

**THE ANALYSIS OF THAI STUDENTS DETERMINANT TO STUDY IN
THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM**

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*International Journal of
Business and Economics* **IJBE**

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Abstract

The famous UK and US Postgraduate program is very popular among Thai students who finished Bachelor Degree in Thai Universities. The impact of the forces of globalization on postgraduate education has been powerful. The establishment of the Thai societies and economies requires pool of skilled people. Labour markets in the country or international and job opportunities are very competitive for applicants with the requisite skills, and many opportunities are seeking people at postgraduate and doctoral level. Hence Higher Education is bound up with human capital. They contribute considerably to scientific and technological development in their country and are a part of labour force worldwide offers valuable skills to any country in which they work in.

The analysis in this research paper investigate the determining factors influencing Thai students to study in the Master Degree level in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. This analysis helps the stakeholders in academia, educational development sectors and businesses to understand from the students' perspectives. They are to learn the factors affecting decisions from the demand side and also to improve the ability to provide education from the supply side. This could be important part of the mangement planning and strategy for international student recruitment to the US and UK institutions point of view. Also programmes in Thai institutions can be devised to suit the demand in this changing of trend.

The students had shown that they have various views toward their selection of higher education. Most of the students who study abroad use the service from education agents. Many stakeholders believe that Thailand has high opportunities for higher education and for student recruitment to study overseas, also collaboations with local institutions for further programme developments. However, the quality and the cost are the main concerns that need to be taken into account. The English language skills of Thai students I another main barrier for the international education in the country, especially when using English as a medium of teaching. The level of English is not at satisfying standard. The research finding defines the obstable preventing Thai students from going to study abroad, specifically in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It also describes many possibilities for Thai institutions to internationalize and for Education providers to seek opportunities and develop strategies.

Keywords: Study in the United Kingdom, Study in the United States of America, Higher Education Institution, Study abraod, Thai students, Education in Thailand

1. Introduction

Education is essential to show and teach people about other cultures, other languages, exposing them to others economically, politically, and culturally. International education is the mean in which students are bridged by culture, experience, language and knowledge globally.

From the past to present, there are many study abroad businesses and also educators who distribute and provide education. Education for individual, as a person, it is usually seen as the basis of career and opportunity for employment, status and recognition, and many more that enhancing one's ability and credibility. Education can be achieved various location around the world. International education is a popular option for students to gain life experience while studying. Higher education in Thailand increasingly plays an important role in giving higher education institutions more opportunity to grow. Thailand is attractive to foreign investment in education. Many Thai students would like to study abroad. The world is getting smaller and students know well that opportunities are out there and they are able to continue their study abroad easier than before. In order to have a good job opportunities, students nowadays are competitive. Despite higher cost of education in other countries and many issue concerning safety, staying away from home and family, around 25,000 Thai students had chosen to study abroad according to Nuffic Neso Thailand, (2010).

Studying abroad obviously is student's choice that come with several advantages. In our case we will consider United Kingdom and the United States of America for study destinations. These two countries are the two most popular countries for students to study overseas. Firstly, British and American education systems have long been acknowledged as the best globally recognized system. This recognition is like a path to great opportunities ahead and to achieve higher social status. Secondly, English language proficiency is very important. Studying abroad helps student to learn and practise English effectively. It is considered an asset to be able to use English language fluently, especially in Asian countries where English is a second language. Living abroad is broadening. Students are expected to learn to live their lives in Western culture which is a life experience. In general, students who have been in Western culture are normally absorb cultural values. For example, the punctuality, self-esteem, confidence and self organized. There are not only good side of studying abroad. The other side of this experience are, for example, homesickness, culture shock, language and inability to adapt to new countries. Of course there are bad sides of the story in living in a foreign culture. Overall studying and living abroad gives students life challenges and to improve their abilities to learn and mature out the experience.

2. Background

2.1 Trends in international student recruitment in the United Kingdom.

Following the decline of the international students number in the United Kingdom from the year 2011-2013, UK higher education faced problems in recruiting international students due to the change of UK Border Agency rules and regulation on student visa. The number of Indian students had fallen almost 50% in following two year. The number of international entrants with Master degree courses being particularly affected. According to Universities UK (2014), the UK's competitors in the student recruitment market – Australia, the US and Canada – have all seen significant increases in recent years, at a time when numbers coming to the UK have been in decline. Following the drop in demand since 2011, from the latest UK survey suggested a more positive policy for international recruitment should be starting to emerge in 2014.

2.2 The effect of the UK student visa cut on Thai students.

Australia (AU), Canada (CAN), New Zealand (NZ) and Thailand (TH) are considered both the sources for the students and destinations. For Thailand, only the international programs are considered in this study. Information concerning international student enrolment in 2009 available on websites are organized by the author as illustrated in Table 1.

The information gathered from various sources and re-assembled information into a source-destination table as illustrated in Table 2. The information in Table 2 represent the situation of the student enrolment in HEIs in the target source and destination countries before the UK new student visa policy began to take effect. Zero enrolment is in fact not strictly zero but it indicates that the numerical values are so small and may be considered negligible.

Table 1: Student enrolment in Higher Education Institution in the target countries

Higher Education Enrolment, 2009				
	International Student	Local Students	Total Student	International to Total Student Ratio, %
AU	226,011 ⁶	904,044	1,130,055	20.0 ⁵
CA	120,000	1,080,000	1,200,000 ⁵	10.0 ⁵
NZ	43,500 ⁸	425,500	469,000 ⁸	9.28
UK	325,000 ⁷	1,475,000	1,800,000 ⁵	18.0
US	671,616 ³	19,756,384	20,428,000 ²	3.3
TH *	5,881 ¹	68,381	74,262 ¹	7.8

Note: * Only international programs are considered.

Source: Commission of Higher Education. 2010

Table 2: Student enrolment sources and destinations in HEIs in the target countries

Source	Destination						Demands
	AU	CA	NZ	UK	US	TH	
AU	904,044	0	0	0	0	0	904,044
CA	0	1,080,000	441	5,350	29,697	0	1,115,488
NZ	0	0	425,500	0	0	0	425,500
UK	0	0	833	1,475,000	8,701	0	1,484,534
US	0	11,275	2,296	14,345	19,756,384	0	19,784,300
TH	26,380	0	3,098	4,675	8,736	68,381	111,270
OT	199,631	32,225	36,832	300,630	624,482.00	5,811	1,199,611
Supplies	1,130,055	1,123,500	469,000	1,800,000	20,428,000	74,192	25,024,747

Source: ¹ Commission of Higher Education. 2010.

2.3 Trends in international student recruitment in the United States.

According to World Education Service (2012), trends indicate that enrollment has been growing in the U.S., because of the supply of students from the traditional countries whose students like to study in the United States such as, India or China. There are also students from emerging markets to the US such as Brazil and Saudi Arabia. The economy of the United States starts to get better, this shall effect the perspective of employment in a good way and also among international students, this is the good news. Effects of the immigration policies in the UK, it is likely that pool of international who wanted to go to the UK will be

diverted to other destinations, United States, Australia and Canada. The United States of America as the world's leading country of destination among international students. It is seen as the main recruiter and the number of international students population is still growing.

3. Methodology

This research is quantitative design using questionnaire to collect data from samples. The research sample are with the population of student or alumni who decided to study in the UK or the US. The result from the questionnaire interview helped to identify barriers, driver and deterrents for students to continue their Postgraduate education in the UK and the US, and to gain some insight into the strategies that the Universities could consider to cope.

3.1 Populations and Sample Size.

The population of this research is limited by the time and resource constraints. Numbers of the Thai students who had studied in the United Kingdom or the United States of American are planned for the interviewed. There are 400 persons as illustrated in Table 3. The major objectives of the interview are to confirm the trends expected from statistical analysis of secondary data, and to find more subtle information which may not be available elsewhere. It is planned that most of the interviews will be carried out from student database of UK and US Postgraduate prospective students. We will then use the result to seek thoughts from the UK Higher Education Institutions' international office representatives during an education fairs organized by the British Council Thailand and The Office of the Civil Service Commission.

Table 3: The planned number of interviewed persons

Interviewee	Number
Thai students who decided to study their Postgraduate level in the UK	200
Thai students who decided to study their Postgraduate level in the US	200
Total	400

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis.

This questionnaire interview participated by 400 students decided to study in the UK and the US were conducted via the Universities alumni associations, Universities' regional offices in Thailand and Malaysia, and pre-departure sessions for Thai students. The data was analysed using the Analysis of Variance (Anova) which shows the results from cross analysis and correlation analysis for this research. The content analysis also provided in order to study the importance of information collected and look for themes, commonalities, and patterns to make sense of the information.

4. Finding and Analysis

4.1 Decision of Thai students to study in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The 400 respondents responded to the statements below. It is summarized in Table 4

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of the response to each research statement

No	Statement	UK			Meaning	US			Meaning
		Mean	SD	Median		Mean	SD	Median	
Student experience									
1	It is a fantastic opportunity to travel and see the world.	3.00	1.18	3.00	Neutral	3.99	0.72	4.00	Agree
8	Getting a part-time job while studying is very important for Thai students.	4.30	0.70	3.00	Strongly Agree	2.23	0.84	2.00	Disagree
10	I agree that the number of international students should be reduced. There are too many international students.	3.08	1.31	3.00	Neutral	2.98	1.26	3.00	Neutral
Language improvement									
2	Being fluent in a English language is the main aim of studying abroad, benefiting in both in career and personal life.	3.01	1.32	3.00	Neutral	3.17	1.26	3.00	Neutral
16	The main barrier to higher quality of higher education in Thailand is the English language skills of Thai students.	3.21	1.38	3.00	Neutral	2.87	1.09	3.00	Neutral
HEI strategies									
3	If Thai University offer a Dual Degree with University abroad, ie. One semester abroad. I would not go to study abroad.	3.23	1.37	3.00	Neutral	3.14	1.14	3.00	Neutral
5	If international higher education in Thailand is better in quality, less Thai students will study abroad.	3.10	1.38	3.00	Neutral	3.07	1.37	3.00	Neutral
6	If international education in Thailand is less expensive, Thai students will study in the country.	3.79	0.76	4.00	Agree	2.35	0.82	2.00	Disagree
13	The quality of international higher education in Thailand is acceptable for prospective students.	3.06	1.36	3.00	Neutral	3.22	1.18	3.00	Neutral
14	International higher education fees in Thailand is acceptable, compared to your choice of studying abroad (exclude living expense, etc.)	3.10	1.29	3.00	Neutral	3.02	1.28	3.00	Neutral
15	Thai University calendar (change in 2014, Semester starts in August) benefit Thai student to study abroad without time gap.	3.06	1.48	3.00	Neutral	3.09	1.17	3.00	Neutral
Length of the study program									
7	The length of Degree program abroad is shorter.	3.63	1.07	4.00	Agree	2.50	0.89	3.00	Neutral
Career prospects									
9	Studying abroad gives Thai students more opportunity to get a better paid job in Thailand.	3.34	1.33	3.00	Neutral	3.02	1.27	3.00	Neutral

4	Studying abroad is something unique and noteworthy on CV that will help me to stand out.	2.86	1.18	3.00	Neutral	3.23	1.48	3.00	Neutral
11	I want to work abroad. This is the start to my international career.	3.12	1.38	3.00	Neutral	3.02	1.34	3.00	Neutral
12	I believe in free-movement of students and workers between countries	3.07	1.31	3.00	Neutral	3.23	1.26	3.00	Neutral
17	Re-entering higher education is worth quitting a job.	3.01	1.22	3.00	Neutral	2.96	1.39	3.00	Neutral
20	Lacking of years in working experience while study abroad worries me.	3.12	1.26	3.00	Neutral	2.99	1.25	3.00	Neutral
Expense									
18	Exchange rate affect my decision making to study abroad.	3.51	0.90	4.00	Agree	2.89	1.13	3.00	Neutral
22	Scholarship and lower tuition fees are key to choose a University.	3.68	1.00	4.00	Agree	2.68	0.91	3.00	Neutral
Visa policy									
19	Visa & Immigration rules are key factor affecting my decision.	3.43	0.95	4.00	Neutral	2.55	0.92	3.00	Neutral
University's branding and ranking									
23	University ranking is my main concern.	3.16	1.27	3.00	Neutral	2.97	1.30	3.00	Neutral
Family influence									
21	Personal recommendation is important in choosing a University.	3.21	1.36	3.00	Neutral	2.92	1.20	3.00	Neutral
24	My parent influences my decision a lot.	3.14	1.34	3.00	Neutral	3.17	1.29	3.00	Neutral

4.2 Data Analysis

Anova is used in analysis of this questionnaire. The 400 respondents were interviewed with the designed questionnaire survey. The result from Anova is as followed.

4.2.1 Regression equation:

$$\text{Full Model: } Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 Q1 + \beta_2 Q2 + \beta_3 Q3 + \beta_4 Q4 + \beta_5 Q5 + \beta_6 Q6 + \beta_7 Q7 + \beta_8 Q8 + \beta_9 Q9 + \beta_{10} Q10 + \beta_{11} Q11 + \beta_{12} Q12 + \beta_{13} Q13 + \beta_{14} Q14 + \beta_{15} Q15 + \beta_{16} Q16 + \beta_{17} Q17 + \beta_{18} Q18 + \beta_{19} Q19 + \beta_{20} Q20 + \beta_{21} Q21 + \beta_{22} Q22 + \beta_{23} Q23 + \beta_{24} Q24$$

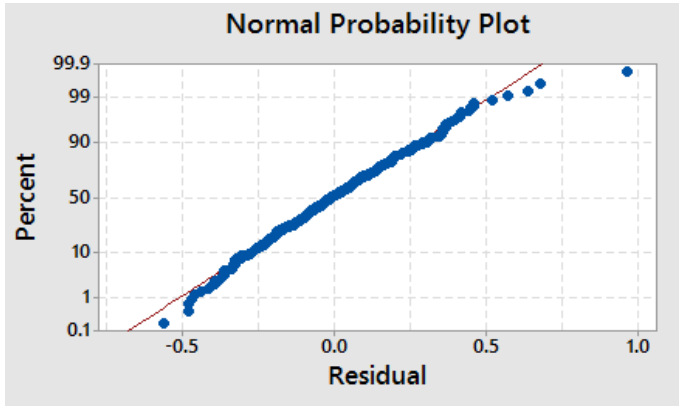
S	R-sq	R-sq(adj)	R-sq(pred)
0.226575	80.75%	79.52%	78.05%

4.2.2 Analysis of Variance:

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	24	80.749	3.3645	65.540	0.000
Residual Error	375	19.251	0.0513		
Total	399	100.000			

The regression equation is used to explain the behaviour of variables. The changes of the independent variables effect the decision making of the Thai students (Y).

Figure 1: The normal probability plot



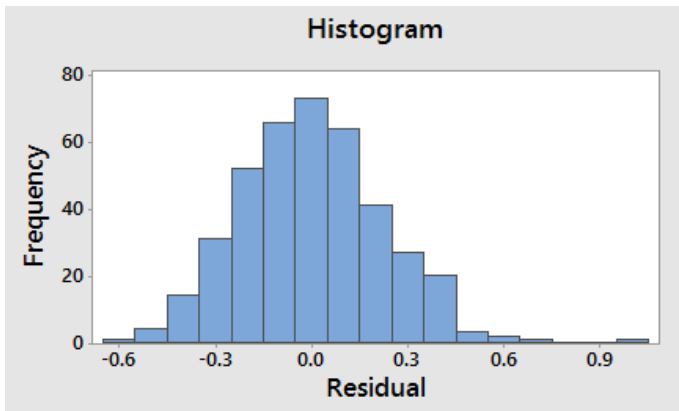
From figure 1, the normal probability plot represents the 24 statements from the questionnaire. The distribution of residuals is normal, the plot resembles a straight line. From this regression equation.

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Country} &= -0.688 - 0.0580 Q1 - 0.01059 Q2 + 0.00641 Q3 - 0.03450 Q4 \\
 &+ 0.01315 Q5 + 0.1320 Q6 + 0.0442 Q7 + 0.1857 Q8 + 0.00532 Q9 \\
 &+ 0.00264 Q10 + 0.00021 Q11 - 0.01548 Q12 - 0.00845 Q13 \\
 &- 0.00232 Q14 - 0.01098 Q15 + 0.00346 Q16 + 0.00202 Q17 \\
 &+ 0.0263 Q18 + 0.0503 Q19 + 0.00221 Q20 + 0.00077 Q21 \\
 &+ 0.0401 Q22 + 0.01531 Q23 - 0.00700 Q24
 \end{aligned}$$

Figure 2: Versus order

The versus order shows the relationship of variables and the residuals in a normal distribution and random pattern. Both plot of residuals versus observation orders do not show any pattern form. Thus, both constant variance and independence assumptions are satisfied. There are 24 variables in relation to the 400 sample size.

Figure 3: Histogram



This histogram is a graphical representation of the distribution of consistant data with narrow spread. It is a skewed right, bell shape normal distribution. The most significant variables are identified by Stepwise regression.

4.2.3 Reduced Model:

Full Model: $Y_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta_1 Q_1 + \beta_2 Q_2 + \dots + \beta_m Q_m$

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Country} &= -0.7072 - 0.0573 Q_1 - 0.03400 Q_4 + 0.1343 Q_6 + 0.0462 Q_7 \\ &+ 0.1843 Q_8 - 0.01754 Q_{12} + 0.0251 Q_{18} + 0.0517 Q_{19} + 0.0422 Q_{22} \\ &+ 0.01402 Q_{23} \end{aligned}$$

S R-sq R-sq(adj) R-sq(pred)
0.224649 80.37% 79.86% 79.22%

4.2.4 Analysis of Variance (Stepwise):

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Regression	10	80.368	8.0368	159.25	0.000
Residual Error	389	19.632	0.0505		
Total	399	100.000			

Figure 4: The normal probability plots stepwise pattern

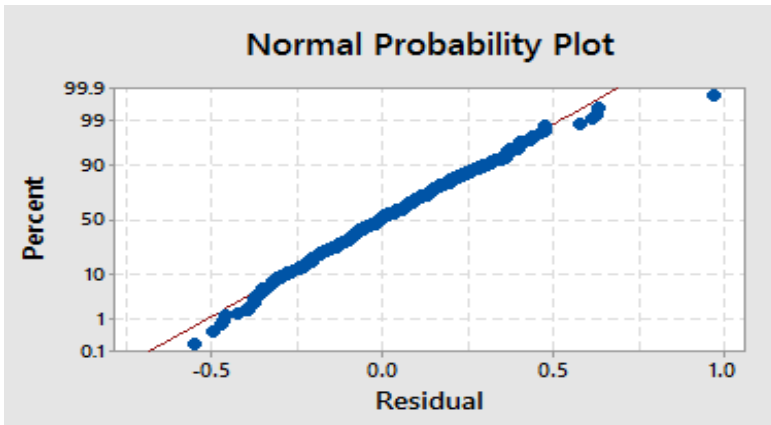


Figure 5: Versus order of the reduced model

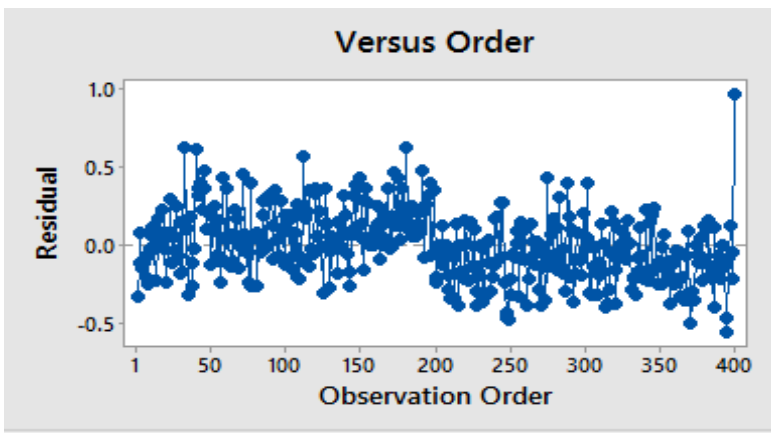
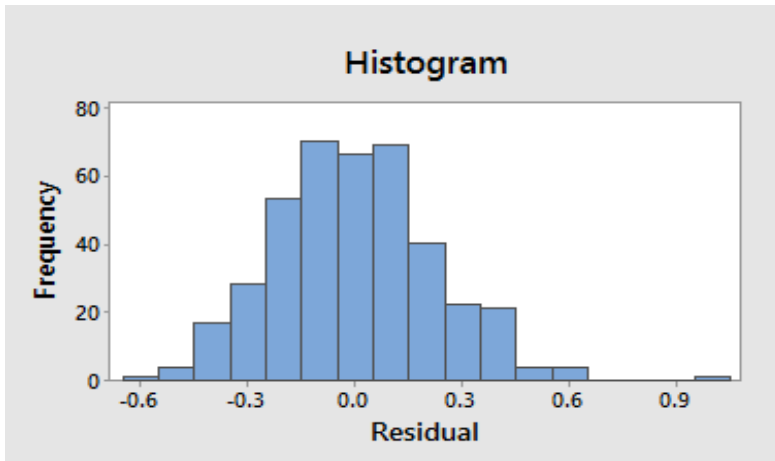


Figure 6: Histogram of the reduced model



Comparison of each variable affecting the decision making of the students to study in the UK and the US presented in regression analysis with Q1 – Q24. This table shows the P-Value of each question statement which indicate its significant value statistically. It is assumed that each research statement is an independent value.

Table 5: P-Value of the response to each research statement

No.	Statement	P-Value
Student experience		
1	It is a fantastic opportunity to travel and see the world.	0.000
8	Getting a part-time job while studying is very important for Thai students.	0.000
10	I agree that the number of international students should be reduced. There are too many international students.	0.432
Language improvement		
2	Being fluent in a English language is the main aim of studying abroad, benefiting in both in career and personal life.	0.202
16	The main barrier to higher quality of higher education in Thailand is the English language skills of Thai students.	0.007
HEI strategies		
3	If Thai University offer a Dual Degree with University abroad, ie. One semester abroad. I would not go to study abroad.	0.406
5	If international higher education in Thailand is better in quality, less Thai students will study abroad.	0.827
6	If international education in Thailand is less expensive, Thai students will study in the country.	0.000
13	The quality of international higher education in Thailand is acceptable for prospective students.	0.196
14	International higher education fees in Thailand is acceptable, compared to your choice of studying abroad (exclude living expense, etc.)	0.587
15	Thai University calendar (change in 2014, Semester starts in August) benefit Thai student to study abroad without time gap.	0.881
Length of the study program		
7	The length of Degree program abroad is shorter.	0.000

Career prospects		
9	Studying abroad gives Thai students more opportunity to get a better paid job in Thailand.	0.010
4	Studying abroad is something unique and noteworthy on CV that will help me to stand out.	0.005
11	I want to work abroad. This is the start to my international career.	0.532
12	I believe in free-movement of students and workers between countries	0.201
17	Re-entering higher education is worth quitting a job.	0.759
20	Lacking of years in working experience while study abroad worries me.	0.283
Expense		
18	Exchange rate affect my decision making to study abroad.	0.000
22	Scholarship and lower tuition fees are key to choose a University.	0.000
Visa policy		
19	Visa & Immigration rules are key factor affecting my decision.	0.000
University's branding and ranking		
23	University ranking is my main concern.	0.120
Family influence		
21	Personal recommendation is important in choosing a University.	0.018
24	My parent influences my decision a lot.	0.819

Each of the question statement is analysed by using the regression analysis, its interpretation is presented from question 1 to question 24 in this research. The significant level (α) is set at 0.05.

4.3 Discussion of the Research Results

For this research paper, the statistical analysis is used to determine the probability that a given hypothesis is true. Hypothesis testing is as followed;

H_a: There is significant relationship between the factors influencing on decision making to study in the UK and US.

$$H_0: \beta_0 \dots \beta_{24} = 0$$

$$H_1: \beta_0 \dots \beta_{24} \neq 0$$

$$F\text{-Critical} = 1.546446$$

$$F\text{-Stat} = 65.54$$

$$F\text{-Critical}_{\text{Questionnaire}} < F\text{-Stat}_{\text{Questionnaire}}$$

F-critical can be found from the F table statistic or use the excel formula command;

$\text{FINV}(\text{Probability}, \text{Degree of freedom}_1, \text{Degree of freedom}_2)$

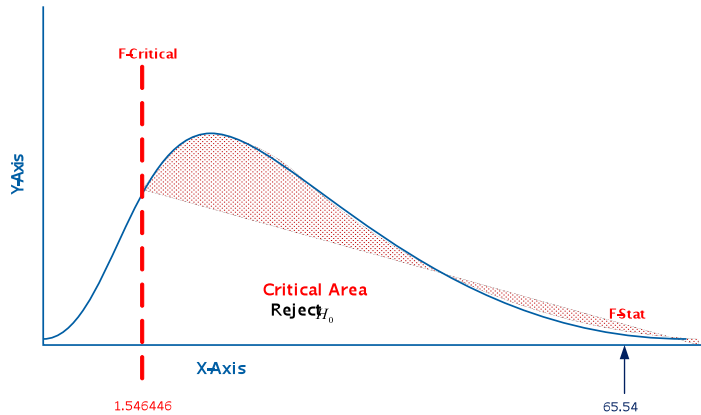
Probability = 0.05

Degree of freedom₁ (Degree of freedom's Regression) = 24

Degree of freedom₂ (Degree of freedom's Residual) = 375

F-critical < F-Statistic

Figure 7: Critical area of hypothesis A: There is significant relationship between the factors influencing on decision making to study in the UK and US.



Analysis: This data is significant with 95% confident interval.

From the F-Critical and F-Statistic, the value shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. There is significant relationship between the factors influencing on decision making to study in the UK and US.

From the result of ANOVA test table, R square is 99.2%, 0.8% is error. The data collected is accurate.

H_b : There is significant relationship between respondent’s data

$$H_0: \beta_0, \beta_{\text{Gender}}, \beta_{\text{Age}}, \beta_{\text{Income}}, \beta_{\text{Work}}, \beta_{\text{Nationality}} = 0$$

$$H_1: \beta_0, \beta_{\text{Gender}}, \beta_{\text{Age}}, \beta_{\text{Income}}, \beta_{\text{Work}}, \beta_{\text{Nationality}} \neq 0$$

From F-Critical = 2.236895

F-Stat = 66.27

$$F\text{-Critical}_{\text{Family_pprofile}} < F\text{-Stat}_{\text{Family_profile}}$$

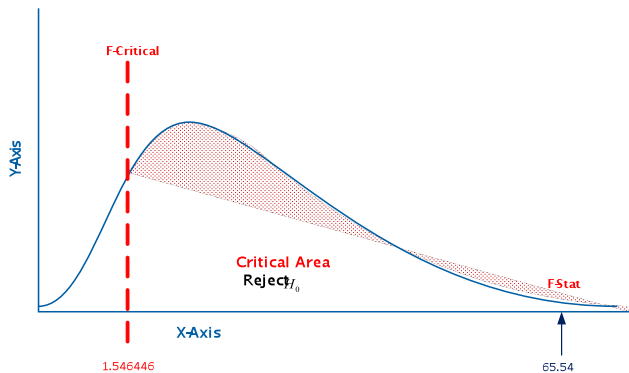
Find the F-critical by open the F table statistic or use the excel formula command FINV(Probability, Degree of freedom₁, Degree of freedom₂)

Probability = 0.05

Degree of freedom₁ (Degree of freedom’s Regression) =5

Degree of freedom₂ (Degree of freedom’s Residual) =394

Figure 8: Critical area of hypothesis B: There is significant relationship between the respondent’s data.

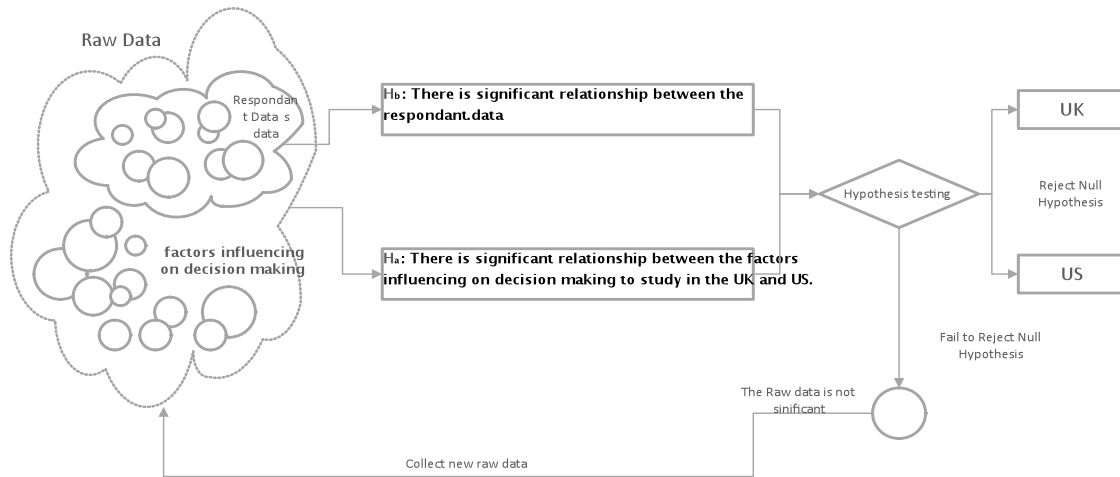


Analysis: This data is significant with 95% confident interval.

From the F-Critical and F-Statistic, the value shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. The data then rejecting H0, there is significant relationship between the respondent's data.

From the result of ANOVA test table, R square is 99.2%, 0.8% is error. The data collected is accurate.

Figure 9: Hypothesis testing diagram



4.4 Contribution to Theories and Concept

From this research, the decision making model of Thai student to study abroad is proposed. The attributes presented in the decision making model proposed are the center of the evaluation of alternatives stage. The attributes are factors that influence the purchase intention of international students. The influencing factors proposed were expense, length of time study program, HEI strategies, safety, personal reasons and family influence, visa policy, institution ranking, and country image.

After the data has been analysed and the reduced model is developed from Stepwise analysis, we concluded the factors influencing the decision making. The new decision making model of Thai student to study abroad is devised as shown in figure 10, figure 11 and figure 12.

Figure 10: Decision making model of Thai student to study abroad

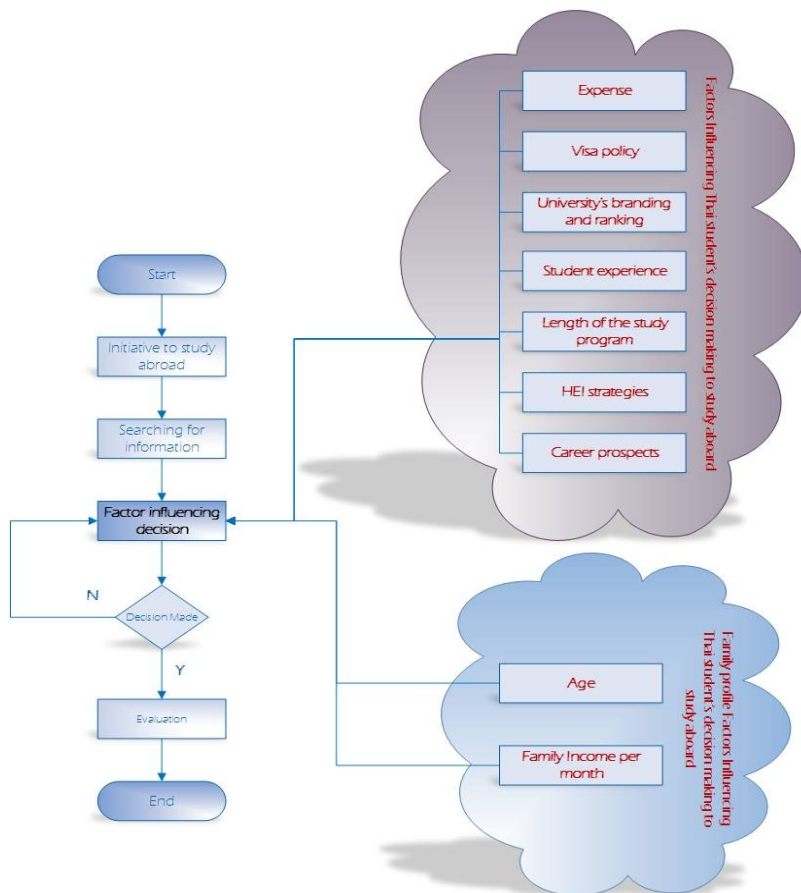


Figure 11: Factors influencing Thai students' decision making to study abroad according to the statements from the questionnaire

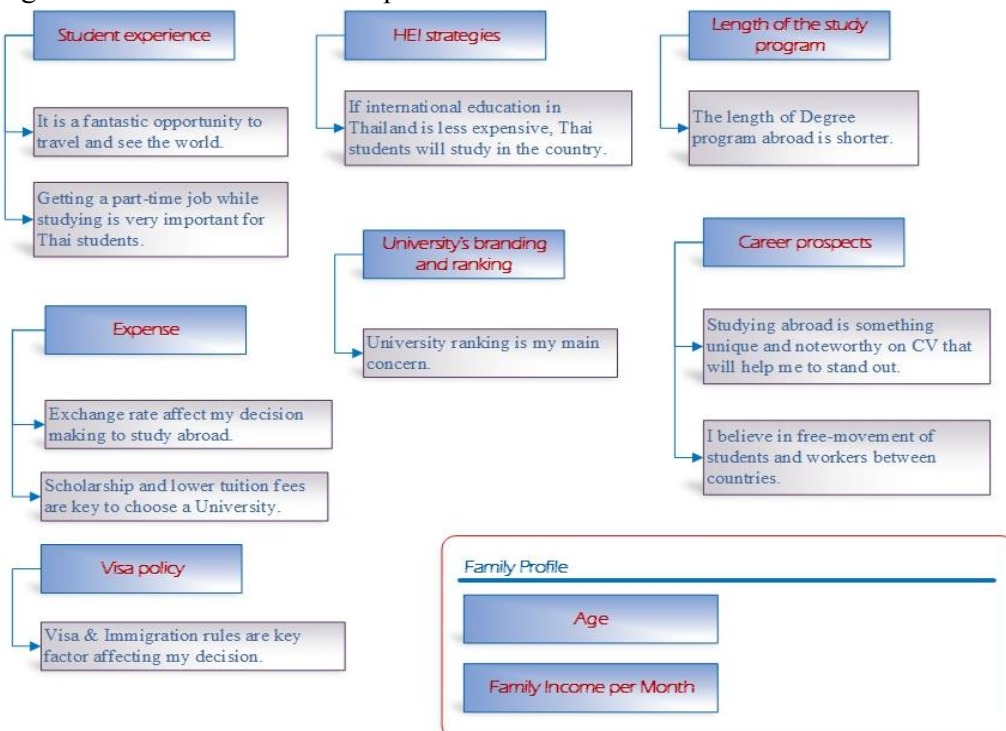
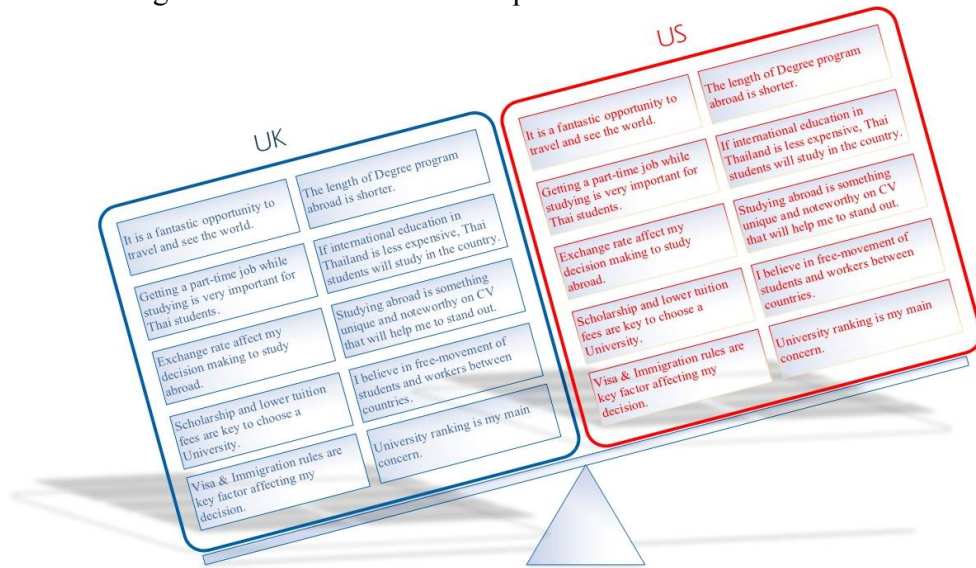


Figure 12: Factors influencing Thai students’ decision making to study in the UK and the US according to the statements from the questionnaire.



This study contributes to the students’ decision making discussion by increasing our understanding from the supply side of international education from Thai students perspective. It is clear, based on the findings of this research, that both controllable and uncontrollable influencing factors play major role in the student’s choice. It is very useful for education providers to understand and develop appropriate strategies for international recruitment. There are rooms for improvement for Thai education providers to adapt and change for the better.

Basically the development of all decision making, decision making models and theories in this research have been based on the recent studies and perspective of Thai students. This research needs to be updated constantly according to the changing business environment and trends in international education.

5. Conclusion

There are few points to discuss from this analysis, one is the main perceptions of Thai students toward studying in the UK and the US and another one is the future of international education in Thailand. As result from the questionnaire, both Thai students went to study in the UK and the US aim to improve their language skills, upgrade their CVs to find a better paid jobs and gain life experience. It shows the Thai students from the US side are not sensitive to high tuition fees, visa rules, length of degree program, and lack of years in working experience. They seems determined with their choices.

For Thailand, International education is growing and the future international education in Thailand was managed by the various education sectors. Offering a dual degree program and the international degree in Thailand is another option that is now booming in the country. This is because there are strong demand in international education in this country. It is very popular among the Thai students but from the questionnaire result shows that the alumni tends not to choose the option instead of going abroad.

In promoting international education in Thailand, quality appears to have a big role. Thai students tend to have lower capability in using English language, make it harder for international education to thrive in the country. The language proficiency of Thai students need improvement.

What is likely to happen for the near future? Thai students will continue to flow to English speaking countries for international education. International education in Thailand will also continue to grow with hope for quality and rooms for improvements.

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