

FACTORS AFFECTING THE DECISION TO BORROW FROM THE STUDENT LOAN FUND (SLF) AMONG SUAN SUNANDHA RAJABHAT UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Rujeerat Sukho¹, Nawatsawan Tangmonrojanarak², Thanakorn Srisakda³, Wassana Aonpom⁴Auttaporn
Kongsupapsiri⁵**

^{1,2,3,4,5} College of Politics and Government, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Bangkok, Thailand,

Email: wassana.ao@ssru.ac.th

ABSTRACT

The objectives of this research are (1) To study the personal factors influencing the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF). (2) To study the economic, social and family, and information perception factors influencing the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF). (3) To propose guidelines for decision-making regarding borrowing from the Student Loan Fund (SLF). This study employs a quantitative research methodology. The sample group consists of 380 students from all faculties and colleges of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in the academic year 2025. The research instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire. The basic statistics used in the data analysis include frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation. The statistical methods used to test the hypotheses are the t-test and F-test through one-way analysis of variance (One-way ANOVA). The research findings revealed that: (1) Overall, the factors influencing students' decisions to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University were at a high level. When analyzed by category, three factors were found to have a high level of influence. Ranked in order of importance, social and family factors had the highest average score, followed by information and communication perception, and economic factors, respectively all at a high level. (2) The average monthly family income of students with different income levels has a statistically significant difference at the .05 level in their decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) between social and family factors and information and communication perception factors. Likewise, students' average monthly personal income also shows a statistically significant difference at the .05 level in their decision to borrow from the SLF between economic factors and information and communication perception factors. (3) It is recommended that the loan consideration and approval process be improved to become faster, more transparent, and more efficient, in order to increase borrower confidence and reduce operational delays. The loan interest rate should be reduced or made interest-free to alleviate borrowers' financial burdens and promote greater access to educational opportunities. Additionally, the document submission system should be enhanced to be more convenient, faster, and better integrated with online systems, to improve user convenience and reduce processing time. **Keywords:** Borrowing Decision, Student Loan Fund (SLF).

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INTRODUCTION

The Student Loan Fund (SLF) was established to reduce educational inequality and provide opportunities for financially disadvantaged students to access higher education on an equitable basis. However, several challenges remain. These include inaccurate income screening for low-income applicants, delays in the loan approval process, and an increasing rate of default due to insufficient post-graduation income for repayment

(Atthaphon Jorajan & Adun Suphanat, 2022). Additionally, many students lack a full understanding of the SLF's terms and conditions, reflecting both systemic issues within the SLF and behavioral challenges among borrowers themselves. (Pinit, Y., & Boonarchatong, K. 2020)

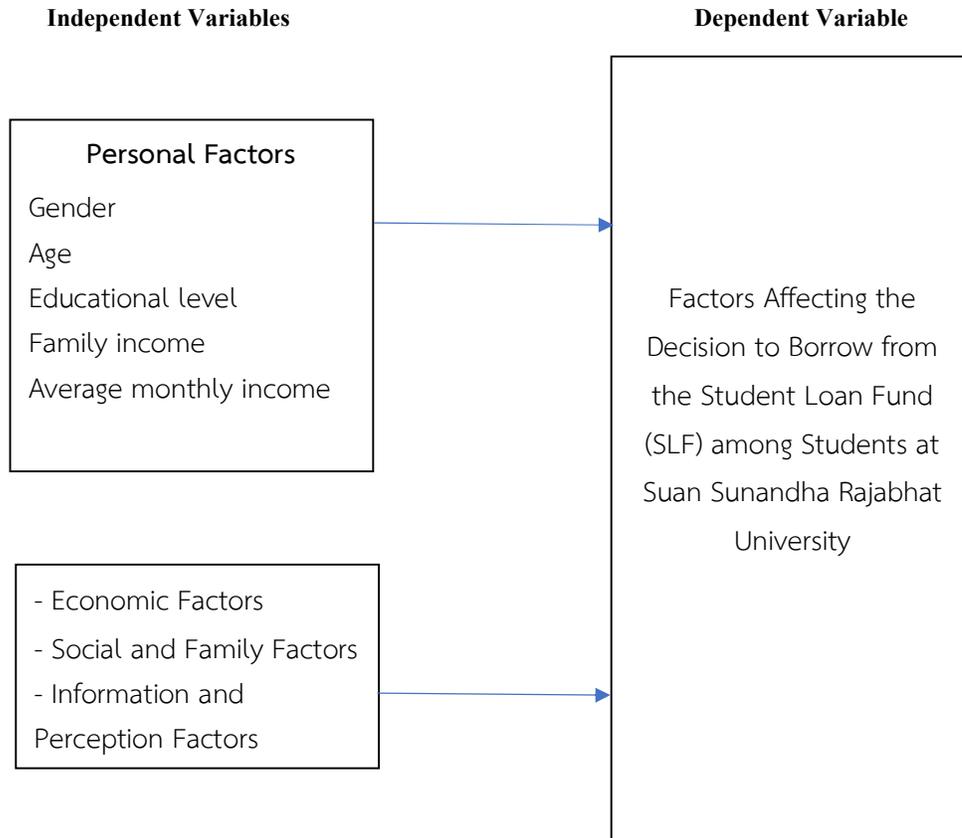
According to the Student Loan Fund Office (2022), the number of borrowers has steadily increased from approximately 3.2 million in 2012 to over 6 million in 2022. Yet, the on-time repayment rate averages only 55–60%, leading to cash flow shortages that hinder the fund's ability to fully support new borrowers. For the population in this study—Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University students totaling 6,339, with a sample of 380—most come from low- to middle-income families and rely on loans to fund their education. They also face limitations in accessing information, planning finances, and are influenced by family and peers in their borrowing decisions.

These challenges underscore the importance of studying the factors affecting students' decisions to borrow from the SLF. Understanding these behaviors can inform policies and support strategies to better assist borrowers. This research aims to examine personal, economic, social, and familial factors, as well as information perception, that influence borrowing decisions, and to propose improvements to the loan system and borrower support. The findings are expected to benefit policymakers, students and their families in financial planning, and universities in providing guidance and promoting equitable access to education over the long term.

Research Objectives

1. To examine personal factors influencing the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF).
2. To study economic, social, and familial factors, as well as information perception, that affect the decision to borrow from the SLF.
3. To propose guidelines for making informed decisions regarding borrowing from the SLF.

Research Conceptual Framework



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a **quantitative research approach**, using a questionnaire as the primary instrument to collect data from students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. The research aimed to examine the factors affecting students' decisions to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) for education.

Population and Sample

1. The population for this study comprised students of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University who had borrowed or had previously borrowed from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) in the 2025 academic year, totaling 6,339 students (Office of Student Development, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, 2025).

2. The sample consisted of 380 students selected from all faculties and colleges offering programs at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in the 2025 academic year. The sample size was determined using Yamane's formula (Yamane, 1973, cited in Vallop Ratchataranont, 2019) with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

The research instrument was a questionnaire, comprising both **close-ended** and **open-ended questions**, administered to students from all faculties and colleges of Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University in the 2025 academic year. The questionnaire was divided into three sections:

1. **Section 1: General information regarding personal factors** (5 items), including gender, age, educational level, family monthly income, and average monthly income of the student. This section used close-ended response questions.

2. **Section 2: Factors affecting the decision to borrow from the SLF** (25 items), covering: Economic factors (5 items), Social and family factors (9 items), Information perception factors (11 items). Respondents rated their answers on a **five-point Likert scale** to measure the degree of influence on their decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund.

3. **Section 3: Suggestions regarding the decision to borrow from the SLF**, which consisted of open-ended questions to allow students to provide their opinions and recommendations.

INSTRUMENT VALIDATION

1. Questionnaire Development

1. Developed a questionnaire regarding students' personal factors.
2. Developed a questionnaire related to economic, social, and family factors, as well as information perception, loan conditions, and procedures affecting the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF).
3. Developed a questionnaire regarding suggestions for improving the process of borrowing from the Student Loan Fund (SLF).
4. Submitted the draft questionnaires to the research advisor for review to identify deficiencies and provide recommendations for improvement, ensuring the questionnaires were complete and more accurate.

2. Reliability and Validity Testing

1. **Content validity:** Examined using the **Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC)**. Three or more experts reviewed the items and rated their alignment with the research objectives. Items were revised based on expert feedback.
2. The revised questionnaires were re-submitted to the advisor for a second review to ensure content validity.
3. **Pilot testing:** The questionnaires were trialed with 30 students from Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

4. **Reliability testing:** The overall reliability of the questionnaire was calculated using **Cronbach's alpha coefficient**, yielding a high reliability score of **0.952**.

5. After completing the validation and reliability testing, the finalized questionnaires were printed and prepared for the main data collection.

DATA COLLECTION

1. The questionnaires were distributed directly to students enrolled at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, who constituted the target population for this study. The researcher explained the purpose and details of the questionnaire and allowed respondents to complete it independently.
2. A total of 380 questionnaires were distributed, and all 380 were returned and deemed complete. Data collection was conducted during October 2025. The researcher ensured completeness by reviewing each questionnaire, and for any incomplete responses, follow-up interviews were conducted to obtain accurate and comprehensive data.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using statistical software and supporting tables. The analysis and hypothesis testing procedures were as follows:

1. **Descriptive Statistics:** Used to summarize the data, including:
 - **Frequency and Percentage:** To describe the personal factors of students.
 - **Mean and Standard Deviation:** To quantify the level of influence of various factors on the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF).
2. **Inferential Statistics:** Used to test the research hypotheses as follows:
 - **Independent t-test:** Applied to compare the means between two groups at a significance level of 0.05. For example, this test was used to examine differences in borrowing decisions based on gender. Prior to analysis, **Levene's Test** was conducted to assess the equality of variances. If the test indicated equal variances (Sig. > 0.05), the "Equal Variances Assumed" option was used; otherwise (Sig. < 0.05), "Equal Variances Not Assumed" was applied.
 - **One-way ANOVA (F-test):** Used to compare means among more than two groups, such as age, education level, family income, average monthly income, and other factors.
 - **Post-hoc Analysis:** If significant differences were detected in ANOVA, pairwise comparisons were conducted using **Fisher's Least Significant Difference (LSD)** method to identify which groups differed significantly (Boonchom Srisard, 2015).

RESEARCH RESULTS

Objective 1: To examine the personal factors influencing the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF)

The results indicated that personal factors, including gender, age, educational level, personal income, and family income, affected students' borrowing decisions in certain aspects. In particular, family income and personal income were found to have a statistically significant effect on the perceived necessity of borrowing at the 0.05 level. This suggests that students' economic status remains a key determinant in the decision to borrow, which is consistent with the study's hypothesis and the first research objective.

Objective 2: To examine the influence of economic, social, family, and information perception factors

The findings revealed that all three factors—economic, social and family, and information perception—exerted a strong influence on students' borrowing decisions. Among them, social and family factors had the highest mean score, followed by information perception, and then economic factors. Furthermore, differences in family income significantly affected social and family factors as well as information perception. These results confirm that borrowers are influenced not only by their family context and social networks but also by their understanding and awareness of the conditions of the loan fund.

Table 2.1: Shows the mean and standard deviation of factors influencing students' decisions to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University.

(n=380)

Factors	Mean	S.D.	Decision Level	Rank
Economic Factors	4.40	.586	High	3
Social and Family Factors	4.50	.612	Highest	1
Information and Awareness	4.46	.586	High	2
Overall	4.45	0.518	High	

From Table 2.1, it can be observed that the factors influencing the decision to borrow from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) among students at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University are overall at a high level (Mean = 4.45, S.D. = 0.518). When analyzed by category, three main factors affecting the borrowing decision were identified, all at a high level.

3) Objective 3: Proposing Guidelines for Student Loan Decisions from the SLF

Based on students' suggestions and the data analysis, the researcher can summarize the key guidelines for instance, the loan application and approval system should be improved to ensure faster processing and greater transparency. It is recommended to consider reducing the interest rate or providing interest-free loans to prevent future financial burdens. The channels and methods of communication regarding procedures,

conditions, and repayment should be made clear, particularly through online systems. Additionally, the university should offer financial counseling services to students. These recommendations are directly derived from the research findings.”

DISCUSSION

The present study examined factors influencing students’ decisions to take loans from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University. Overall, the factors affecting students’ decisions were found to be highly influential (Mean = 4.45, S.D. = 0.518), indicating that students hold positive attitudes and recognize the importance of the SLF as a financial mechanism for educational opportunities. Student loans were perceived more as an investment in their future rather than a financial burden, helping to reduce social inequality and provide equal educational opportunities. Furthermore, students expressed confidence in the transparent management of the fund and believed that repayment could be effectively managed after graduation. These findings also reflect contemporary student trends, emphasizing financial planning and viewing education as an investment for future returns.

Economic factors were also found to be highly influential (Mean = 4.40, S.D. = 0.586). Daily expenses, tuition fees, and family obligations were identified as the primary drivers motivating students to seek loans, consistent with the study of Ariane de Gayardon, Claire Callender, and Francis Green (2019), which found that loan decisions are related to family income and wealth, parental education and occupation, gender, ethnicity, and students’ attitudes toward debt. Students living with their parents during their studies tended to avoid loans for personal expenses. These findings highlight the complexity of economic and social factors affecting loan decisions and provide insights for policies aimed at promoting equitable access to education.

Social and family factors were found to have the highest influence (Mean = 4.50, S.D. = 0.612), indicating that family plays a crucial role in students’ loan decisions, particularly in low-income households. Loans were often viewed as a means to alleviate financial burdens and provide opportunities for children to continue their education. Families that offered support and positive guidance helped foster confidence in students’ decision-making. These findings align with Ariane de Gayardon, Claire Callender, and Francis Green (2019).

Information perception factors were also highly influential (Mean = 4.46, S.D. = 0.586). Students who received complete and accurate information about the SLF program were more likely to take loans. The role of communication by both the fund and the university through diverse channels, including websites, social media, and guidance systems, was crucial in enhancing students’ understanding and confidence. This finding is consistent with the study by Nongnuch Saengpruk (2021), which indicated that returning students expressed high satisfaction with the fund’s operations, particularly in terms of information dissemination, highlighting that comprehensive and clear communication is a key factor in creating borrower satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study regarding factors influencing students' decisions to take loans from the Student Loan Fund (SLF) at Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the convenience and efficiency of the loan system including develop a document submission and contract system that can be processed online, reducing unnecessary steps and paperwork, while increasing flexibility in loan amounts and repayment periods; Improve the debt monitoring system to make it easy to use and accessible at all times; Implement careful measures for evaluating guarantors and consider reducing interest rates or offering interest-free loans. Streamline the approval process to be faster, more transparent, and more efficient. These measures aim to support equitable access to educational opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

For future studies, it is recommended to include psychological and social variables, such as attitudes toward debt, perceptions of social pressure, and family expectations. In addition, detailed investigations into the family's economic conditions such as income, debt burden, and the number of school-aged children should be conducted. Moreover, the long-term psychological impacts on borrowers, such as stress and anxiety resulting from debt obligations, should be explored, as these factors may influence financial decision-making and future quality of life.

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