6674	-.4546
	Location and transport	.29575*	.03732	.000	.1894	.4022
	Personal condition	-.60933*	.03732	.000	-.7157	-.5029
Location and transport	Educational environment	-.96744*	.03732	.000	-1.0738	-.8610
	School distinction	-.89318*	.03732	.000	-.9996	-.7868
	Extra activities	-.85680*	.03732	.000	-.9632	-.7504
	Social network	-.29575*	.03732	.000	-.4022	-.1894
	Personal condition	-.90508*	.03732	.000	-1.0115	-.7987
Personal condition	Educational environment	-.06236	.03732	.551	-.1688	.0440
	School distinction	.01190	.03732	1.000	-.0945	.1183
	Extra activities	.04829	.03732	.789	-.0581	.1547
	Social network	.60933*	.03732	.000	.5029	.7157
	Location and transport	.90508*	.03732	.000	.7987	1.0115

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Post hoc comparisons using the Tukey HSD test in table 4.11 indicate that the mean score for “educational environment ” ($M=3.88$, $SD=0.54$) is significantly higher than the mean scores of “extra activities”, $p=0.036$; “social network”, $p=0.000$ and “ location and transport”, $p = 0.000$. However, the mean score for “educational environment” is insignificantly higher than the mean scores of “school distinction”, $p=0.348$ and “ personal conditions”, $p = 0.551$. We can conclude that the overall means of these 3 groups of factors (educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions) are nearly equal and affect both urban and rural students more than the other three factors in choosing their high school.

The difference between urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school

Table 11. Group Statistics urban and rural students towards all factors

	Students	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Total factors mean	Urban students	440	3.63	.51	.02436
	Rural students	337	3.69	.57	.03126

Table 12. Independent Samples Test of urban and rural students towards all factors

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Total factors mean	Equal variances assumed	2.047	.153	-1.473	775	.141	-.05750	.03902	-.13410	.01910
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.451	676.913	.147	-.05750	.03962	-.13530	.02031

In table 11, the results show that the mean score of rural students ($M=3.69$) is higher than that of urban students ($M=3.63$). Then, an independent-sample t-test is conducted to compare the difference between urban and rural students in choosing their high school. There is no significant difference in the mean scores for rural students ($M=3.69$, $SD=0.57$) and urban students ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.51$); $t(112) = -9.337$, $p=0.141$. These results suggest that there is no difference between urban and rural students in choosing their high school.

DISCUSSION

From the findings above, it is concluded that there are six groups of factors affecting the urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school. Among them, the 3 groups of factors (educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions) have nearly equal overall mean scores and influence both urban and rural students more than the other three factors (social network, extra activities and location-transportation) in choosing their high school. By comparison, Anyan, Gyebil, Inkoom & Yeboah (2013) found out that there were 4 key factors influencing students' choice of their high school. These researchers confirmed that the controlled social atmosphere of the school was the most significant factor. The second one was the parental guidance or individual needs of the students. The quality of education offered at the school was the third position and the last one was the location of the school. The results of this study are also different from those carried out by Walea & Koyongian (2018) claimed that variety of school programs was the most influential factor. The second important one was teachers' discipline. The third factor mentioned school environment and academic quality was ranked the fourth. The last two factors were related to mental aspect and sports facilities.

Concerning educational environment, the participants tend to pay attention to the following items: dealing with students' problems positively, having fully-equipped educational institution, having perfect relation with the community and providing good day care services. The result of this study is also aligned with the study done by Chen (2007) who claimed that the facilities, the surrounding landscapes of the school and the effective management were vital considerations among parents when they chose schools for their children. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Hsu & Yan-fang (2013) who found that parents were motivated to choose a high school for their children with good educational environment. The finding above is also in accordance with the studies carried out by Amonno (2014) and Walean & Koyongian (2018) who claimed that the secondary students considered the attractive learning environment when choosing their high school.

With regard to school distinction, they are concerned about teachers' dedication, developing students' character and self-confidence, offering scholarships to outstanding and poor students. By comparison, Lin (2009) claimed that the distinctive features of the school would improve students' academic performance and to make the school develop. This finding is aligned with the study done by Hsu & Yan-fang (2013) who investigated that the parents in their study were more concerned about this factor since they wanted their children to learn in a school with distinctive features to build the school reputation, receive its identification and as well as loyalty from parents.

In terms of extra activities, students want to choose their high school having modern facilities, interesting extra curricular activities, volunteer teachers from other countries. Similarly, Hsu & Yuan-fang (2013) discovered that parents were in favor of choosing a high school for their children with various extra curricular activities so that they could relax and learn more useful things outside their classrooms.

Regarding social network, students have a tendency to choose their high school by their parents, relatives' advice and their teachers' recommendations. Amonno (2014) demonstrated that the parents in his study were concerned about this factor when choosing a high school for their children.

As for location and transport, the participants believe that their school should be in a developed and modern place and near their house. This factor is considered the least important the participants mention when they choose their high school. This result is the same as that found by Anyan (2010) who investigated that the students in his study put this factor in the last position according to the order of importance while Hsu & Yuan-fang (2013) indicated that parents in their study preferred sending their children to a neighborhood school since they could save travel time, energy and money.

Concerning personal conditions, most students assert that their learning results at secondary school and affordable tuition will facilitate for them to choose their high school. The participants in this study believe that this factor is as important as the two other factors: educational environment and school distinction. By contrast, this factor was not mentioned in previous studies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This present study aims to investigate factors affecting secondary students' choice of high school. The results show that there are six groups of factors affecting the urban and rural secondary students in choosing their high school. Three groups of factors (educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions) are found to have nearly similar overall mean scores and affect students more than the other three factors (social network, extra activities and location-transportation) in choosing their high school. Also, in terms of the surveyed factors, there is no difference between urban and rural secondary students in selecting their high school,

Recommendations

To the executive boards of high school: High schools don't need to apply different enrollment methods when consulting for secondary students in rural and urban areas. Besides, it is essential for high schools to enhance the strengths in educational environment, school distinction and personal conditions to attract secondary students.

To secondary school teachers: They should get to know clearly about the distinctive features of intended high schools so that they can give appropriate orientation to their students. This can be considered a fundamental period for students be equipped with knowledge, skills and attitudes to pursue tertiary education.

To secondary school students: The six groups of factors investigated in this study would be a useful and sufficient source for secondary students to refer when selecting their high school.

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