# The Determinants of Thai Students Decision-Making to Study in The United Kingdom and The United States of America

"ปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อการตัดสินใจเพื่อศึกษาต่อในสหราชอาณาจักร และสหรัฐอเมริกา ของนักเรียนไทย"

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# **ABSTRACT**

Education is now open for all people who seek for and be eligible to pay for it. Education services have become a commodity in international marketplace. There are a lot of Thai students wish to study the graduate degrees in the UK and the US. They have various choice to choose and many decision to make. Understanding the needs and wants of the students or the demand side as well as the ability to give education as a service product or the supply side, a better arrangement can be planned. Based on the study results, alternatives to studying abroad, such as newer and better study programs in Thailand that suit students' needs at more reasonable costs may be brought in to consideration.

This paper discusses the determinants of students in higher education from Thailand to study in the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America (US) as the two of the most popular countries among all international students, with the best globally recognized education systems. Various study abroad perspective were discussed and also toward other study destinations i.e. Australia, Canada, New Zealand and Thailand itself. The possible effects of the UK and US marketing strategies to recruit students in Thailand and related factors influencing decision of the students are brought in to discuss. A questionnaire interview was carried out on students and alumni from Thailand who had chosen to study in the UK or the US including observations from education service agents, higher education institutes

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representatives from the UK and US, and prospective Thai students seeking for education in the UK and US.

The students had different perspective toward choosing the two countries as the place to further their education but they felt neutral in some of the areas. The majority of the education service agents maintain the good level of effort in recruiting Thai students for both the UK and the US universities. Most of the stakeholders agreed that there are opportunities for the growth of international education in Thailand, also pathways for developments. However, the quality improvement and the cost reduction may need to be in account. The level of English skills of Thai students seems to be a major barrier to international education in Thailand which English is used as a medium. The problem of low English skills of Thai students need to be improved.

**Keywords:** International education, Higher education, Education in Thailand, Study Abroad, International student, Study UK, Study USA

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is undoubtedly one of the most important factors in socioeconomic development and to improve social and economic condition for a nation or an individual, education is essential. The discussion of study abroad programs and international education in general has become more prevalent in the field of educational research. In the past decade, numerous study abroad organizations and research groups have been expanded. For an individual, education is the basis for employment, career opportunity, social status and recognition. Education may be achieved in one's country or in foreign countries. To achieve these goals many Thai students aim to study abroad.

In Thailand, higher education increasingly plays an essential role in enabling greater opportunities for growth and attractiveness to foreign investment. For the Thais, in order to secure good employment position, studying abroad is a popular choice. It is a passport to a better employment opportunity and a relatively higher social status, despite the relatively higher cost and personal insecurity concerning living away from home. Moreover, studying abroad is an effective way of gaining English proficiency. The ability to read and write English is an asset for people in Thailand or any Asian countries. Having knowledge about Western cultures through living in a particular country is a worthwhile experience. In general, students

who have been trained in a Western culture will absorb some Western cultural values such as punctuality, self-confidence, and well organized. Of course there are bad sides of the story in living in a foreign culture. Loneliness, isolation, homesickness, inability to adapt to the environment can be barriers of education success. Living abroad gives many challenges to improve one's abilities. Students learn to take good care of them and learn what they should do in different situations. They learn and get matured out of their experience.

## **BACKGROUND**

Education becomes a service business producted to everyone who can afford for the expense. The international higher education market is expanding while more and more higher education institutes (HEIs) are providing international education. The level of competition is getting higher. Many factors affecting international education include government policies, rules and regulations concerning student visa, employment opportunity, English proficiency requirement, entry requirement, various institutions' products and government policy on supports or barriers for international education. Wider access to the internet has made it easy for communication, finding information and learning. According to Thammaneewong & Nakthong (2012), online world is another way of creative learning. There is a need to develop innovative technology especially in education (Lekkla & Sombooksuk, 2012). Study abroad still is a wider choice to world experiecnce. Some of these influencing factors mentioned above are controllable while the others are not. They affect the decision of the students in different ways. For HEIs, the number of enrolled international students is an important factor since it is an important source of revenue, which can be critical to liquidity or even survival of the organizations. Similar statement can be attributed to international education agencies who assist the students in finding the right education destinations and recruit students for HEIs.

International education in the UK: For Thai students, studying abroad has become more and more popular. Until today it seems a must for parents to send their children abroad as English language is seen as the need. The UK as one of the most popular educational destination and the originality of English is there the good choice of studying. The United Kingdom is popular for its 12 months postgraduate program was found to be a great attraction and the main factor driving demand in higher education for international market (BBC, 2011). The numbers of international student in the UK from many countries are illustrated in Table 1. It is measured by the number of student visa which tends to rise gradually. This happens also

for work visa, settlement visa, and family migration. The student enrolment in the United Kingdom in the year 2009 and 2010 was 339,735 and 405,810 respectively. Chinese and Indian students are majority of international students in the UK. The Thai students were only about 1.4% of all the international students. Figure 1 displays the number of students from each country before the rules for UK student visa were to be much stricter in the year 2011 according the The Migration Observatory at The University of Oxford.

Table 1 International students enrolment in HEIs in the UK in 2009-2010

| No. | Nationality       | Enrolmen | t     |         |       | Growth |
|-----|-------------------|----------|-------|---------|-------|--------|
|     |                   | 2009     | %     | 2010    | %     | %      |
| 1   | China             | 47,035   | 14.5  | 56,990  | 14.0  | 21.2   |
| 2   | India             | 34,065   | 10.5  | 38,500  | 9.5   | 13.0   |
| 3   | Nigeria           | 14,380   | 4.4   | 16,680  | 4.1   | 16.0   |
| 4   | Ireland           | 15,360   | 4.7   | 16,595  | 4.1   | 8.0    |
| 5   | Germany           | 14,130   | 4.3   | 15,425  | 3.8   | 9.2    |
| 6   | USA               | 14,345   | 4.4   | 15,060  | 3.7   | 5.0    |
| 7   | Malaysia          | 12,695   | 3.9   | 14,060  | 3.5   | 10.8   |
| 8   | France            | 13,090   | 4.0   | 13,780  | 3.4   | 5.3    |
| 9   | Greece            | 12,035   | 3.7   | 11,785  | 2.9   | -2.1   |
| 10  | Cyprus            | 10,370   | 3.2   | 11,160  | 2.7   | 7.6    |
| 11  | Hong Kong (China) | 9,600    | 3.0   | 9,945   | 2.5   | 3.6    |
| 12  | Pakistan          | 9,610    | 3.0   | 9,815   | 2.4   | 2.1    |
| 13  | Poland            | 9,145    | 2.8   | 8,415   | 2.1   | -8.0   |
| 14  | Saudi Arabia      | 5,205    | 1.6   | 8,340   | 2.1   | 60.2   |
| 15  | Italy             | 6,035    | 1.9   | 6,650   | 1.6   | 10.2   |
| 16  | Spain             | 5,690    | 1.8   | 5,720   | 1.4   | 0.5    |
| 17  | Canada            | 5,350    | 1.6   | 5,575   | 1.4   | 4.2    |
| 18  | Thailand          | 4,675    | 1.7   | 5,505   | 1.4   | 17.8   |
| 19  | Bulgaria          | 2,185    | 0.7   | 3,395   | 0.8   | 55.4   |
| 20  | Netherlands       | 3,200    | 1.0   | 3,270   | 8.0   | 2.2    |
| 21  | Others            | 91,535   | 23.4  | 129,155 | 31.8  | 41.1   |
|     | Total             | 339,735  | 100.0 | 405,810 | 100.0 | 24.9   |

Source: UK Council for International Student Affairs, 2014.

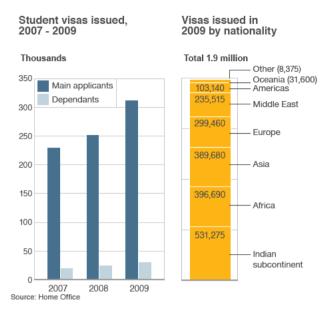


Figure 1 Student visas issued by the UK

International education in the United States of America: The United States of America (US) is the largest international education provider. The total number of international student enrolment in 2012-2013 was 819,644 for the US. During 2001-2009 the number of international student enrolment in the US, has been growing at an average rate of 2.5% per year. However, during 2003-2006 the number of international student enrolment in the USA steadily declined due to the strict visa policy following the 911 incident couple with higher education fees and stronger competition from other English-speaking countries (Institute of International Education, 2013). Thailand ranked 14<sup>th</sup> on the list with 8,736 enrolment in 2008. During 2005-2009, the number of Thai students declined by 3.0%. According to Statista Inc. (2014), statistic shows the number of international students that were studying in the United States as of 2013 on Figure 2. The numbers are also ordered by countries of origin. In 2013, there were 274,439 international students from China studying in the United States. The number of student enrolment by country is illustrated. About 50% of the international students are from the top 5 countries i.e. India, China, South Korea, Canada and Saudi Arabia.

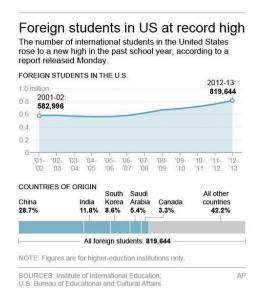


Figure 2 Foreign students in US

During 2001-2009 the total number of enrolment of international students in the US tends to increase continuously. In 2009, the enrolment reached 605,015. Students enrolled mostly in graduate programs (46.83%), secondly in graduate programs (44.61%), and thirdly non-degree programs (8.56%). More details are given in Table 2.

The most popular fields for international students in the United States are Business and Management and engineering. Field of study that has grown the most during the academic year 2008 - 2013 is the Intensive English Language. International student enrolments in this field increased in double. Enrolments in Math and Computer Science are the next fastest growing field. (Handover Research, 2014). Table 4 gives further details in more fields of study.

Table 2 International student enrolment in the US 2008-2009 by Country

| No. | Nationality | Enrolment |      | Growth  |      |       |
|-----|-------------|-----------|------|---------|------|-------|
|     |             | 2008      | %    | 2009    | %    | %     |
| 1   | India       | 94,563    | 15.2 | 103,260 | 15.4 | 9.2   |
| 2   | China       | 81,127    | 13.0 | 98,235  | 14.6 | 21.1  |
| 3   | South Korea | 69,124    | 11.1 | 75,065  | 11.2 | 8.6   |
| 4   | Canada      | 29,051    | 4.7  | 29,697  | 4.4  | 2.2   |
| 5   | Japan       | 33,974    | 5.4  | 29,264  | 4.4  | -13.9 |
| 6   | Taiwan      | 29,001    | 4.6  | 28,065  | 4.2  | -3.2  |
| 7   | Mexico      | 14,837    | 2.4  | 14,850  | 2.2  | 0.1   |
| 8   | Turkey      | 12,030    | 1.9  | 13,263  | 2.0  | 10.2  |

| ١. |                | 0 = 40  |       |         |       |      |
|----|----------------|---------|-------|---------|-------|------|
| 9  | Vietnam        | 8,769   | 1.4   | 12,823  | 1.9   | 46.2 |
| 10 | Saudi Arabia   | 9,873   | 1.6   | 12,661  | 1.9   | 28.2 |
| 11 | Nepal          | 8,936   | 1.4   | 11,581  | 1.7   | 29.6 |
| 12 | Germany        | 8,907   | 1.4   | 9,679   | 1.4   | 8.7  |
| 13 | Brazil         | 7,578   | 1.2   | 8,767   | 1.3   | 15.7 |
| 14 | Thailand       | 9,004   | 1.4   | 8,736   | 1.3   | -3.0 |
| 15 | United Kingdom | 8,367   | 1.3   | 8,701   | 1.3   | 4.0  |
| 16 | Hong Kong      | 8,286   | 1.3   | 8,329   | 1.2   | 0.5  |
| 17 | Indonesia      | 7,692   | 1.2   | 7,509   | 1.1   | -2.4 |
| 18 | France         | 7,050   | 1.1   | 7,421   | 1.1   | 5.3  |
| 19 | Colombia       | 6,662   | 1.1   | 7,013   | 1.0   | 5.3  |
| 20 | Nigeria        | 6,222   | 1.0   | 6,256   | 0.9   | 0.5  |
| 21 | Malaysia       | 5,428   | 0.9   | 5,942   | 0.9   | 9.5  |
| 22 | Kenya          | 5,838   | 0.9   | 5,877   | 0.9   | 0.7  |
| 23 | Pakistan       | 5,345   | 0.9   | 5,298   | 8.0   | -0.9 |
| 24 | Russia         | 4,906   | 0.8   | 4,908   | 0.7   | 0.0  |
| 25 | Venezuela      | 4,446   | 0.7   | 4,678   | 0.7   | 5.2  |
| 26 | Others         | 136,789 | 21.9  | 143,738 | 21.4  | 5.1  |
|    | Total          | 623,805 | 100.0 | 671616  | 100.0 | 7.7  |
|    |                |         |       |         |       |      |

Source: Institute of International Education, 2009.

Table 3 International Student Enrolment in the US During 2008-2009 by Level of Study

|       | Enrolment     |      |           |      |            |      |           |
|-------|---------------|------|-----------|------|------------|------|-----------|
| Year  | Undergraduate | %    | Graduate  | %    | Non-degree | %    | Total     |
| 2,001 | 254,429       | 48.3 | 238,497   | 45.3 | 33,883     | 6.4  | 526,809   |
| 2,002 | 261,079       | 46.6 | 264,748   | 47.3 | 34,423     | 6.1  | 560,250   |
| 2,003 | 260,103       | 46.6 | 267,876   | 48.0 | 30,551     | 5.45 | 558,530   |
| 2,004 | 248,200       | 45.7 | 274,310   | 51.0 | 20,659     | 3.8  | 543,169   |
| 2,005 | 239,212       | 45.0 | 264,410   | 49.7 | 28,418     | 5.3  | 532,040   |
| 2,006 | 236,342       | 44.9 | 259,717   | 49.3 | 30,611     | 5.8  | 526,670   |
| 2,007 | 238,050       | 44.9 | 264,288   | 48.8 | 38,986     | 7.2  | 541,324   |
| 2,008 | 243,360       | 42.9 | 276,842   | 48.8 | 46,837     | 8.3  | 567,039   |
| 2,009 | 269,874       | 44.6 | 283,329   | 46.8 | 51,812     | 8.6  | 605,015   |
| Total | 2,250,649     | 45.5 | 2,394,017 | 48.3 | 316,180    | 6.4  | 4,960,846 |

Source: Institute of International Education, 2009.

Table 4 International Student Enrolment in the US During 2008-2013 by Field of Study

|                       |         |         | _       |         | -       |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Field                 | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
| Agriculture           | 8,961   | 10,317  | 9,888   | 9,750   | 10,463  |
| Business and          |         |         |         |         |         |
| Management            | 138,565 | 145,514 | 155,769 | 166,733 | 178,984 |
| Education             | 18,120  | 18,299  | 16,933  | 17,200  | 17,011  |
| Engineering           | 118,980 | 127,441 | 135,592 | 141,285 | 154,186 |
| Fine and Applied Arts | 34,854  | 35,801  | 37,237  | 41,710  | 45,850  |
| Health Professions    | 35,064  | 32,111  | 32,526  | 29,535  | 31,222  |
| Humanities            | 19,179  | 17,985  | 16,263  | 16,294  | 17,121  |
| Intensive English     |         |         |         |         |         |
| Language              | 19,898  | 22,315  | 32,306  | 38,887  | 39,990  |
| Math and Computer     |         |         |         |         |         |
| Science               | 56,367  | 60,780  | 64,588  | 71,364  | 77,560  |
| Other Field of Study  | 73,011  | 76,743  | 75,459  | 77,252  | 79,876  |
| Physical and Life     |         |         |         |         |         |
| Sciences              | 61,699  | 61,285  | 63,471  | 66,007  | 69,152  |
| Social Sciences       | 57,348  | 59,865  | 63,347  | 66,163  | 73,274  |
| Undeclared            | 20,944  | 18,707  | 19,898  | 22,315  | 24,955  |

Source: Institute of International Education, 2013.

International education in Thailand: Many Thai universities offer International Programme which is taught in English. This is to cater the need and relevance of the internationalization and English language in Thailand. In 2006, 51 HEIs in Thailand offered international programs (Commissioner of Higher Education. 2009). In 2008 international programs are taught in 54 HEIs. The increase is slow but steady. The total number of enrolment for international programs in 2006 and 2008 was 74,262 and 75,055 respectively. The student enrolment in 2008 are shown in Table 5.

Table 5 Enrolment for international programs in HEIs in Thailand 2008

|     |                              |       | Foreign | Thai    |
|-----|------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|
| No. | HEI                          | Total | Student | Student |
| 1   | Burapha                      | 747   | 269     | 478     |
| 2   | Chiangmai                    | 363   | 203     | 160     |
| 3   | Chiangrai Raj                | 53    | 1       | 52      |
| 4   | Chulalongkorn                | 3,626 | 169     | 3,457   |
| 5   | Thonburi Raj                 | 15    | 9       | 6       |
| 6   | Kasetsart                    | 1,190 | 140     | 1,050   |
| 7   | Khon Kaen                    | 584   | 113     | 471     |
| 8   | KMITL                        | 14    | 3       | 11      |
| 9   | KMUTNB                       | 176   | 13      | 163     |
| 10  | KMUTT                        | 1,895 | 44      | 1,851   |
| 11  | Mae Fah Luang                | 6,304 | 105     | 6,199   |
| 12  | Mahachula.                   | 117   | 74      | 43      |
| 13  | Mahasarakham                 | 393   | 3       | 390     |
| 14  | Mahidol                      | 5,978 | 556     | 5,422   |
| 15  | Nakhon Sawan R.              | 179   | 142     | 37      |
| 16  | NIDA                         | 8,233 | 20      | 8,213   |
| 17  | Prince of Songkla            | 1,712 | 71      | 1,641   |
| 18  | Raj. Mahasarakham            | 19    | 0       | 19      |
| 19  | Rajamangala U. T. Krungthep  | 359   | 25      | 334     |
|     | Rajamangala U. T. Phra       |       |         |         |
| 20  | Nakhon                       | 35    | 0       | 35      |
| 21  | Rajamangala U. T. Lanna      | 130   | 1       | 129     |
| 22  | Rajamangala U. T. Thanyaburi | 40    | 0       | 40      |
| 23  | Ramkhamhaeng                 | 544   | 63      | 481     |
| 24  | Silpakorn                    | 585   | 14      | 571     |
| 25  | Suan Sunandha Raj.           | 171   | 1       | 170     |
| 26  | Suranaree U. T.              | 9,329 | 40      | 9,289   |
| 27  | Thammasat                    | 4,406 | 186     | 4,220   |
| 28  | Ubon Rajathani               | 87    | 6       | 81      |
| 29  | Uttaradit Raj.               | 210   | 130     | 80      |
| 30  | Asian                        | 199   | 26      | 173     |

| 31 | Assumption               | 20,152 | 2,638 | 17,514 |
|----|--------------------------|--------|-------|--------|
| 32 | Bangkok                  | 2,141  | 396   | 1,745  |
| 33 | Christian U. of Thailand | 20     | 0     | 20     |
| 34 | Dhurakij Pundit          | 242    | 20    | 222    |
| 35 | Dusit Thani Coll.        | 128    | 16    | 112    |
| 36 | Eastern Asia             | 121    | 11    | 110    |
| 37 | Far Eastern              | 65     | 65    | 0      |
| 38 | Hatyai                   | 5      | 5     | 0      |
| 39 | Huachiew C. U.           | 80     | 2     | 78     |
| 40 | Inter. Buddhist Coll.    | 49     | 39    | 10     |
| 41 | Kasem Bundit             | 135    | 24    | 111    |
| 42 | Mission Coll.            | 467    | 365   | 102    |
| 43 | Payap                    | 380    | 252   | 128    |
| 44 | Rangsit                  | 240    | 67    | 173    |
| 45 | Saint John's             | 118    | 86    | 32     |
| 46 | Shinawatra               | 206    | 38    | 168    |
| 47 | Siam                     | 555    | 200   | 355    |
| 48 | Sripathum                | 109    | 11    | 98     |
| 49 | Stamford Int.            | 469    | 132   | 337    |
| 50 | St Theresa Inti Coll.    | 247    | 7     | 240    |
|    | U Thai Chamber of        |        |       |        |
| 51 | Commerce                 | 321    | 69    | 252    |
| 52 | Webster U. Thailand      | 218    | 186   | 32     |
| 53 | Yala Islamic             | 848    | 87    | 761    |
| 54 | Yonok                    | 46     | 32    | 14     |
|    | Total                    | 75,055 | 7,175 | 67,880 |

Source: Commission on Higher Education, 2010.

# **METHODOLOGY**

In the first part of this study, the annual student flow from the sources to the destinations based on statistical data where there are sets of primary data representing demands of student studying abroad. The second part is a qualitative study using an indepth interview of a focus group of Thai students which consist of those alumni and students studied in the US or UK. The result from the interview were analyzed using content analysis

# FINDING AND ANALYSIS

Thai students' determinant to study in the UK and US: These 30 respondents responsed to the 24 statements and are summarized in Table 6. The responses to the statements in the questionnaire was interpreted by the scale that 0.0-1.49 for "Strongly Disagree", 1.5-2.49 for "Disagree", 2.5-3.5 for "Neutral", 3.51-4.24 for "Agree", and 4.25-5.0 for "Strongly Agree".

Table 6 Mean and standard deviation of the response to each research statement

| 1  | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·  | <u> </u>          |      |                   |                   |      |                   |
|----|--|-------------------|------|-------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------|
| No | Statement  | <u>UK</u><br>Mean | SD   | Meaning           | <u>US</u><br>Mean | SD   | Meaning           |
| 1  | It is a fantastic opportunity to travel and see the world.   | 4.53              | 0.52 | Strongly<br>Agree | 4.80              | 0.41 | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 2  | Being fluent in a English language is the main<br>aim of studying abroad, benefiting in both in<br>career and personal life. | 4.73              | 0.46 | Strongly<br>Agree | 4.80              | 0.41 | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 3  | If Thai University offer a Dual Degree with University abroad, je. One semester abroad. I would not go to study abroad.      | 4.13              | 0.64 | Agree             | 3.47              | 0.64 | Neutral           |
| 4  | Studying abroad is something unique and noteworthy on CV that will help me to stand out.                                     | 4.73              | 0.46 | Strongly<br>Agree | 4.80              | 0.41 | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 5  | If international higher education in Thailand is better in quality, less Thai students will study abroad.                    | 3.73              | 0.70 | Agree             | 3.87              | 0.64 | Agree             |
| 6  | If international education in Thailand is less expensive, Thai students will study in the country.                           | 2.80              | 0.77 | Neutral           | 2.26              | 0.80 | Disagree          |
| 7  | The length of Degree program abroad is shorter.  | 4.45              | 0.52 | Strongly<br>Agree | 3.33              | 0.82 | Neutral           |
| 8  | Getting a part-time job while studying is very important for Thai students.  | 4.33              | 0.62 | Strongly<br>Agree | 4.13              | 0.52 | Agree             |
| 9  | Studying abroad gives Thai students more opportunity to get a better paid job in Thailand.                                   | 4.60              | 0.51 | Strongly<br>Agree | 4.67              | 0.49 | Strongly<br>Agree |
| 10 | I agree that the number of international students should be reduced. There are too many international students.              | 3.40              | 0.63 | Agree             | 2.60              | 0.51 | Neutral           |

|              | Lunch to used should This is the steel to see  |      | ·    |          |      |      | 1         |
|--------------|--|------|------|----------|------|------|-----------|
| 11           | I want to work abroad. This is the start to my | 3.13 | 0.74 | Neutral  | 272  | 0.70 | Agree     |
|              | international career.                          |      |      |          | 3.73 | 0.70 |           |
| 12           | I believe in free-movement of students and     | 3.67 | 0.82 | Agree    |      |      | Agree     |
|              | workers between countries                      |      |      |          | 3.87 | 0.74 |           |
|              | The quality of international higher education  |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 13           | in Thailand is acceptable for prospective      | 3.53 | 0.64 | Agree    | 3.40 | 0.51 | Neutral   |
|              | students.                                      |      |      |          |      |      |           |
|              | International higher education fees in         |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 14           | Thailand is acceptable, compared to your       | 2.87 | 0.64 | Neutral  |      |      | A ====    |
| 14           | choice of studying abroad (exclude living      | 2.01 | 0.64 | Neutral  | 3.67 | 0.49 | Agree     |
|              | expense, etc.)                                 |      |      |          |      |      |           |
|              | Thai University calendar (change in 2014,      |      |      | Strongly |      |      |           |
| 15           | Semester starts in August) benefit Thai        | 4.40 | 0.51 |          |      |      | Agree     |
|              | student to study abroad without time gap.      |      |      | Agree    | 4.20 | 0.42 |           |
|              | The main barrier to higher quality of higher   |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 16           | education in Thailand is the English language  | 4.53 | 0.52 | Strongly |      |      | Strongly  |
|              | skills of Thai students.                       |      |      | Agree    | 4.40 | 0.51 | Agree     |
|              | Re-entering higher education is worth quitting |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 17           | a job.   | 3.27 | 0.80 | Neutral  | 3.47 | 0.74 | Neutral   |
|              | Exchange rate affect my decision making to     |      |      | _        |      |      |           |
| 18           | study abroad.                                  | 4.07 | 0.60 | Agree    | 3.87 | 0.64 | Agree     |
|              | Visa & Immigration rules are key factor        |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 19           | affecting my decision.                         | 3.87 | 0.52 | Agree    | 2.73 | 0.59 | Neutral   |
|              | Lacking of years in working experience while   |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 20           | study abroad worries me.                       | 2.80 | 0.77 | Neutral  | 3.00 | 0.65 | Neutral   |
|              | Personal recommendation is important in        |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 21           | choosing                                       | 4.33 | 0.62 | Strongly | 4.07 | 0.59 | Agree     |
|              | a University.                                  |      |      | Agree    |      |      |           |
| $\vdash$     | Scholarship and lower tuition fees are kgy to  |      |      |          |      |      |           |
| 22           | choose   | 4.33 | 0.49 | Strongly | 4.13 | 0.64 | Agree     |
|              | a University.                                  | 4.33 | 0.49 | Agree    | 4.15 | 0.04 | VAIGE     |
|              | a Oriiveisity.                                 |      |      |          |      |      | Ciancador |
| 23           |  | 3.53 | 0.52 | Agree    |      |      | Strongly  |
| $oxed{oxed}$ | University ranking is my main concern.         | !    |      |          | 4.4  | 0.51 | Agree     |
| 24           |  | 3.40 | 0.63 | Neutral  |      |      | Agree     |
|              | My parent influences my decision a lot.        |      |      | İ        | 3.73 | 0.59 |           |

For the first statement "It is a fantastic opportunity to travel and see the world.". The response shows the mean score of 4.53 for UK students and 4.80 for US students which mean that they are "Strongly Agree" to the statement. The students are not going abroad only to study but they expect to gain life experiences.

The response to the statement "Being fluent in a English language is the main aim of studying abroad, benefiting in both in career and personal life." is represented by the mean score 4.73 and 4.80 which means "Strongly Agree" at a high side. English language is very much the main essential to the Thai students.

For the statement "If Thai University offer a Dual Degree with University abroad, ie. One semester abroad. I would not go to study abroad." the means core of 4.13 indicates agreement from student studied in the UK while it is only 3.47 for students studied in the US. The US respondents still think that they will opt to international education abroad.

The statement "Studying abroad is something unique and noteworthy on CV that will help me to stand out." receives the score on the high side for both countries which means "Strongly Agree".

The statement "If international education in Thailand is better in quality, less Thai students will study abroad" attract the mean scores which shows both sides agreements. It can be implied that Thailand's international education still stand a good chance of getting more students provided that the education provider improves quality.

The response to the statement "If international education in Thailand is less expensive, Thai students will study in the country" is at neutral for UK respondents and disagree for the US respondents. This shows that cost to study in Thailand is not the main factor in considering to study abroad. Students studied in the US is more persist with their choice of study over the lower cost to study in Thailand.

The statement "The length of Degree program abroad is shorter." draws high mean score from the UK respondents of 4.45 and neutral mean score of 3.33 from US respondents. As higher education programme is shorter at most UK Universities compare to those in the US and Thailand, the student studied in the UK noticed this difference and this may influenced them that they had chosen to study in the UK.

The mean score response to the statement "Getting a part time job while study abroad is very important for Thai students" is 4.33 reflects strong agreement from the UK respondents and 4.13 from the US respondents.

The response to the statement "Studying abroad gives Thai students more opportunity to get better paid jobs in Thailand" draws high means result in "Stronly Agree" from both UK and US respondents.

The statement "I agree that the number of international students should be reduced. There are too many international students." is reflected by the mean score of 3.40 which is "Agree" from the UK respondents. The respondents thinks that there were too many international students in the UK while it is 2.60 or "Neutral" in the US. The US respondents have no clear opinion whether the number of international students in the US should be reduced.

The statement "I want to work abroad. This is the start to my international career." Shows that the UK respondants are not sure if they aimed to work abroad while the US respondants agree to this statement.

The response to "I believe in free-movement of students and workers between countries" attracts the mean score of "Agreement" from both sides. The idea of globalization seems to be accepted from the respondants.

The statement "The quality of international education in Thailand is acceptable for prospective students". The UK respondents agree while the US respondants result in neutral. It seems to indicate that Thai international education still have rooms for improvements.

The response to the statement "The cost of international higher education in Thailand is acceptable" are neutral for UK respondants and agree for US respondants. The cost of international education in Thailand appears to be less competitive versus the UK higher education market while it is still competible to the US market.

As for the statement "Thai University calendar changes benefit Thai student to study abroad without time gap.", the mean score of the response from UK students is 4.40 which shows strong in agreement and 4.20 or agree from the US's. The change in the Thai University calendar matches the start dates and semester gap with those around the world.

The statement "The main barrier to higher quality of higher education in Thailand is the English language skills of Thai students" finds "Strongly Agree" from both UK and US students. English language skills should be a requirement in order to improve the quality and uplift Thai international education.

"Re-entering higher education is worth quitting a job." This statement results in "Neutral" from both UK and US respondents. The students are unsure between re-entering higher education and quitting a job.

The statement "Exchange rate affect my decision making to study abroad." is responsed "Agree" from both countries. Money is still one of important factor in buying educational product services.

Visa & Immigration is important. Especially for those UK students where student visas were changing many times in the past few years. "Visa & Immigration rules are key factor affecting my decision." The statement shows agreement from UK respondents and "Neutral" from US respondents.

The statement "Lacking of years in working experience while study abroad worries me." presents "Neutral" from both countries' respondents. The students are not sure if the years spent studying would count compare the working experience.

"Personal recommendation is important in choosing a University." For the UK side, it shows the "Strongly Agree" which mean it is important that someone's refferal will affect the decision while it is "Agree" for the US side.

"Scholarship and lower tuition fees are key to choose a University." From this statement, the UK students seems to emphasize the important of University scholarship. It is strongly agree that getting a scholarship or low fees affect the decision making greatly. While it is also important for the US respondents, a little less than the UK's.

The response to the statement "University ranking is my main concern" shows that the US respondents concern about ranking more than those went to study in the UK.

The statement "My parents influences my decision a lot" implies that student went to study in the US still being supported by parents while Thai students in the UK might be more independent compare to the US.

### CONCLUSION

There are many influencing factors affecting the determinent of the Thai students decision in chooseing their study choice. Of course, there is no easy answer to which is the better although there are numbers of different opinion toward UK and US Universities. Experience and the language seems to be very important for both destinations as it is one of the main reason students choose to study abroad, not to only study but to gain life experiences. Cost length is another different Thai students noticed that it is shorter in UK Universities. This is an option that save time and money. The student could go in to career faster, making studying in the UK worth more. Scholarships, recommendations, ranking and part-time job opportunity also affect overall decision making. The trend of studying abroad is

predicted to be always booming as international education in the country does not seems to substitute the need of this group of students. As result from the respondents to the statement "If international education in Thailand is less expensive, Thai students will study in the country" showing disagreement from US students and neutral from UK students. It implies that the student are not sure that international education in Thailand will give what they would get from abroad. This study should be extended to cover more samples and wider questionnaire, to be able to analyse more decision making factors.

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