

**CHOICE CRITERIA AMONG THAIS TOWARDS CHOOSING
AN INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN
THAILAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

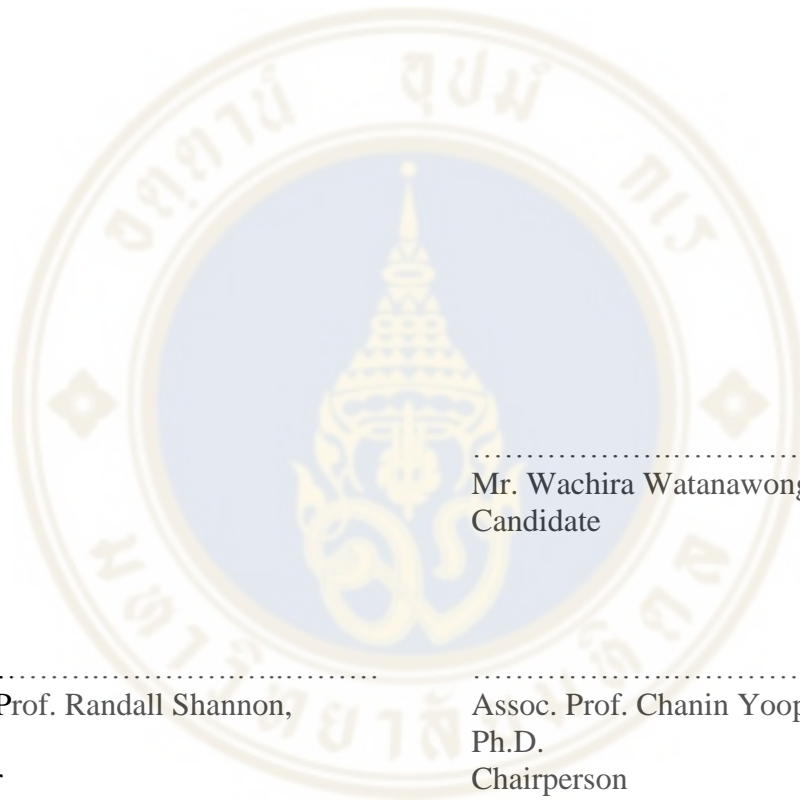


WACHIRA WATANAWONGWORAKULA

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
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Thesis
entitled
**CHOICE CRITERIA AMONG THAIS TOWARDS CHOOSING
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THAILAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**



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was submitted to the College of Management, Mahidol University
for the degree of Master of Management

on
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CHOICE CRITERIA AMONG THAIS TOWARDS CHOOSING AN INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM IN THAILAND DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

Universities and institutions around the world, including Thailand, are offering international master's business program. Both public institutions and private institutions are competing to maximize their students' enrollment. At the same time, the demand of higher education is diminishing due to aging population and declining fertility rate. In order to attract potential students, it is essential for universities to understand consumer behaviour behind Thai students' choices toward international master's business degree. Thus, the research objectives of this study are to determine criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais, to determine the criteria posing the greatest influence on Thai students' choice in the selection of an international master's business program among Thais, to determine factors influencing overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand, and to determine factors influencing the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others. This study adopted a quantitative research approach featuring online anonymous questionnaire. The total sample size of the study was 360, which can be divided into Thai students currently enrolled in Thai university (83.6%), and foreign brand university (16.4%). Multiple regression analysis showed that social norm and alumni network has the strongest influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand followed by location/traveling convenience and tuition fee ($p < 0.05$). In term of spreading recommendation, the factors posing the greatest influence found in the study were location/traveling convenience and tuition fee followed by social norm and alumni network ($p < 0.05$). Multiple regression analysis also rejected that self-efficacy and reputation, and courses have statistically significant influence on students' satisfaction level, as well as, on their likelihood to recommend the business program to others. Although the study was performed during the COVID-19 pandemic, the findings suggest that social norm and alumni network, and location/traveling convenience and tuition fee play a key role in determining students' satisfaction and their tendency to spread positive words of mouth.

KEY WORDS: Master Degree / International Master Degree / Business Program / Covid-19 / Education / University Choice

85 pages

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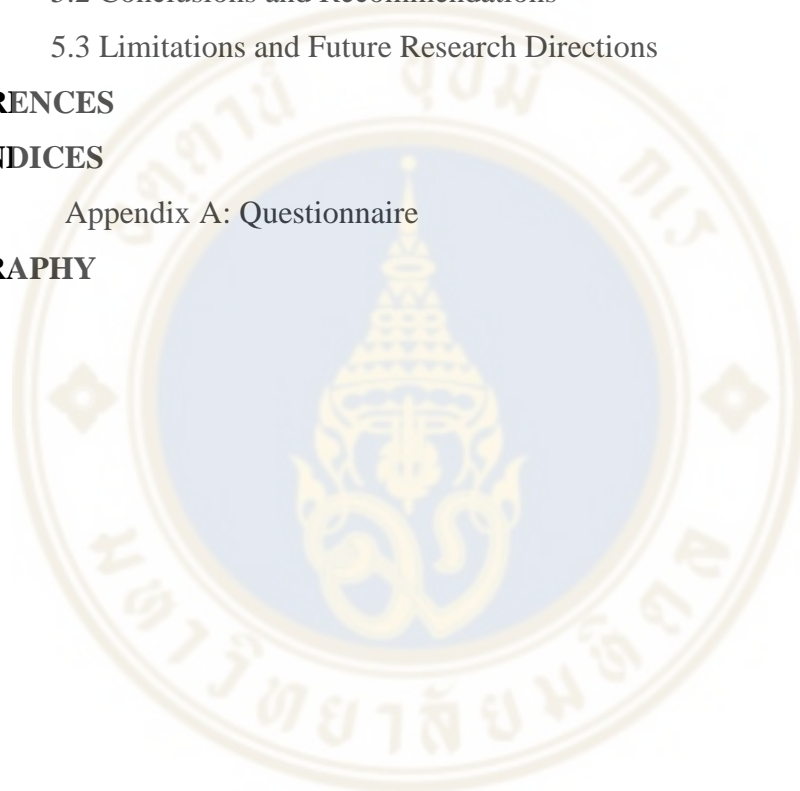
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

Higher education has been more internationalized in many parts of the world, with a variety of ideas, methods, and activities. Many factors motivate this trend, such as a need to foster awareness, skilled labor migration in a globalized environment, the need for institutes and universities to generate additional revenues, or the need to develop a more trained workforce in home countries, which are predominantly emerging economies (OECD, 2004). Adaptation to internationalization trend is seen differently in different parts of the world. Thailand has incorporated for the internationalization of higher education since 1990 (Lavankura, 2013). Since then, Thai universities, both public universities and private universities, continue to introduce a so called “international programs”, which uses English as the medium of instruction, to its system. The internationalization of Thai higher education system was mainly driven by Thai politics and global economies (Chaianan, 2001). After the enforcement of Thai government internationalization scheme, the country has a total of 79 public universities, 71 private universities, and 19 community colleges offering international programs (Officer of Higher Education Commission, 2011). To meet the needs of both Thai and international students, the number of international programs continues to grow. In 2010, Thai public and private higher education institutions offers a total of 981 undergraduate and graduate programs taught in English, which consisted of 342 undergraduates, 614 graduates, and 25 other degree programs. There are 699 public university systems and 282 private university programs. There has been a growth of international programs among both public and private universities in the country. The recent statistics regarding the number of international programs among Thai higher education institutes is unknown. That being said, source indicates that all top universities in the countries have launched international programs targeting at both local students and international students. Chulalongkorn University, for example,

offers a total of 101 international programs, which can be divided into 16 bachelor's international programs, 50 master's international programs, and 34 doctoral international programs (QAA, 2019). Similarly, Mahidol University also offers 31 international bachelor's programs (Singh, 2020).

Internationalization of Thai higher education system has become more prominent during the era of globalization. The desire to "catch up with the West" is still active and well, but the concept has been extended to include other areas of the world, especially the ASEAN countries. The government announced its intention to become a regional education center in 2009, setting a goal of 100,000 international students enrolled in Thai universities by 2014-2015 (Chaianan, 2001; Lavankura, 2013). In 2010, Thailand received 20,155 international students at 103 higher education institutions across the country (Officer of Higher Education Commission, 2011). While government is offering scholarships to overseas students to attract their enrollments, Thai students were also receiving similar financial aids to support their education path in an international programs, which is often more costly (Officer of Higher Education Commission, 2011). Examples of scholarships include His Majesty the King's Scholarships for Master's Program, Her Majesty the Queen's Scholarships for Master's Program, as well as, Loom Nam Khong Pijai (GMS Scholarships) for Master's Program (ASEAN Scholarships, 2021).

International programs in Thai universities were designed with Thai students in mind. Thai students accounted for between 85 percent and 98 percent of the total in some foreign programs in Thai universities during 2002-2003, particularly in the field of business administration (Pad, 2005). The universities that are launching these initiatives are aware that their target market is Thai students. The main advantage for Thai students was that these programs were much less expensive than studying abroad. Comparison between the price of various MBA program between international colleges in Thailand and Universities abroad is shown in Table 1.1. It is clear that Thailand has a competitive edge in term of its tuition price. The number of applicants rose rather than decreased during the ≥ 1997 economic downturn. Indeed, unlike the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, Canada, and the Netherlands, where higher education is an export commodity, Thailand's internationalization is not marketable on a global scale (Teichler, 2009). As such, Thai universities are currently

able to raise revenue mostly from Thai students through the principle of internationalization. Through charging "full-fee," Thai universities hope to generate revenue mostly from upper- and middle-class Thai students. Those that can afford to compensate would, of courses, have better chances at enrolling in an international program. Thus, the English language driven programs represent education's exclusive place in servicing specific middle and upper-class elites.

Table 1.1 Tuition fees of MBA programs offered by various universities

| Thailand | | |
|----------|--|---------------|
| 1 | NIDA (English MBA) | 140,000 THB |
| 2 | Thammasat Business School | 298,170 THB |
| 3 | Chulalongkorn Business School | 378,000 THB |
| 4 | College of Management Mahidol University | 429,000 THB |
| 5 | Stamford International University | 624,400 THB |
| USA | | |
| 1 | California Institute of Technology (Caltech) | 1,171,370 THB |
| 2 | Yale University | 1,363,517 THB |
| 3 | Harvard University | 1,603,565 THB |
| 4 | Stanford University | 1,673,724 THB |
| 5 | Princeton University | 1,693,217 THB |
| 6 | Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) | 1,693,847 THB |
| UK | | |
| 1 | University of Cambridge | 1,396,876 THB |
| 2 | University of Oxford | 1,468,927 THB |
| 3 | Imperial College London | 2,417,136 THB |

The growing number of universities offering international program has resulted in increased competition. Due to this competition Thai universities needs to understand its consumer needs and wants in order to remain competitive and survive among higher education providers. Another factors that the contribute toward the

increasing competition among Thai universities are the aging population and declining birth rate (United Nations, 2020). In 2020, Thailand has 66.19 million population (Thailand Board of Investment, 2020). As shown in Figure 1.1, The largest proportion of Thai population for both gender is elderly with age ranges between 40 year old to 54 year old (Thailand Board of Investment, 2020). In term of birth rate, the birth rate in Thailand is declining. At present, the birth rate of Thailand in the year 2021 is 9.904 births per 1,000 population, which is a 1,84% reduction from 2020. In 2020, the birth rate was 10.090 births per 1,000 population and the number is 1.81% decline from the year 2019. The statistics show a declining birth rate within the country (Macrotrend, 2021). The aging population and the declining birth rate have the potential to reduce the pool of students across education system. As a result, the diminished demand may result in more intense competition among Thai universities. This study aims to explore the factors that influence Thai student choice in the selection of to pursue master's degree in an international program in Thailand.

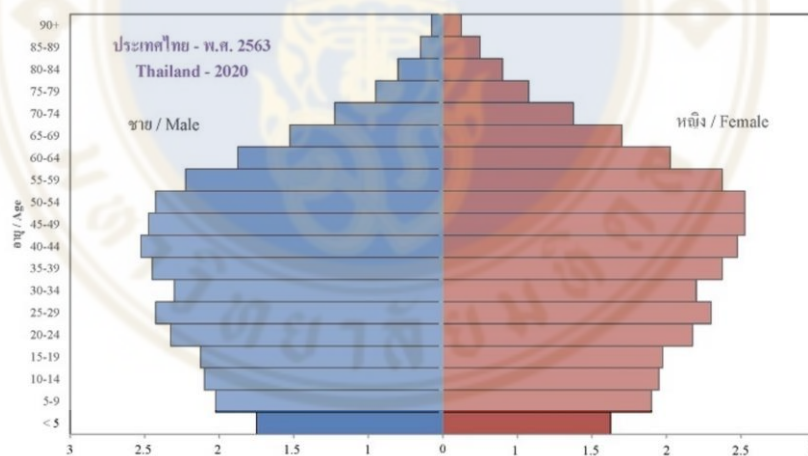


Figure 1.1 Thailand population pyramid (Thailand Board of Investment, 2020)

1.2 Research Questions and Research Objectives

This study comprises of a research question and two research objectives. The research question and research objectives are listed as follow:

Research question 1 (RQ1): What are the criteria that Thais take into consideration when choosing an international master's business degree program within the country?

- **Research objective 1 (RO1):** To determine criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais

- **Research objective 2 (RO2):** To determine the criteria posing the greatest influence on Thai students' choice in the selection of an international master's business program among Thais

- **Research objective 3 (RO3):** To determine factors influencing overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand

- **Research objective 4 (RO4):** To determine factors influencing the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others

1.3 Rationale and Significance of the Study

At present, higher education in Thailand is becoming more like an open market system where universities act as supplier providing educational products to students, which play roles as a buyer. As a response to globalization, Thai universities across the country are internationalizing its higher education program (Council, 2020). In the past decades, Thailand's Commission on Higher Education (CHE) and the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA) have participated actively to support the internationalization process of Thai universities (Chang, 2018). With the government supports and market demands, the country witnesses the growing number of international programs especially among Master's degree curriculum (Lavankura, 2013). As a market system, the universities are competing against each other to secure numbers of students. With growing number of international programs offered by Thai universities, the market became highly competitive. Thai universities offering English programs receive considerable amount of international each year. However, the pandemic has restricted the flow of individuals including potential international students. The situation creates an even more challenging for Thai universities offering

international programs. That being said, the situation also serves as an opportunity as Thai students looking to study abroad may choose international program at Thai university as their alternatives. That being said, the demand of higher education may be on a declining trend due to aging population. Thailand officially became an aged society since 2005, which means that at least 10% of Thai population is 60 year old or older (Chantanusornsiri, 2021). The nation is among the fastest-ageing countries in the world. It has been forecasted that Thailand may become a “super-aged” society by 2031 where 28% of its population will be 60 year old or more (Chantanusornsiri, 2021). Ageing society can also reflects diminishing pool of potential students. Thus, the ageing population has reasonable tendency to increase competitive among higher education institutes including universities offering international master’s business program.

Based on these rationales, understanding consumer behaviour of Thai students is essential to thrive in the industry. One of the most crucial consumer behaviors of students is choice criteria. Acknowledging choice criteria will be useful for Thai universities to adapt their programs and marketing material to be more efficient at attracting Thai students’ enrollment in an international program. Moreover, the knowledge learned from this study will provide a significant contribution to the existing body of research. There has been limited number of studies on choice criteria of Thai students toward getting master’s degree in an international program. This study, therefore, will provides insight that will update the information on this topic. This research also explores overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend master’s business program to others. It is important to investigate these variables because they act as proxies for measuring students’ happiness toward their choice. The insights gained from the exploration of these variables may also be helpful for programs in terms of understanding what is the most important among potential students.

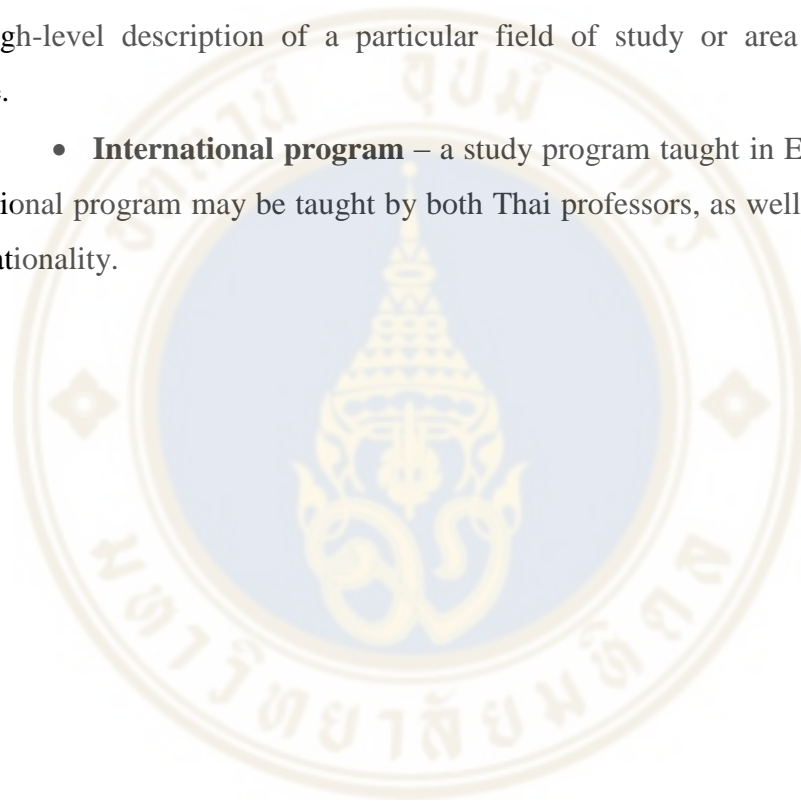
1.4 Scope of the Study

This study focuses only on international master’s business program in Thailand. Specific program was chosen as the scope of this study because individual pursuing for different academic qualification may have varying factors influencing

their choice of university. As such, it is important to focus only on single academic field to obtain specific practical insight. This study aims to explore the perspective of current students only.

1.5 Definition of Terms

- **Master's degree** – an academic degree conferred by universities or colleges following successful completion of a courses of study demonstrating mastery or a high-level description of a particular field of study or area of professional practice.
- **International program** – a study program taught in English language. International program may be taught by both Thai professors, as well as professors of other nationality.



CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many potential variables as to how or why people choose to study for a master's degree. This chapter discusses these variables and its association with choice criteria in the academic field.

2.1 University Choice Criteria

2.1.1 Location/travelling convenience

Location and travelling convenience are one of the most important factors influencing the choice of university among students (Raposo & Alves, 2017; Schauer, Woolley, & Gupta, 2014). Study among medical students in Australia found that proximity to home is the most influential factor (Schauer et al., 2014). Other study also found the same finding (Dawes & Brown, 2018; Shamsudin & Affendy, 2018). The rationale behind the importance of this factor is that location indirectly reflects level of cost of living. Further proximity generally implied that student needs to spend more on travelling expenses. In certain cases, student who live in location where daily commute to the selected university is not possible may need to acquire accommodation service or dormitory closer to the university. As a results, more money is required (Hossler & Gallagher, 2018). Based on these findings, it can be implied that location is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Location/travelling convenience has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.2 Tuition fee

An economics-based approach implies that students are rational and weigh all available options when making a cost-benefit choice (Maniu & Maniu, 2014). Thus, another important factor influencing students' choice of university is tuition fee (Dwenger, Storck, & Wrohlich, 2021; Gyamfi, 2017). Similarly a student performed in Germany found that tuition fee associated with each program influence not only the university choice, but also whether or not individual will pursue higher education or not (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019). The relationship was exceptionally strong among individual from low-income household (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019). While many studies evidence that tuition fee highly influences students' choice of university, a study performed in Kurdistan-Iraq found a contrasting results where cost of study was not seen to be highly influential toward student choice of university (Qasim, Al-Askari, Massoud, & Ayoubi, 2021). The rationale of the negative relationship between cost and the probability of enrollment in a certain university is that tuition fee is not the only cost consideration. Factor that matter more is the overall net cost associated with enrollment that is important (Qasim et al., 2021). Even though the reason supporting the negative is sound, there are multiple studies that evidenced the positive relationship between tuition fee and university choice. As such the second hypothesis is formulated as follow:

Hypothesis 2 (H2): Tuition has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.3 Reputation of the university

Reputation of the university was found to be one of the most crucial factors in student's decision toward their future education. A study performed among Taiwan student found that apart from city image, university reputation is the most important key factors shaping the choice of university (Ma, 2020). Ma (2020) suggested that reputation of the university represents branding that appeal to student and the rest of the society. Thus, enrolling and graduating from reputable university is likely to enhance education background and reputation of individual student. That being said, researcher argued that reputation of a high education institution is highly subjective. Whether or not university has good reputation depends on judgement of

individual students and does not automatically equate with universities' actual quality or other attributes (Vught, 2018). Yet multiple studies have found that university reputation is deniably the crucial factor determining students' choice of higher education institution (Bouke, 2020; Qasim et al., 2021; Soutar & Turner, 2017). This relationship was also identified in the context of Asian students (Gray, Fam, & Llanees, 2018; Munisamy, Jaafar, & Nagaraj, 2019). Based on these findings, it can be implied that reputation of the university is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 3 (H3): Reputation of the university has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.4 Reputation of faculty members

Higher education comprises of every characteristic of a service industry. One important characteristic of service industry is that it is people based. When talking about people as a service provider in education industry people often think of teacher, lecturers, and professors. Thai people perceived that these personnel are the major contributors toward the quality of education (Jamjuree, 2018; Reginald, Breffle, & Kelly, 2018). Reputation faculty members was found to have positive influence on university enrollment (Bathmaker, 2017). There is limited research that have been conducted to investigate the impact of reputation of lecturers on university choice. However, a study conducted among Chinese university student found that lecturers reputation on research work and teaching quality has strong influence on enrollment rate of courses in comparison to student with no reputation teaching the same courses (Tian & Lu, 2019). With reference to this discussion, the fourth hypothesis of the study is as written below.

Hypothesis 4 (H4): Reputation of faculty members has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.5 Course duration

Another important factor influencing university choice is program duration (Hoyt & Brown, 2019). Study among Thai student prefers to pursue postgraduate study in the United Kingdom over the United States of America because of shorter duration to complete a particular master's degree (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018). In contrast, other study argue that course duration may influence the choice of destination for higher education among international study, but it does not influence the choice of the university when it comes to comparing universities in the same country. This is because universities within the same country usually offer similar program duration. However, with the background study performed among Thai study that signified the importance of courses duration in student choice criteria. The fifth hypothesis is as followed:

Hypothesis 5 (H5): Course duration has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.6 Variety of courses

Availability of academic programmes also plays a major role in student choice of university, as demonstrated by many studies (Gill, Rodeiro, & Zanini, 2018; Qasim et al., 2021). More variety of courses available has potential to attract more student as students may have different career plan in different area (Hoyt & Brown, 2019). The availability of needed academic programs entails a number of important sub-issues, including a variety of courses alternatives, degree program flexibility, and academic recognition (Massoud & Ayoubi, 2019; Reginald et al., 2018). Based on these findings, it can be implied that variety of courses offered by the university is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 6 (H6): Variety of courses has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.7 Availability of international lecturers

Whether or not courses is instructed by international lecturers is another factor that student takes into consideration while choosing to enroll in international program in a university (Gill et al., 2018; Tereza, 2013). Study pursuing an international program often seeks international study environment where nationality of the lecturers matter (Mupemhi, 2019). Based on these findings, it can be implied that availability of international lecturer is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 7 (H): Availability of international lecturers has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.8 University infrastructures and facilities

University infrastructures and facilities are important factors influencing university choice (Qasim et al., 2021). Facilities could for example be essential to attract key research personnel, or to provide environments for faster knowledge creation i.e. it has impact on students' perceptions of their pedagogic experience (Price, Matzdorf, Smith, & Agahi, 2019). This relation was also found in among African postgraduate students (Kayombo, 2020). Based on these findings, it can be implied that university infrastructures and facilities is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 8 (H8): University infrastructures and facilities have an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.9 Social norm

Since higher education is an intangible and indivisible service, prospective students may depend on the recommendation of others when choosing a university because they cannot try or experience the quality of the services before making a final selection (Wong, Peggy, Lee, & Lam, 2019). As such, social norm has positive influence on the choice of students when it comes to university choice (Callender & Dougherty, 2018). Parents have a significant impact on a student's college decision,

according to a variety of studies (Ajibola, 2017; Fong, 2018; Luna & Martin, 2017). Significant individuals such as siblings, friends, classmates, relatives, instructors, and other significant persons impact a student's choice of institution, according to studies in Asian nations (Luna & Martin, 2017; Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018). Based on these findings, it can be implied that social norm is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand.

Hypothesis 9 (H9): Social norm has an influence on university choice of student looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.10 Availability of exchange programs with foreign university

Even though there has been limited number of study on availability of exchange programs with foreign university on university choice among students, two researches were found that students in developing country prefers university to provide opportunity to travel abroad as part of their education (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018; Shamsudin & Affendy, 2018). Thus, the tenth hypothesis of this study is as followed:

Hypothesis 10 (H10): Availability of exchange programs with foreign university has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.11 Perceived self-efficacy

Bandura proposed self-efficiency, which refers to individuals' perception on their capability to perform particular activities. As part of Bandura's social cognition theory, self-efficacy is used to forecast how individual approach and investigate and deal with circumstances within their self-perceived capacity but avoid transactions that surpass their capacity with stressful environmental elements. Perceived self-effectiveness is an essential component of human agency, because effectiveness influences people's sense, thinking, motivation and behavior (Bandura, 1986). A study self-efficacy influence study choice of their school (Phillips, 2016). Even though the relationship has only been found among high school, the relationship also be possible among students seeking postgraduate study. As such the eleventh hypothesis can be formulated as follow:

Hypothesis 11 (H11): Perceived self-efficacy has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.1.12 Alumni network

Alumni may have a beneficial impact on a students' interest in a certain program. Alumni offer insight not only in term of quality of the program of the university, represent career path and possibility of success in the future (Kohanna, Jacob, & Chopra, 2019). Alumni are often eager to share their knowledge and provide advice. Exploring all of the possibilities that alumni networks give should be just as essential as the quality of the MBA program and the assistance provided by the career center. Many institutions invite graduates back to career fairs and business informative meetings, and they often help alumni get interviews (Hopper, 2015). Study have shown that alumni connection can offer intrinsic values to potential students and create the sense of long-term success (Bozeman & Eadens, 2020). The study has shown that alumni connection is particularly important for business degree as its offer connection that will increase students' future business opportunities, which in turn increase the likelihood, that their business will be successful. As such good and diverse alumni connection is one of the major contributor toward students' motivation to choose a particular university program (Finney & Pyke, 2008). Based on the past research and support information, it can be implied that alumni network is an important choice criterion for students' choice of university of international master's degree program in Thailand. As such the final hypothesis of this study is as follow:

Hypothesis 12 (H12): Alumni network has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.2 Students' Satisfaction

The goal of educational institution is to offer students with a high-quality education at a reasonable cost while also ensuring their complete satisfaction (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The human capital theory serves as the theoretical foundation for

the current investigation. According to this theory, students spend a significant amount of money, time, and energy to get an education and become employed as they gain knowledge and the necessary abilities to do their jobs (Becker, 1975). Higher education is seen as a long-term investment in one's potential. According to the human capital theory, businesses pay higher salaries to educated employees since the workers will be more helpful and productive and will help the company maintain a competitive edge over the long term. Student graduates from renowned educational institutions are in high demand by employers that want to ensure that their employees contribute to the success of their companies and work efficiently to accomplish their goals (Shea & Parayitam, 2019).

Universities are certified based on the quality of education they offer, and it is necessary for schools to be accredited in order to maintain their accreditation status. While grade point average (GPA) is one of the indicators of student achievement, it is often regarded as a necessary but not sufficient condition for ensuring learning. It is necessary for the learning outcomes to be linked with the goals of the institution, and academics must guarantee that learning outcomes are properly assessed in order for the school to get accreditation (Lakhal & Sevigny, 2015). Satisfied students who believe they are receiving a quality education that is worth the money and time they have invested in it contribute to the good reputation of the educational institution at which they have studied (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The value of one's reputation is regarded to be an intangible asset (Rindova, Williamson, & Petkova, 2010). The involvement of professors, infrastructure, course content, methods of delivery, mode of delivery of instruction, availability of high-quality online teaching, and blended learning are all factors that may contribute to student satisfaction in a variety of ways (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The purpose of the current research is to investigate the connections that exist between antecedents of students' satisfaction.

Past study identified factors that significantly influence the satisfaction of graduates from business program (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The first factor discovered was learning environment. The fundamental aim of educational institutions is to provide pupils with a stimulating learning environment in which to thrive. The methods in which people learned two decades ago are drastically different from the

ways in which people learn now. Learning environments at educational institutions have experienced significant transformation with the introduction of the internet, which has brought with it a plethora of digital resources such as testing, games and simulations, movies, brainstorming and collaborating, and other features (Uzunboylu & Birinci, 2014). Most face-to-face courses nowadays make use of a learning management system (LMS), which typically offers an instructor with a means to develop and distribute material, monitor student engagement, and evaluate student performance program (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The body of research on learning environment in educational institutions is substantial and comprehensive (Barak, 1977; Elbeck, 2009; Halawi et al., 2009; Harper and Harder, 2009). Among academics, there is broad agreement that learning environment is associated with increased levels of student satisfaction. Students are more likely to be pleased with their educational institutions if they offer a positive learning environment (Barak, 1977; Elbeck, 2009; Shea & Parayitam, 2019).

Another important factor is dedicated professors. Professors play a significant role in the lives of students who attend educational institutions (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). A glut of information occurs now as a result of the fast growth in the production of new knowledge. Finding the finest, most current, and most relevant materials for the class is part of the professor's knowledge distribution responsibilities these days. Professors are required to stay up with developments, in both technology and subject, and to refresh their expertise before entering the classroom today more than ever. A devoted teacher is one who is in love with the area of knowledge, profoundly moved by problems and ideas that are changing our world, attracted to the challenges and potentials of the young people who come into class every day (Fried, 2001). There are many more sources of information accessible to students now than there were even a decade ago such as the internet, online library databases, and social media allowing students to be better prepared for class and to complete homework assignments. Students want their professors to be committed and genuine in their approach to teaching, as well as up to date with the most recent developments in their fields in order to receive their money's worth. If the students are dissatisfied with the commitment of the professor, it is quite probable that they would avoid future classes with that professor (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). According to the available scientific

data, devoted instructors attract students by encouraging them to study, which would pave the path for a rise in enrolment (Mart, 2013). A high degree of dedication is shown by dedicated instructors, who are concerned with the growth of their pupils, the enhancement of learning, and the cultivation of curiosity (Olson, 2003).

The third factor related to students' satisfaction is teaching method (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The techniques of instruction used by different professors are very different from one another. It is less essential whether or not the technique of teaching engages the students than whether or not the method of teaching is engaging for each individual instructor. A good teaching approach encourages students to challenge their assumptions and pushes them to learn by placing them in situations where they come to view themselves as authors of solutions and agents of change (Bidabadi, Nasrisfahani, Lahi, & Khalili, 2016). Even though there is no standard method for effective teaching, what is expected is a combination of methods in which student-centered and teacher-centered approaches converge to provide ideas, insight, and innovation while also improving the overall quality of the educational experience for all students (Klug, Bruder, Kelava, Spiel, & Schmitz, 2013). As a result of today's digital world, business instructors are using blended methods of teaching that incorporate lectures as well as hands-on activities in the classroom, simulations, online assignments, and discussion boards. As a result of their familiarity and sensitivity to the blended style of teaching, pupils have expressed their appreciation for it (Shea & Parayitam, 2019).

The fourth important factor influencing students' satisfaction is course content (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). In most cases, it is generally accepted that there is a contract between professors and students, and this contract is written out in great detail in the syllabi that professors hand out on the first day of class. Most essential, the syllabi outline the course material in a logical manner. Students get perplexed about the course goals if the course material is disjointed and poorly structured. It is critical for students to comprehend the material they will be learning throughout a course's duration content (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). Students' ability to comprehend the objectives of the course and what is expected of them is improved when the course material is well stated content (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). Some instructors utilize an experiential learning method to educate students to deal with the challenges and

complexities of a complex and difficult environment (Seow, Pan, & Koh, 2019). One popular and effective method is to include real-world, project-based learning into the curriculum. By using this method, students are encouraged to move outside the classroom and get involved in real-world issues via the completion of a project. When students participate in hands-on training and projects, they are more likely to be pleased with their learning experience. Students collaborate with a variety of groups of people in the real world as part of projects, while instructors coach them on knowledge of the subject they are studying, for example, finance, as well as project management skills, in order to get practical experience (Shea & Parayitam, 2019). The Center for Marketing Research at one institution, for example, trains students to join the workforce by organizing student groups that perform survey research projects for local businesses in the position of advisors to the company. A recent round of informal interviews showed that students are very pleased with the chance to collaborate on a real-world project with industry collaborators. Such projects as part of the course material encourage students to get more involved in the course and learn more efficiently (Shea & Parayitam, 2019).

2.3 Word-of-Mouth Recommendation

Word-of-mouth (WOM) in this study refers to the behaviour in which the students talk to their family, relatives, friends, colleagues, or other individuals about their university subsequent to their enrollment. WOM has long been seen as a valuable source of information for consumers as well as a valuable tool for nonprofit organizations, especially colleges, to spread their messages (Lang & Lawson, 2013). Previous research has shown both direct and indirect relationships between students' evaluations of service quality and their willingness to share positive WOM communication behavior (Bruce & Edgington, 2008). Another research discovered that elements of service quality that are relational and functional in nature may successfully promote students' positive word-of-mouth behavior after their enrollment (Carter, 2009; Casidy, 2014). Positive WOM is highly correlated with high satisfaction i.e., student who are satisfied with their enrollment are more likely to spread positive WOM (Mahmoud & Grigoriou, 2017).

2.4 Research Hypotheses

This study comprises of eleven hypotheses. The hypotheses are as followed:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Location/travelling convenience has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's degree program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Tuition has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's degree program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Reputation of the university has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's degree program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Reputation of faculty members has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's degree program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 5 (H5):** Course duration has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's degree program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 6 (H6):** Variety of courses has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 7 (H7):** Availability of international lecturers has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 8 (H8):** University infrastructures and facilities has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 9 (H9):** Social norm has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 10 (H10):** Availability of exchange programs with foreign university has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

- **Hypothesis 11 (H11):** Perceived self-efficacy has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 12 (H12):** Alumni network has an influence on university choice of students looking to pursue international master's business program in Thailand

2.5 Conceptual Framework

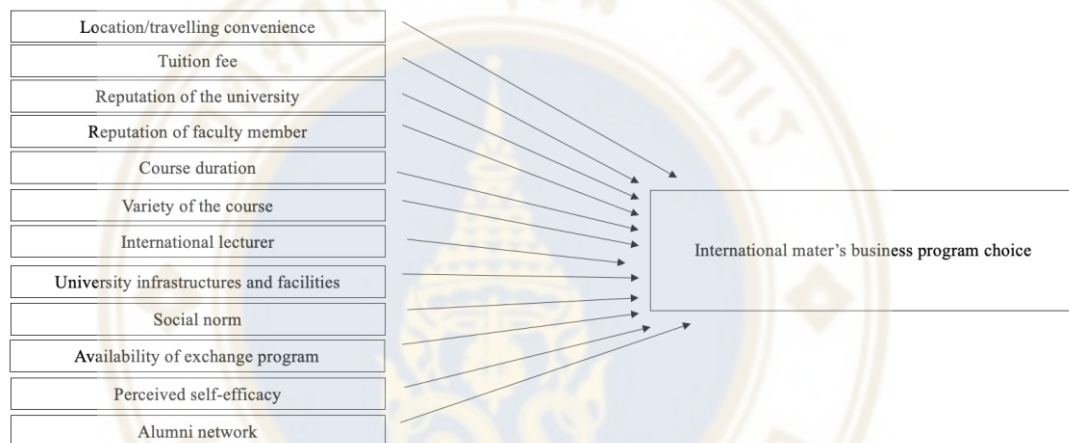


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.6 Summary of Literature Review

Multiple studies have been done to investigate factor influencing university choice among students. Past researchers suggested that important choice criteria include location/travelling convenience (Raposo & Alves, 2017; Schauer et al., 2014), tuition fee (Qasim et al., 2021), reputation of the university (Gray et al., 2018; Munisamy et al., 2019), reputation of faculty members (Jamjuree, 2018; Reginald et al., 2018), courses duration (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018), variety of courses (Gill et al., 2018; Qasim et al., 2021), availability of international lecturers (Gill et al., 2018; Tereza, 2013), university infrastructure and facilities (Price et al., 2019), social norm (Ajibola, 2017; Fong, 2018; Luna & Martin, 2017), availability of exchange programs

with foreign university (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018; Shamsudin & Affendy, 2018), and perceived self-efficacy (Phillips, 2016), and alumni network (Bozeman & Eadens, 2020; Finney & Pyke, 2008; Hopper, 2015). That being said, there seem to be minimal number of the past studies that have been conducted in the context of international business program in Thailand. This gap in the literature signifies the important to conduct this study.



CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY

Chapter 3 is the chapter about methodology, which describes the research procedure adopted in order to achieve the objectives of the study, and validate the hypotheses mentioned in the previous chapter. The tool for methodology development used in this study was the “research onion”, which was developed by Saunders and colleague. As shown in Figure 3.1, there are six layers to research onion including philosophy, approach to theory development, methodologic choice, research strategy, time horizon, and techniques and procedures Onion (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

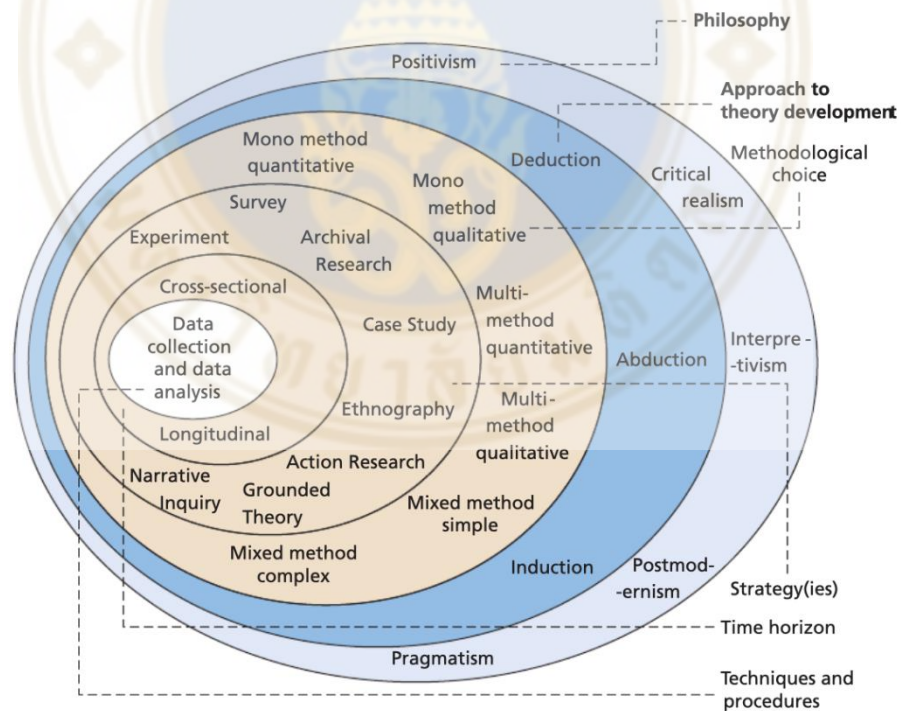


Figure 3.1 The Research Onion (Saunders & Lewis, 2009)

3.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy can be described as assumptions or a system of beliefs about knowledge development (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). At every stage of the research procedure, researchers will make a different type of assumptions, including ontological assumptions, epistemological assumptions, and axiological assumptions (Burrell & Morgan, 2016). Ontological assumptions refer to assumptions regarding the realities one discovers in his/her research (Burrell & Morgan, 2016). Epistemological assumptions regard the assumptions on human knowledge while axiological assumptions are all about the ways and extent to which one's own values affect the research process (Burrell & Morgan, 2016). It is an undeniable fact that all three types of assumptions determine how researchers understand his/her research questions, the methods he/she will use, and how he/she interprets the results obtained from the research (Crotty, 1998). Due to these influences, it is crucial to define the research philosophy of the study at an early stage (Johnson & Clark, 2006). Four viewpoints constitute research philosophy, namely critical realism, positivism, postmodernism, and pragmatism (Lahaney & Vinten, 1994). This study adopted a positivism viewpoint by relying on existing theories and past researchers to formulate the research hypotheses.

In this study, the researcher believes that choice criteria of individuals looking to pursue an international master's degree program, is the social reality that is external to us. In other words, choice criteria or consumer behaviour exists independently from how we think of them, label them, or even of our awareness of them. Thus, it is possible to investigate the choice criteria among Thais by observation or measurable instrument. This ontological assumption of consumer behaviour surrounding international master's degree programs corresponds with the ontological assumption of a positivist, who generally believes that nature of reality is independent, real, and external, i.e. one true reality (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). This research is seeking to identify factors motivating Thai students to pursue international master's degree programs. The influential relationship is a causal relationship that can be predicted and explained primarily through statistical data and statistical analysis (Gill and Johnson, 2010). In addition, this study is value-free research meaning that the research is detached, and remains neutral of what is being researched. This role of

value of this study, corresponded with the positivism viewpoint that researcher maintains objective stance, and the result derived solely from data collection and reality, which are measurable and observable (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

This study could have been conducted based on different research philosophy. For example, a human could be perceived as different from physical phenomena and has the ability to create meaning. People are often exposed to different circumstances, thus having different experiences, which can make them interpret things differently. The different interpretation and meaning of thing can later create varying social realities, which is the opposite of the universal assumption of positivism (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). Based on this view, interpretivism research approach could have been adopted. However, the researcher believes that positivism is more appropriate where the researcher is not part of what is researched, and researcher interpretations is not a significant contribution to the finding of the study (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

3.2 Approach to Theory Development

The step following research philosophy based on the research onion is research approach. There are three main research approaches, which are inductive research approach, deductive research approach, and abductive (Kovacs & M.Spens, 2005). From a positivist point of view, the most suitable research approach is deductive research approach (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). Thus, this study adopted the deductive research approach. Extensive literature reviews have been conducted to formulate research hypotheses of this study. Based on the deductive approach, the next step, once the hypotheses been developed, is to design a research strategy in order to test those hypotheses (Zalaghi & Khazaei, 2016). The deductive approach is suitable to explain causal relationships between variables and concepts (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018). In this study, the research attempted to explore the factors influencing choice criteria of Thais interested to pursue international Master's degree program, which is a causal relationship. Due to the aim of this research, the deductive research approach was suitably applicable. The deductive research approach was also advantageous as there is a great possibility to generalize the findings of the research,

which was desirable for this study (Woiceshyn & Daellenbach, 2018). Lastly, the research approach allows researchers to measure the concept using quantitative data collection (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

3.3 Methodologic Choice

In the field of research, data can be collected primarily through two methods, namely the quantitative method and qualitative method (Neuman, 2002). The methodologic choice typically accepted by positivist is quantitative methods of analysis. So, the study chosen the quantitative method over qualitative method to evaluate the hypotheses formulated based on past literatures. Past researches serve as the framework that not only allowed the researcher to develop the hypothesis but also to develop a specific structured tool that can be used to obtain quantitative data (Bryman & Bell, 2011; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

This study collected numerical data that can be tested statistically. Thus, it allows the researcher to comply to the positivism research philosophy that finding is factual and objective rather than subjective (Tobin & Begley, 2004). The data collected through this approach, hence, offered better generalization and implied the ontological assumption of positivism (Tobin & Begley, 2004). Numerical data also derived from data collected from a larger pool of participants within a short period of time (Tobin & Begley, 2004). This was crucial for this study because the study also took sociodemographic factors into consideration, meaning that data must be collected from a very diverse pool of participants. All in all, the methodologic choice of this study is a mono research method featuring quantitative data collection.

3.4 Research Strategy

Research strategy concerns the overall plan for conducting a research study to achieve its research objectives (Johannesson & Perjons, 2014). There are multiple research strategies that can be used in quantitative studies such as experiments, survey, polls, and etc. (Atieno, 2009). Whether which research strategy should be adopted depends more on the research questions (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

One of the tools that have been frequently used to investigate consumer behaviour is survey (Bryman, 1984). As such this study featured an online questionnaire, which was a suitable strategy to collect data during COVID-19 pandemic, where social distancing was indispensable. Moreover, an online questionnaire allows data collection among participants living in a different region (Saunders & Lewis, 2009).

Based on the aforementioned reasons, this study adopted an online questionnaire to fulfil its research strategy. That being said, limitation associated with online survey must be taken into consideration. Being an online survey means that the researcher is absent when the participant answers the questions. As such, the participant cannot ask any question to the researcher even if they cannot understand the question. This could lead to inaccurate results (Wright, 2005). To minimize this issue, the researcher included the informed consent not only for the ethical purposes but also to include all the information necessary for the participant to have a better understanding of the research.

3.5 Time Horizon

This study is based on a cross-sectional time horizon, which is a short term study featuring data collection at a certain period of time (Melnikovas, 2018). While longitudinal time horizon is also another alternative time horizon that this study could be based on, the longitudinal time horizon is not necessary for this study. This research aimed to investigate factors motivating Thai students to pursue international master's degree program, which meant that the cross-sectional time horizon was already adequate and appropriate. It is unnecessary to collection series of data using longitudinal time horizon as the aim of the research is not to compare purchase intention over a period of time (Melnikovas, 2018). In addition, the researcher had a limited period of time to conduct the study meaning that study based on longitudinal time horizon is not possible. Thus, this study was a cross-sectional study.

3.6 Techniques and Procedures

3.6.1 Sampling design

3.6.1.1 Sampling technique

In term of sampling technique, there are two main sampling techniques, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). The differences between the two sampling techniques are that probability sampling uses a random sampling technique to create a sample, while a non-probability sampling technique uses a non-random process (Saunders & Lewis, 2009). Due to a limited period of time, the non-probability sampling technique was more practical for this study. Firstly, this study relied on convenience sampling where the survey is given to close group of people that the researcher has contact with including family, friends, and colleague. Based on convenience sampling, the researcher posted the link to the questionnaire on personal Facebook, as well as, send a direct message on Facebook and other social media platforms to people in the circle. After convenience sampling, this study relied on snowball sampling, which is also referred to as chain-referral sampling, chain sampling, or referral sampling (Goodman, 1961). This technique allows researchers to acquire future participants from already recruited participants, i.e. the participants obtained through convenience sampling (Goodman, 1961). This snowballing technique helped to acquire sufficient sample size in a shorter period of time. The researcher included a prompt at the end of the survey to encourage participants to share the questionnaire to people they know. The prompt also included the inclusion criteria, which are people who have purchase before. This information serves to ensure that the participant will be referring the survey to the right target population.

3.6.1.2 Target population

Target population refers to the population of interest that meet the minimum requirement of the study (Brace, 2004). The identifying target population is important for the following step, which is sample size determination (Brace, 2004). The target population of this study includes current international Master's business degree students.

3.6.1.3 Sample size

Sufficient sample size is crucial for every research, especially those constructed based on positivism viewpoint (Cooper, Schindler, & Sun, 2003) as the sample size poses significant effect on the reliability of the results (Saunders, 2012). There are various rules to determine appropriate sample size to a study. One of such rules is same-to-item ratio. Researcher suggested that ratios of 15:1 or 20:1 are preferred (F. Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2018). That being said, for a questionnaire that composes of multiple questions per factor usually required a minimum of 20 to 30 samples per construct. This study comprises of 12 constructs, as shown in the conceptual framework (F. Hair et al., 2018). Therefore, the minimum number of sample size required by this study is 360. According to the sample size rule, the estimated sample size for this study was 360.

3.6.2 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire used in this study was developed based on the literature review. The aim of the questionnaire is to assess various constructs of this study, which include location/travelling convenience, tuition fee, reputation of the university, reputation of faculty members, courses duration, variety of the courses, international lecturers, university infrastructures and facilities, social norm, availability of exchange program, perceived self-efficacy, and alumni network.

Including the informed consent, which is a necessary element for ethical consideration, the questionnaire is divided into six sections. The first section is the informed consent, which describes the purpose and objectives of the study, as well as addressing their rights. The second part of the questionnaire are screening questions, which aimed to exclude participant who does not fit the inclusion criteria of this study. The third part of the questionnaire concerns information about the mater's business program achieved or currently partaking by the participants. The fourth section seeks to determine criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais. The fifth part of the questionnaire concerns overall satisfaction of the master's business program currently enrolled by participants. In addition, the part also asked the participant to rate their likelihood to spread positive WOM. The fifth part of the questionnaire helps the researcher achieve the third and the fourth research objective.

The last part of the concerns demographic information of the participants. All of the sections featured multiple choices question while the fourth section featured questions requesting participant to express their level of agreement to different statement based on four-point Likert scale where one being strongly disagreed and four being strongly agreed (J. Hair, Celsi, Money, Samouel, & Page, 2016). Different statement in the fourth section of the questionnaire was adapted from past studies, as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Statements in the questionnaire as their sources

| Statement | Adapted from |
|---|--|
| Location/travelling convenience | |
| I prefer university that locates within close proximity to my home/accommodation | (Jung, Ellis, & Crowe-White, 2018; Schauer et al., 2014) |
| I prefer university that is easy to commute to | |
| I prefer university that locates within close proximity to my work location | |
| I prefer university that has convenient access to public transportation | |
| Location and travelling convenience are an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Tuition Fee | |
| I prefer university that offers international master's business program at a reasonable price | (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019) |
| Affordable tuition fee is an important factor I think about when choosing international master's business program | |
| Tuition fee is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Reputation of the university | |
| I prefer to study at a university whose name is widely recognizable in my country | (Ma, 2020) |
| I prefer university that has international recognition | |
| I prefer university that has positive reputation | |
| I prefer university that listed highly on university ranking site | (Gray et al., 2018; Munisamy et al., 2019) |
| Reputation of the university is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| | (Ma, 2020) |

Table 3.1 Statements in the questionnaire as their sources (cont.)

| Statement | Adapted from |
|--|---|
| Reputation of faculty members | |
| I prefer university with faculty members that is well known for good teaching quality | (Bathmaker, 2017) |
| I prefer university with faculty members that has multiple research publications | |
| I prefer university with faculty members with extensive work experiences in well-known company | (Tian & Lu, 2019) |
| I prefer university with faculty members whose name is widely recognizable | (Bathmaker, 2017) |
| Reputation of faculty members is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Courses duration | |
| I prefer international master's business program that lasted only a year | (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018) |
| I prefer international master's business program that allow me to graduate as soon as possible | |
| The shorter the international master's business program the better | |
| Courses duration is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Variety of the courses | |
| I prefer university that offers diverse range of courses | (Hoyt & Brown, 2019) |
| I prefer university that offers multiple availability of academic programs | (Gill et al., 2018; Qasim et al., 2021) |
| I prefer university offers many elective courses | |
| Variety of the courses is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| International lecturers | |
| I prefer international master's business program that will be taught by international lecturers | (Gill et al., 2018; Tereza, 2013) |
| I think it is important that international master's business program is taught by international lecturers | |
| I prefer international master's business program that will be taught by Thai lecturers who have international degree | |
| International lecturers is an influential factor toward my university choice | |

Table 3.1 Statements in the questionnaire as their sources (cont.)

| Statement | Adapted from |
|--|---|
| University infrastructures and facilities | |
| I prefer university that have various facilities to support its students | (Price et al., 2019) |
| I prefer university that have decent library | |
| I prefer university that have multiple meeting rooms | |
| I prefer university that have common room where I can interact and work with my friends. | |
| University infrastructures and facilities is an influential factor toward my university choice | (Qasim et al., 2021) |
| Social norm | |
| My parents expect me to choose a certain university | (Ajibola, 2017; Fong, 2018; Luna & Martin, 2017) |
| My friends expect me to choose a certain university | |
| People in my circle expect me to choose a certain university | |
| Most people who are important to me expects me to choose a certain university | (Luna & Martin, 2017; Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018) |
| Social norm is an influential factor toward my university choice | (Callender & Dougherty, 2018) |
| Availability of exchange program | |
| I prefer university that offers exchange program to other country as part of the international master's business program | (Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018; Shamsudin & Affendy, 2018) |
| It is important that university provides opportunity for its students to study abroad as part of their exchange program | |
| Availability of exchange program is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Perceived self-efficacy | |
| I prefer to choose university that matches may capability | (Phillips, 2016) |
| I evaluate myself and my academic capability before choosing a university | |
| Perceived self-efficacy is an influential factor toward my university choice | |
| Alumni network | |
| I prefer university with strong alumni network | (Hopper, 2015) |
| I prefer university that host multiple events that allow current students to meet with the alumni | |
| I prefer university that has reputable alumni network | |
| I prefer university with alumni network that will allow me to have stronger business connection | (Finney & Pyke, 2008) |
| Alumni network is an influential factor toward my university choice | |

3.6.3 Data Analysis

The numeric data obtained through quantitative research method was analyzed using the SPSS software. In order to analyse independent variables of choice criteria, the descriptive statistics used were mean value and standard deviation. As previously mentioned, this study utilised a four-point Likert scale in this section of the question. In order to evaluate the Likert scale, the level of importance is divided into four levels, as shown in Table 3.2. Multiple regression was used to for hypothesis testing. In addition, ANOVA was used to analyze the variation of the findings among respondents from different demographic background.

Table 3.2 Interpretation of Likert scale

| Level of Agreement | Mean |
|--------------------|--------------|
| Strongly disagree | 0.01 to 0.99 |
| Disagree | 1.00 to 1.99 |
| Agree | 2.00 to 2.99 |
| Strongly agree | 3.00 to 4.00 |

3.7 Pilot Testing

3.7.1 Reliability

A statistic known as Cronbach's alpha is often used by writers researcher to show whether that tests and scales that have been developed or accepted for research projects are appropriate for their intended purpose (Taber, 2017). According to Cronbach (1951), when an instrument is used to assign a score to an individual, a high value of alpha is desirable, but the most important thing to consider is whether or not the score can be interpreted. He argued that this could often be accomplished without the use of extremely high values of alpha. Cronbach pointed out that, although adding more items to an instrument may raise the value of alpha, doing so with items that measure the same thing as the current items results in duplication, which makes the instrument inefficient (Cronbach, 1951).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

4.1 Demographic Information of the Respondents

Anonymous questionnaires were distributed online and a total of 360 responses were received. As shown in Table 4.1, majority of the respondents were female (55.8%) followed by male (41.9%), and prefer not to say 2.2%). In term of age, the largest proportion of participants were those whose age was between 26 year old and 30 year old (45.88%). Similar proportion of participants (38.9%) have the age range of 31 year old and 40 year old. Respondents whose age range was between 18 year old and 25 year old accounted for 11.4% of the entire pool of participant. Regarding residential region, a total of 219 out of 360 respondents (60.8%) reside in Bangkok and metropolis area. While participants who reside in the central region of Thailand accounted for 10.6% of the participants, a total of 8.3% and 7.8% where from the northern region of Thailand and the northeast (Isarn) region of Thailand, respectively. Table 4.1 also shows that the majority of the respondents have average personal monthly income between 30,001 and 50,000 THB (33.3%) followed by 25,001 to 30,000 THB (23.1%), and 50,001 to 100,000 THB (20%).

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics concerning different demographic variables

| Demographic variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | | |
| - Male | 151 | 41.9 |
| - Female | 201 | 55.8 |
| - Prefer not to say | 8 | 2.2 |

Table 4.1 Descriptive statistics concerning different demographic variables (cont.)

| Demographic variables | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Age | | |
| - Below 18 | 1 | 0.3 |
| - 18 - 25 | 41 | 11.4 |
| - 26 - 30 | 165 | 45.8 |
| - 31 - 40 | 140 | 38.9 |
| - 41 - 50 | 12 | 3.3 |
| - Above 50 | 1 | 0.3 |
| Residential area | | |
| - Bangkok and metropolis | 219 | 60.8 |
| - The central region of Thailand | 38 | 10.6 |
| - The northern region of Thailand | 30 | 8.3 |
| - The northeast (Isarn) region of Thailand | 28 | 7.8 |
| - The eastern region of Thailand | 15 | 4.2 |
| - The southern region of Thailand | 12 | 3.3 |
| - None of the above | 6 | 1.7 |
| Average personal monthly income | | |
| - Less than 15,000 THB | 3 | 0.8 |
| - 15,001 – 20,000 THB | 24 | 6.7 |
| - 25,001 – 30,000 THB | 83 | 23.1 |
| - 30,001 – 50,000 THB | 120 | 33.3 |
| - 50,001 – 100,000 THB | 72 | 20.0 |
| - 100,001 and above | 13 | 3.6 |

4.2 Criteria for Choosing an International Master's Business Program Among Thais

This section concerns the first objective of the study, which is to determine criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais. Table

4.2 showed that majority of the variables received “agree” interpretation, which mean that the factors have potential influence on the choice criteria of international master’s business program among Thais. The factors that received “neither disagree nor agree” response were “my friend expect me to choose a certain university”, and “I prefer a university that has multiple meeting rooms”. The factor that received the highest mean score was “I prefer a university that has a positive reputation” with mean score of 3.48 and standard deviation of 0.739.

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics and relevant interpretation for different international master’s business program choice criteria among Thais

| Statement | Mean | S.D. | Interpret |
|--|------|-------|-----------|
| I prefer a university that has a positive reputation | 3.48 | 0.739 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that has various facilities to support its students | 3.46 | 0.782 | Agree |
| Reputation of the university is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.41 | 0.785 | Agree |
| I prefer to study at a university whose name is widely recognizable in my country | 3.39 | 0.779 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that is listed highly on university ranking sites | 3.39 | 0.803 | Agree |
| Location and travelling convenience are an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.38 | 0.770 | Agree |
| I prefer a university with faculty members that is well known for good teaching quality | 3.38 | 0.795 | Agree |
| overall satisfaction of the master’s international business program | 3.38 | 0.621 | Agree |
| I prefer a university with strong alumni network | 3.38 | 0.724 | Agree |
| My own ability is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.38 | 0.845 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that is easy to commute to | 3.37 | 0.804 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that has international recognition | 3.36 | 0.805 | Agree |

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics and relevant interpretation for different international master's business program choice criteria among Thais (cont.)

| Statement | Mean | S.D. | Interpret |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| Course duration is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.35 | 0.783 | Agree |
| confident with the choice you made in choosing the master's international business program | 3.35 | 0.596 | Agree |
| recommend the master's international business program | 3.34 | 0.603 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that offers international master's business program at a reasonable price | 3.33 | 0.807 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that is located close to my work location | 3.33 | 0.823 | Agree |
| I prefer a university with faculty members with extensive work experience in well-known companies | 3.32 | 0.783 | Agree |
| I evaluate myself and my academic capability before choosing a university | 3.32 | 0.790 | Agree |
| I think it is important that international master's business program is taught by international lecturers | 3.31 | 0.840 | Agree |
| I prefer to choose a university that matches my capability | 3.29 | 0.842 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that has a reputable alumni network | 3.29 | 0.807 | Agree |
| I prefer an international master's business program that will be taught by international lecturers | 3.28 | 0.853 | Agree |
| Tuition fee is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.28 | 0.809 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that offers a diverse range of courses | 3.28 | 0.795 | Agree |

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics and relevant interpretation for different international master's business program choice criteria among Thais (cont.)

| Statement | Mean | S.D. | Interpret |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| I prefer a university with an alumni network that will allow me to have stronger business connections | 3.28 | 0.816 | Agree |
| International lecturers are an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.28 | 0.802 | Agree |
| Reputation of faculty members is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.28 | 0.846 | Agree |
| I prefer a university with faculty members whose names are widely recognizable | 3.28 | 0.842 | Agree |
| Affordable tuition fee is an important factor I think about when choosing an international master's business program | 3.25 | 0.836 | Agree |
| University infrastructure and facilities is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.24 | 0.844 | Agree |
| Variety of the courses is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.23 | 0.825 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that has a good library | 3.23 | 0.899 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that have common rooms where I can interact and work with my friends. | 3.22 | 0.870 | Agree |
| Alumni network is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.21 | 0.862 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that hosts events that allows current students to meet with the alumni | 3.21 | 0.875 | Agree |
| My parents expect me to choose a certain university | 3.19 | 0.956 | Agree |
| I prefer an international master's business program that lasts only a year | 3.19 | 0.864 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that has convenient access to public transportation | 3.18 | 0.873 | Agree |

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics and relevant interpretation for different international master's business program choice criteria among Thais (cont.)

| Statement | Mean | S.D. | Interpret |
|---|-------------|-------------|------------------|
| I prefer a university that offers multiple availability of academic programs | 3.18 | 0.784 | Agree |
| I prefer an international master's business program that allows me to graduate as soon as possible | 3.18 | 0.787 | Agree |
| It is important that the university provides opportunity for its students to study abroad as part of their exchange program | 3.16 | 0.829 | Agree |
| I prefer a university which offers many elective courses | 3.16 | 0.849 | Agree |
| Social norm is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.15 | 0.833 | Agree |
| People in my circle expect me to choose a certain university | 3.14 | 0.930 | Agree |
| The shorter the international master's business program the better | 3.14 | 0.840 | Agree |
| Most people who are important to me expect me to choose a certain university | 3.11 | 0.882 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that offers exchange programs to other countries as part of the international master's business program | 3.11 | 0.862 | Agree |
| Availability of exchange programs is an influential factor towards my university choice | 3.11 | 0.864 | Agree |
| I prefer an international master's business program that will be taught by Thai lecturers who have international degrees | 3.09 | 0.894 | Agree |
| I prefer a university that is located close to my home/accommodation | 3.09 | 0.897 | Agree |

Table 4.2 Descriptive statistics and relevant interpretation for different international master's business program choice criteria among Thais (cont.)

| Statement | Mean | S.D. | Interpret |
|---|------|-------|----------------------------|
| I prefer a university with faculty members that have multiple research publications | 3.03 | 0.884 | Agree |
| My friends expect me to choose a certain university | 3.00 | 0.931 | Neither disagree nor Agree |
| I prefer a university that has multiple meeting rooms | 2.99 | 0.883 | Neither disagree nor Agree |

Factor analysis, shown in Table 4.3, was performed. The criterion used was Eigenvalues over 1 with the varimax rotation. The results show that when considering factor loading that is higher than 0.4, the calculation yields a total of four components. To put it differently, the findings suggested that all questions are expected to be divided into four group i.e., four conceptual factors. After factor analysis, factors can be divided as 1) self-efficacy and reputation with 12 components, 2) courses with nine components, 3) location/travelling convenience and tuition fee with seven components, and 4) social norm and alumni network with seven components (Table 4.4).

Table 4.3 Factor Analysis

| Rotated Component Matrix | | | | |
|---|-----------|---|---|---|
| | Component | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I prefer to study at a university whose name is widely recognizable in my country (v40) | .742 | | | |
| I prefer a university that is listed highly on university ranking sites (v35) | .725 | | | |

Table 4.3 Factor Analysis (cont.)

| Rotated Component Matrix | | | | |
|---|-----------|------|---|---|
| | Component | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I prefer a university that has a positive reputation (v39) | .724 | | | |
| Reputation of the university is an influential factor towards my university choice (v24) | .685 | | | |
| I prefer a university that has international recognition (v23) | .667 | | | |
| I prefer a university with faculty members that is well known for good teaching quality (v44) | .651 | | | |
| International lecturers are an influential factor towards my university choice (v20) | .599 | | | |
| I prefer to choose a university that matches my capability (v16) | .594 | | | |
| I prefer a university that has various facilities to support its students (v53) | .568 | | | |
| I prefer a university with faculty members with extensive work experience in well-known companies (v42) | .560 | | | |
| I evaluate myself and my academic capability before choosing a university (v51) | .537 | | | |
| I think it is important that international master's business program is taught by international lecturers (v6) | .464 | | | |
| Availability of exchange programs is an influential factor towards my university choice (v30) | | .746 | | |
| I prefer a university that offers exchange programs to other countries as part of the international master's business program (v15) | | .709 | | |
| It is important that the university provides opportunity for its students to study abroad as part of their exchange program (v48) | | .707 | | |

Table 4.3 Factor Analysis (cont.)

| Rotated Component Matrix | | | | |
|--|-----------|------|------|------|
| | Component | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| I prefer a university with faculty members that have multiple research publications (v11) | | .683 | | |
| I prefer a university which offers many elective courses (v27) | | .667 | | |
| I prefer a university that offers multiple availability of academic programs (v13) | | .618 | | |
| I prefer a university that has multiple meeting rooms (v14) | | .557 | | |
| I prefer a university that has a good library (v41) | | .545 | | |
| Variety of the courses is an influential factor towards my university choice (v12) | | .515 | | |
| Tuition fee is an influential factor towards my university choice (v26) | | | .792 | |
| Affordable tuition fee is an important factor I think about when choosing an international master's business program (v22) | | | .760 | |
| I prefer a university that has convenient access to public transportation (v9) | | | .709 | |
| I prefer a university that is located close to my home/accommodation (v10) | | | .698 | |
| I prefer a university that offers international master's business program at a reasonable price (v36) | | | .691 | |
| I prefer a university that is easy to commute to (v25) | | | .679 | |
| I prefer a university that is located close to my work location (v37) | | | .617 | |
| Most people who are important to me expect me to choose a certain university (v4) | | | | .707 |

Table 4.3 Factor Analysis (cont.)

| Rotated Component Matrix | | | | |
|--|-----------|---|---|------|
| | Component | | | |
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| My parents expect me to choose a certain university (v5) | | | | .706 |
| Alumni network is an influential factor towards my university choice (v19) | | | | .682 |
| I prefer a university that hosts events that allows current students to meet with the alumni (v17) | | | | .592 |
| I prefer a university with strong alumni network (v49) | | | | .579 |
| I prefer a university that has a reputable alumni network (v18) | | | | .544 |
| Social norm is an influential factor towards my university choice (v32) | | | | .487 |

Table 4.4 Comparison between original grouping and new grouping

| | Statement | Grouping | New Grouping |
|----|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 16 | I prefer to choose university that matches my capability | Perceived self-efficacy | Self-efficacy and reputation |
| 51 | I evaluate myself and my academic capability before choosing a university | Perceived self-efficacy | |
| 6 | I think it is important that international master's business program is taught by international lecturer | International lecturers | |
| 20 | International lecturers are an influential factor toward my university choice | International lecturers | |
| 42 | I prefer university with faculty members with extensive work experiences in well-known company | Reputation of faculty members | |

Table 4.4 Comparison between original grouping and new grouping (cont.)

| | Statement | Grouping | New Grouping |
|----|---|---|------------------------------|
| 44 | I prefer university with faculty members that is well known for good teaching quality | Reputation of faculty members | Self-efficacy and reputation |
| 53 | I prefer university that have various facilities to support its students | University infrastructures and facilities | |
| 23 | I prefer university that has international recognition | Reputation of the university | |
| 24 | Reputation of the university is an influential factor toward my university choice | Reputation of the university | |
| 35 | I prefer university that listed highly on university ranking site | Reputation of the university | |
| 39 | I prefer university that has positive reputation | Reputation of the university | |
| 40 | I prefer to study at a university whose name is widely recognizable in my country | Reputation of the university | |
| 11 | I prefer university with faculty members that has multiple research publications | Reputation of faculty members | Courses |
| 12 | Variety of the courses is an influential factor toward my university choice | Variety of the courses | |
| 13 | I prefer university that offers multiple availability of academic programs | Variety of the courses | |
| 27 | I prefer university which offers many elective courses | Variety of the courses | |
| 14 | I prefer university that have multiple meeting rooms | University infrastructures and facilities | |

Table 4.4 Comparison between original grouping and new grouping (cont.)

| | Statement | Grouping | New Grouping |
|----|--|---|---------------------|
| 41 | I prefer university that have decent library | University infrastructures and facilities | Courses |
| 15 | I prefer university that offers exchange program to other country as part of the international master's business program | Availability of exchange program | |
| 30 | Availability of exchange program is an influential factor toward my university choice | Availability of exchange program | |
| 48 | It is important that university provides opportunity for its students to study aboard as part of their exchange program | Availability of exchange program | |
| 9 | I prefer university that has convenient access to public transportation | Location/traveling convenience | |
| 10 | I prefer university that locates within close proximity to my home/accommodation | Location/traveling convenience | |
| 25 | I prefer university that is easy to commute to | Location/traveling convenience | |
| 37 | I prefer a university that is located close to my work location | Location/traveling convenience | |
| 22 | Affordable tuition fee is an important factor I think about when choosing international master's business program | Tuition fee | |
| 26 | Tuition fee is an influential factor toward my university choice | Tuition fee | |
| 36 | I prefer university that offers international master's business program at a reasonable price | Tuition fee | |

Table 4.4 Comparison between original grouping and new grouping (cont.)

| | Statement | Grouping | New Grouping |
|----|---|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| 4 | Most people who are important to me expects me to choose a certain university | Social norm | Social norm and alumni network |
| 5 | My parents expect me to choose a certain university | Social norm | |
| 32 | Social norm is an influential factor toward my university choice | Social norm | |
| 17 | I prefer university that host multiple events that allow current students to meet with the alumni | Alumni network | Alumni network |
| 18 | I prefer university that has reputable alumni network | Alumni network | |
| 19 | Alumni network is an influential factor toward my university choice | Alumni network | |
| 49 | I prefer university with strong alumni network | Alumni network | |

After factor analysis, a reliability test was performed. As shown in Table 4.5, Cronbach's alpha of every variable range between 0.858 and 0.942, which are above the threshold of 0.7. The reliability test, therefore, suggested that the data set is reliable and further analysis can be performed.

Table 4.5 Reliability Analysis

| Variables | Cronbach's Alpha | Number of Items |
|--|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Self-efficacy and reputation | 0.942 | 12 |
| Courses | 0.912 | 9 |
| Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee | 0.890 | 7 |
| Social norm and alumni network | 0.858 | 7 |

Based on factor analysis mentioned previously, the conceptual framework of the study can be redrawn as shown in Figure 4.1 while the research hypotheses can be rewritten as follow:

- **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** Self-efficacy and reputation has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Courses has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 3 (H3):** Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 4 (H4):** Social norm and alumni network has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand
- **Hypothesis 5 (H5):** Self-efficacy and reputation has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others
- **Hypothesis 6 (H6):** Courses has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others
- **Hypothesis 7 (H7):** Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others
- **Hypothesis 8 (H8):** Social norm and alumni network has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others

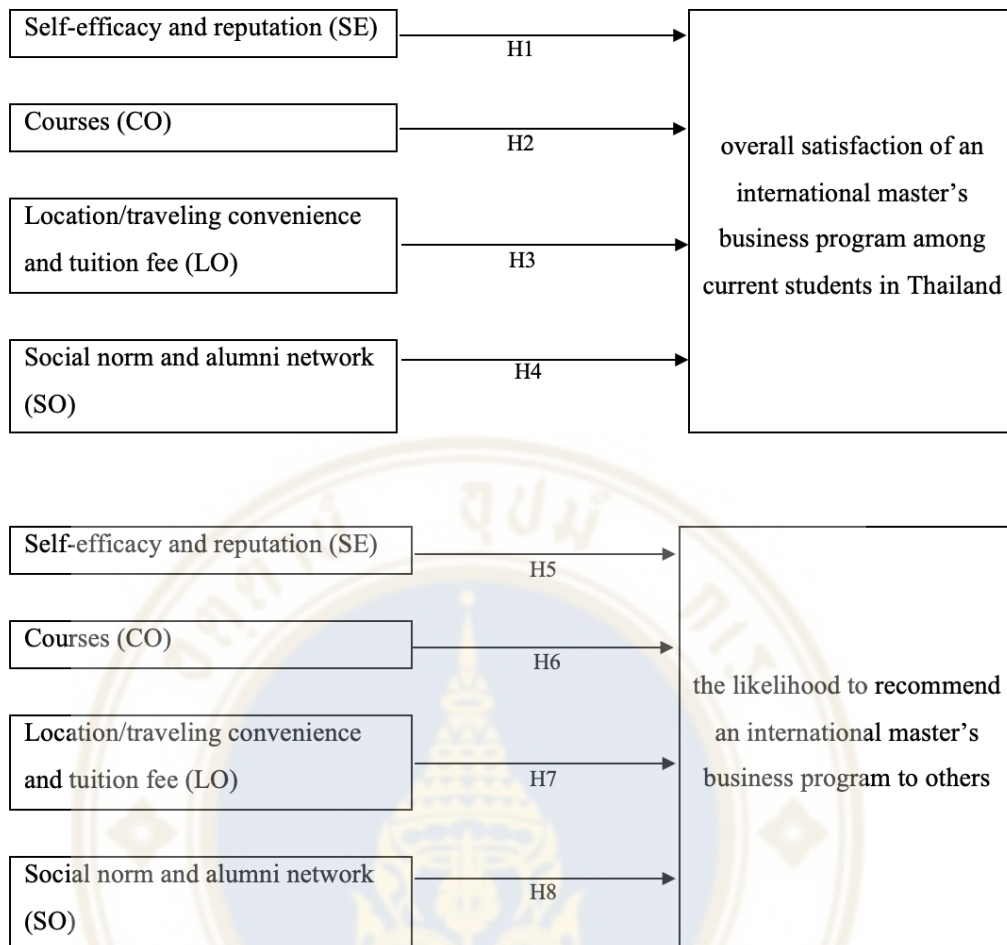


Figure 4.1 New Conceptual Framework

4.3 Factors Influencing Overall Satisfaction of an International Master's Business Program among Current Students in Thailand

With reference to Table 4.6, majority of the participants were confident with their choice of choosing the international master's business program they are currently enrolled in (54.2%). A total of 146 participants, which is equivalent to 40.6% of the participant pool, stated that they are very confident about their choice of institute. Only 4.7% and 0.6% stated that they are unconfident or not at all confident toward their choice of international master's business program, respectively.

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics concerning respondents' confidence with the choice that made in choosing the international master's business program

| Confidence with the choice that made in choosing the international master's business program | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|------------------|-------------------|
| Very confident | 146 | 40.6 |
| Confident | 195 | 54.2 |
| Unconfident | 17 | 4.7 |
| Not at all confident | 2 | 0.6 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

As shown in Table 4.7, majority of the participants are very satisfied with the international master's business program they are currently enrolled in. Out of 360 individuals, a total of 150 rate their overall satisfaction as satisfied, which is equivalent to 50.6% of the entire participants. Similarly, a total of 44.2% scored their satisfaction level for international master's business program as very satisfied. Only 4.2% and 1.1% stated that they are dissatisfied and very dissatisfied, respectively, toward the international master's business program they are currently enrolled in.

Table 4.7 Descriptive statistics concerning respondents' overall satisfaction of the international master's business program

| Overall satisfaction of the international master's business program | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|------------------|-------------------|
| Satisfied | 182 | 50.6 |
| Very satisfied | 159 | 44.2 |
| Dissatisfied | 15 | 4.2 |
| Very dissatisfied | 4 | 1.1 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

After the reliability test, multiple regression analysis was performed. Table 4.8 shows that the two predictors, location/traveling convenience and tuition fee (LO) and social norm and alumni network (SO) can be explained by 3.3% of variance of the dependent variable (adjusted $R^2 = 0.033$) with the significant level (p-value) at 0.003. Social norm and alumni network (SO) ($\beta = 0.196$, $p = 0.013$) has the strongest influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand, followed by location/traveling convenience and tuition fee (LO) ($\beta = -0.181$, $p = 0.010$). Moreover, the analysis showed that the overall satisfaction will decrease by 0.173 unit if the location/travelling convenience and tuition fee increase by one unit. On the other hand, if social norm and alumni network increase by one unit, overall satisfaction will increase by 0.195 unit.

Table 4.8 Multiple Regression Analysis for factors influencing overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta (β) | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 3.064 | 0.195 | | 15.709 | 0.000 |
| | SE | 0.042 | 0.101 | 0.042 | 0.412 | 0.681 |
| | CO | 0.035 | 0.084 | 0.037 | 0.422 | 0.673 |
| | LO | -0.173 | 0.067 | -0.181 | -2.599 | 0.010* |
| | SO | 0.195 | 0.078 | 0.196 | 2.484 | 0.013* |
| R = 0.209, $R^2 = 0.044$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.033$, F = 4.038, p-value = 0.003 | | | | | | |

* P < 0.05

4.4 Factors influencing the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others

Table 4.9 illustrates the frequency and percentage concerning the likelihood that the respondents will recommend the international master's business program. Similar to the overall satisfaction rating of the participants, majority of the participants chose "likely" as their tendency to recommend the program to others (54.7%). A total of 144 participants out of 360 participants rated the likelihood to spread positive word of mouth as "very likely" (40%). Only 4.4% and 0.5% chose "unlikely" and "not likely at all", respectively

Table 4.9 Descriptive statistics concerning respondents' likelihood to recommend the international master's business program to others

| Recommend the international master's business program | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------|------------|
| Likely | 197 | 54.7 |
| Very likely | 144 | 40.0 |
| Unlikely | 16 | 4.4 |
| Not likely at all | 3 | 0.8 |
| Total | 360 | 100 |

According to Table 4.10, the two predictors, location/traveling convenience, and tuition fee (LO) and social norm and alumni network (SO) can be explained by 6.6% of variance of the dependent variable (adjusted $R^2 = 0.066$) with the significant level (p-value) at 0.000. Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee (LO) ($\beta = -0.281$, $p = 0.000$) has the strongest influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others, followed by social norm and alumni network (SO) ($\beta = 0.201$, $p = 0.010$). The figure also shows that if location/traveling convenience, and tuition fee increase by one unit, the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others will decrease by 0.261 unit. In contrast, the likelihood to recommend an international master's business

program to others will increase by 0.194 unit if social norm and alumni network increase by one unit.

Table 4.10 Multiple regression analysis for factors influencing the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | Sig. |
|--|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|--------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 3.086 | 0.186 | | 16.582 | 0.000 |
| | SE | 0.027 | 0.097 | 0.028 | 0.277 | 0.782 |
| | CO | 0.125 | 0.080 | 0.136 | 1.558 | 0.120 |
| | LO | -0.261 | 0.064 | -0.281 | -4.111 | 0.000* |
| | SO | 0.194 | 0.075 | 0.201 | 2.589 | 0.010* |
| R = 0.276, R ² = 0.076, Adjusted R ² = 0.066, F = 7.307, p-value = 0.000 | | | | | | |

* P < 0.05

Based on the findings, four out of eight hypotheses were supported (Table 4.11). The hypotheses supported by the results of this study include “Courses has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand”, “Social norm and alumni network has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand”, “Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others”, and “Social norm and alumni network has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others”.

Table 4.11 Summary of hypotheses testing

| Hypothesis | Support |
|--|---------|
| Hypothesis 1 (H1): Self-efficacy and reputation has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand | No |

Table 4.11 Summary of hypotheses testing (cont.)

| Hypothesis | Support |
|--|----------------|
| Hypothesis 2 (H2): Courses has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand | No |
| Hypothesis 3 (H3): Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand | Yes |
| Hypothesis 4 (H4): Social norm and alumni network has an influence on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand | Yes |
| Hypothesis 5 (H5): Self-efficacy and reputation has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others | No |
| Hypothesis 6 (H6): Courses has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others | No |
| Hypothesis 7 (H7): Location/traveling convenience and tuition fee has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others | Yes |
| Hypothesis 8 (H8): Social norm and alumni network has an influence on the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others | Yes |

4.5 One-way ANOVA analysis

4.5.1 Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among current students enrolling in Thai university and foreign brand university in Thailand

With reference to Table 4.12, the mean score received for overall satisfaction of the international master's business program among students currently enrolling in Thai university was 3.34 while the overall satisfaction of the international

master's business program among students currently enrolling in foreign brand university was 3.59. Similar finding was found in relation to likelihood to recommend the international master's business program. Both Students studying in Thai university and foreign brand university are likely to recommend the international master's business program to others. The mean score of this variable among Thai university study was 3.32 while the mean score of this variable among foreign brand university was 3.42. That being said, Table 4.13 shows that the finding was significant only in term of overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program ($p < .05$).

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among current students enrolling in Thai university and foreign brand university in Thailand

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|--|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | International master's business program in Thailand (Thai university) | 301 | 3.34 | .630 | .036 | 3.26 | 3.41 | 1 | 4 |
| | International master's business program in Thailand (Foreign university) | 59 | 3.59 | .529 | .069 | 3.46 | 3.73 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.39 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.12 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among current students enrolling in Thai university and foreign brand university in Thailand (cont.)

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|--|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | International master's business program in Thailand (Thai university) | 301 | 3.32 | .610 | .035 | 3.25 | 3.39 | 1 | 4 |
| | International master's business program in Thailand (Foreign university) | 59 | 3.42 | .563 | .073 | 3.28 | 3.57 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.34 | .603 | .032 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.13 ANOVA concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among current students enrolling in Thai university and foreign brand university in Thailand

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Between Group | 3.275 | 1 | 3.275 | 8.663 | .003 |
| | Within Group | 135.347 | 358 | .3781 | | |
| | Total | 138.622 | 359 | | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Between Group | .508 | 1 | .508 | 1.397 | .238 |
| | Within Group | 130.148 | 358 | .364 | | |
| | Total | 130.656 | 359 | | | |

4.5.2 Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program of different gender

According to Table 4.14, the mean score concerning overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program was highest among male ($\bar{x} = 3.47$) followed by female ($\bar{x} = 3.32$) and prefer not to say respondents ($\bar{x} = 3.00$). In term of likelihood to recommend the international master's business program, the tendency to recommend is highest among male ($\bar{x} = 3.40$) while female and prefer not to say gender group have the same mean score of 3.38. Even though there are differences between different gender as shown via the differences in the mean score, Table 4.15 illustrated that difference was only significant regarding overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program ($p < 0.05$)

Table 4.14 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program of different genders

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|-------------------|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Female | 201 | 3.32 | .640 | .045 | 3.23 | 3.41 | 1 | 4 |
| | Male | 151 | 3.47 | .575 | .047 | 3.38 | 3.56 | 2 | 4 |
| | Prefer not to say | 8 | 3.00 | .756 | .257 | 2.37 | 3.63 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Female | 201 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| | Male | 151 | 3.40 | .624 | .032 | 3.30 | 3.50 | 1 | 4 |
| | Prefer not to say | 8 | 3.38 | .744 | .263 | 2.75 | 4.00 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.34 | .603 | .032 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.15 ANOVA concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among different genders

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Between Group | 3.026 | 2 | 1.513 | 3.984 | .019 |
| | Within Group | 135.596 | 357 | .380 | | |
| | Total | 138.622 | 359 | | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Between Group | 1.159 | 2 | .580 | 1.598 | .204 |
| | Within Group | 129.496 | 357 | .363 | | |
| | Total | 130.656 | 359 | | | |

4.5.3 Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of different age group

Table 4.16 shows that the highest mean score concerning overall satisfaction between participants of different age group was the participant whose age was below 18 and above 50 ($\bar{x} = 4.00$). However, there was only a single participant that was within that age categories. The mean score regarding overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program of participants whose age was between 18 and 25, 26 and 30, 31 and 40, and 41 and 50 year old was 3.15, 3.36, 3.46, and 3.58, respectively. Regarding likelihood to recommend the international master's business program, the highest mean score was observed among participants whose age was between 31 and 40 year old ($\bar{x} = 3.46$) followed by participants whose age was between 41 year old and 50 year old ($\bar{x} = 3.33$) and participants whose age was between 26 year old and 30 year old ($\bar{x} = 3.32$). Table 4.17 illustrated the significance ANOVA analysis of both overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of different age group ($p < 0.01$).

Table 4.16 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of different age group

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|----------|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Below 18 | 1 | 4.00 | | | | | 4 | 4 |
| | 18 – 25 | 41 | 3.15 | .527 | .082 | 2.98 | 3.31 | 2 | 4 |
| | 26 – 30 | 154 | 3.36 | .594 | .046 | 3.27 | 3.45 | 1 | 4 |
| | 31 – 40 | 140 | 3.46 | .639 | .054 | 3.36 | 3.57 | 1 | 4 |
| | 41 – 50 | 12 | 3.58 | .515 | .149 | 3.26 | 3.91 | 3 | 4 |
| | Above 50 | 1 | 1.00 | | | | | | |
| | Total | 360 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Below 18 | 1 | 4.00 | | | | | | |
| | 18 – 25 | 41 | 3.00 | .632 | .099 | 2.80 | 3.20 | 1 | 4 |
| | 26 – 30 | 154 | 3.32 | .574 | .045 | 3.23 | 3.41 | 1 | 4 |
| | 31 – 40 | 140 | 3.46 | .592 | .050 | 3.36 | 3.56 | 1 | 4 |
| | 41 – 50 | 12 | 3.33 | .651 | .188 | 2.92 | 3.75 | 2 | 4 |
| | Above 50 | 1 | 3.00 | | | | | 3 | 3 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.34 | .603 | .032 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.17 ANOVA concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of different age group

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Between Group | 9.859 | 5 | 1.972 | 5.421 | .000 |
| | Within Group | 128.763 | 354 | .364 | | |
| | Total | 138.622 | 359 | | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Between Group | 7.270 | 5 | 1.454 | 4.172 | .001 |
| | Within Group | 123.385 | 354 | .349 | | |
| | Total | 130.656 | 359 | | | |

4.5.4 Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of region of residence

With reference to Table 4.18, the mean score concerning overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program was highest among participants who reside in the western region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 3.67$) followed by respondents from the central region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 3.58$), respondents from Bangkok and metropolis area ($\bar{x} = 3.39$), and participants from the central region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 3.36$). In term of likelihood to recommend the international master's business program, the mean score was also highest among participants who reside in the western region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 3.58$) followed by respondents from the central region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 3.47$). The likelihood to recommend the international master's business program was lowest among respondents from the southern region of Thailand ($\bar{x} = 2.92$). ANOVA analysis, as shown in Table 4.19, shows that the finding was

significant only in term of overall satisfaction of the international master's business program ($p < 0.05$).

Table 4.18 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of region of residence

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|-------------------|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | North | 30 | 3.10 | .923 | .168 | 2.76 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| | Northeast | 28 | 3.36 | .621 | .117 | 3.12 | 3.60 | 2 | 4 |
| | Central | 38 | 3.58 | .552 | .090 | 3.40 | 2.76 | 2 | 4 |
| | Bangkok | 219 | 3.39 | .583 | .039 | 3.31 | 3.47 | 1 | 4 |
| | West | 12 | 3.67 | .492 | .142 | 3.35 | 3.98 | 3 | 4 |
| | East | 15 | 3.27 | .594 | .153 | 2.94 | 3.60 | 2 | 4 |
| | South | 12 | 3.25 | .622 | .179 | 2.86 | 3.64 | 2 | 4 |
| | None of the above | 6 | 3.17 | .408 | .167 | 2.74 | 3.60 | 3 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | North | 30 | 3.33 | .661 | .121 | 3.09 | 3.58 | 2 | 4 |
| | Northeast | 28 | 3.32 | .612 | .116 | 3.08 | 3.56 | 2 | 4 |
| | Central | 38 | 3.47 | .603 | .098 | 3.28 | 3.67 | 2 | 4 |
| | Bangkok | 219 | 3.34 | .580 | .039 | 3.27 | 3.42 | 1 | 4 |
| | West | 12 | 3.58 | .515 | .149 | 3.26 | 3.91 | 3 | 4 |
| | East | 15 | 3.13 | .640 | .165 | 2.78 | 3.49 | 2 | 4 |
| | South | 12 | 3.92 | .793 | .229 | 2.41 | 3.42 | 1 | 4 |
| | None of the above | 6 | 3.33 | .516 | .211 | 2.79 | 3.88 | 3 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.34 | .603 | .032 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.19 ANOVA concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of region of residence

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Between Group | 5.538 | 7 | .791 | 2.093 | .044 |
| | Within Group | 133.084 | 352 | .378 | | |
| | Total | 138.622 | 359 | | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Between Group | 4.193 | 7 | .599 | 1.667 | .116 |
| | Within Group | 126.463 | 352 | .359 | | |
| | Total | 130.656 | 359 | | | |

4.5.5 Overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of varying average monthly income

According to Table 4.20, respondents with average monthly income ranges between 50,001 THB and 100,000 THB has the highest mean score concerning overall satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 3.60$) followed by participants with average monthly income of 100,001 THB and above ($\bar{x} = 3.54$), and participants with average monthly income between 30,001 and 50,000 THB ($\bar{x} = 3.37$). Participants whose average monthly income was less than 15,000 THB showed that lowest mean score about overall satisfaction toward international master's business program ($\bar{x} = 2.67$). Similarly, participants with average monthly income ranges between 50,001 THB and 100,000 THB has the highest mean score of the likelihood to recommend the international master's business program ($\bar{x} = 3.53$). Respondents with average monthly income ranges between 15,001 THB and 20,000 THB has the least tendency to recommend the international master's business program to others ($\bar{x} = 3.00$). With reference to

Table 4.21, the findings were significant both in term of overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program ($p < 0.01$).

Table 4.20 Descriptive statistics concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of varying average monthly income

| | | N | Mean | Std. Dev. | Std. Error | 95% confidence interval for mean | | Min | Max |
|---|--------------------|-----|------|-----------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | | Lower Bound | Upper Bound | | |
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | <15,000 | 3 | 2.67 | 1.528 | .822 | -1.13 | 6.46 | 1 | 4 |
| | 15,001-20,000 | 24 | 3.17 | .637 | .130 | 2.90 | 3.44 | 2 | 4 |
| | 20,001-25,000 | 45 | 3.22 | .636 | .095 | 3.03 | 3.41 | 1 | 4 |
| | 25,001 – 30,000 | 83 | 3.35 | .593 | .065 | 3.22 | 3.48 | 1 | 4 |
| | 30,001 – 50,000 | 120 | 3.37 | .564 | .051 | 3.26 | 3.47 | 2 | 4 |
| | 50,001 – 100,000 | 72 | 3.60 | .620 | .073 | 3.45 | 3.74 | 1 | 4 |
| | 100,0001 and above | 13 | 3.54 | .660 | .183 | 3.14 | 3.94 | 2 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.38 | .621 | .033 | 3.31 | 3.44 | 1 | 4 |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | <15,000 | 3 | 3.33 | .577 | .333 | 1.90 | 4.77 | 3 | 4 |
| | 15,001-20,000 | 24 | 3.00 | .590 | .120 | 2.75 | 3.25 | 2 | 4 |
| | 20,001-25,000 | 45 | 3.16 | .601 | .090 | 2.97 | 3.34 | 1 | 4 |
| | 25,001 – 30,000 | 83 | 3.30 | .599 | .066 | 3.17 | 3.43 | 1 | 4 |
| | 30,001 – 50,000 | 120 | 3.38 | .611 | .056 | 3.27 | 3.49 | 1 | 4 |
| | 50,001 – 100,000 | 72 | 3.53 | .556 | .066 | 3.40 | 3.66 | 2 | 4 |
| | 100,0001 and above | 13 | 3.38 | .506 | .140 | 3.08 | 3.69 | 3 | 4 |
| | Total | 360 | 3.34 | .603 | .032 | 3.28 | 3.40 | 1 | 4 |

Table 4.21 ANOVA concerning overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend the international master's business program among respondents of varying average monthly income

| | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Overall satisfaction toward the international master's business program (v54) | Between Group | 7.560 | 6 | 1.260 | 3.394 | .003 |
| | Within Group | 131.062 | 353 | .371 | | |
| | Total | 138.622 | 359 | | | |
| Likelihood to recommend the international master's business program (v55) | Between Group | 7.220 | 6 | 1.203 | 3.441 | .003 |
| | Within Group | 123.436 | 353 | .350 | | |
| | Total | 130.656 | 359 | | | |

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This chapter has been divided into three main sections. The first section concerns the discussion of the research findings majorly by comparing the results of this study with existing body of research. The section has been sub-divided further into three parts according to the research objectives. The second section of this chapter provides a conclusion of this research. The third section, which is the final section of this chapter, concerns limitations of this study, and future research directions.

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1 Criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais

This section provides a discussion on the finding of the first research objective, which is to determine criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thai. Based on regression analysis, the criteria for choosing an international master's business program among Thais identified in this study are self-efficacy and reputation, courses, location/traveling convenience and tuition fee, and social norm and alumni network. The finding of this study is consistent with many studies. A study also found that self-efficacy is an important criterion for students when they are choosing their high school of choice (Phillips, 2016). Self-efficacy is an important element of Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986). Researcher explains that self-efficacy regards individuals' perception of one own ability to perform certain task including academic performance (Alvarez-Huerta, Larrea, Muela, & Victoria, 2019). Scholars further explains that self-efficacy is particularly important for students because its reflects the effort, as well as, their motivation to learn of each student (Van-Dinther, Dochy, & Segers, 2011). Moreover, self-efficacy also influence

academic expectations of an individuals (Domenech-Betoret, Abellan-Rosello, & Gomez-Artiga, 2017). Reputation including both the university's reputation and faculty members' reputation were found as one of the important criteria for choosing an international master's business program. Many studies also evidenced the same finding where reputation of university (Bouke, 2020; Qasim et al., 2021; Soutar & Turner, 2017) and reputation of faculty members (Bathmaker, 2017) are important toward university choice. Such evidence was also discovered among Asian students (Gray et al., 2018; Munisamy et al., 2019), which is similar type of student investigated in this study. Researcher elaborated that reputation of university is important as it represents not only the brand of the university, but also the perceived trustworthiness of their degree among potential employees (Ma, 2020). A Chinese study suggested that reputation of faculty members reflects the expertise in their academic field. Thus, potential students often relate reputation of faculty members with teaching quality (Tian & Lu, 2019).

Several students have found that various aspects of courses are important determinants of university choice, which is the same finding as this study (Gill et al., 2018; Hoyt & Brown, 2019; Massoud & Ayoubi, 2019; Qasim et al., 2021; Reginald et al., 2018). For example, variety of the course is important as it has the potential to attract more students with differing career path. Moreover, the students perceived that it is possible to learn different thing from varying course, which make the university with more courses more attractive (Hoyt & Brown, 2019). Similar to this study, many studies found that tuition fee is an important factor influencing choice of university among potential students (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019; Dwenger et al., 2021; Gyamfi, 2017). This factor is particularly important among students with limited budget e.g. students from family with lower income (Bahrs & Siedler, 2019). Researchers suggested that tuition fee plays an important role when student weigh the cost and benefit of their academic pursuit (Maniu & Maniu, 2014). That being said, a study performed in Kurdistan, Iraq, found an opposite finding in that tuition fee has limited influence on student choice of university. Rather, it is the net cost involved with the enrollment that matter (Qasim et al., 2021). The overall net cost could also explain the importance of travelling convenience and university location on university choice.

This is because travelling often involved some kind of expenses (Hossler & Gallagher, 2018; Raposo & Alves, 2017; Schauer et al., 2014).

While this study found that choice international master's business program among Thai depends on social norm and alumni network, multiple studies also found consistent findings. Researchers explained that social norm is particularly important in university choice because it is unlikely that potential students will have the ability to become aware of the quality of teaching by themselves. As such, potential students tend to rely on opinions of others who have had experiences with certain university to make decision whether or not one should choose that particular university (Callender & Dougherty, 2018; Wong et al., 2019). Moreover, Study also suggested that parents also influence students' choice of university particularly in Asian context. This is because students often believe that their parents will be proud of them if they can get into the university that is desirable by their parents (Luna & Martin, 2017; Pimpa & Suwannapirom, 2018). Alumni network was also found to have direct influence on university choice by other authors (Kohanna et al., 2019). Past study suggested that students tend to choose university with strong alumni network because it offers intrinsic values that create the sense of long-term success (Bozeman & Eadens, 2020). In the sense of business degree, alumni network offers connections that are deemed useful in term of real-world business opportunities (Finney & Pyke, 2008).

5.1.2 Factors influencing overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand and factors influencing the likelihood to recommend an international master's business program to others

One of the objectives of this study is to identify factors influencing overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand. The findings of this study suggested that overall satisfaction is influenced by university location and traveling convenience and social norm and alumni network. A study performed in New Zealand also found that university location is important determinant of students' satisfaction level because university location determines the culture, the safety and the sense of community perceived by students (Andrea & Benjamin, 2013). A study performed in Sri Lanka also found that university location

has strong influence on student satisfaction levels (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). That being said, the study found that the strongest predictor of student satisfaction level was the university image i.e. the university reputation is the strongest predictor (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). This finding is in contrary with the finding of this research as this study also found that self-efficacy and reputation, and courses have no influence, statistically, on overall satisfaction of an international master's business program among current students in Thailand. In addition, another study also found a contrasting result where quality of teaching is an important determinants of overall satisfaction (Navaroo, Iglecias, & Torres, 2005).

This sub-section also concerns of the objectives of the study, which is to determine factors influencing the likelihood to recommend and international master's business program to others. The findings in this section are the same as the previous section where university location and traveling convenience and social norm and alumni network has significant influence and self-efficacy and reputation has no influence on the likelihood to recommend and international master's business program to others. The same influential factors between overall satisfaction and likelihood to recommend was also evidenced in other study (Weerasinghe & Fernando, 2017). Researcher suggested that, in education, satisfaction is a positive antecedent of student loyalty to university, which means that students with higher satisfaction are more likely spread positive word of mouth to others (Navaroo et al., 2005).

5.1.3 Criteria posing the greatest influence on Thai students' choice in the selection of an international master's business program among Thai

Even though this study suggested that factors influencing Thai students' choice in the selection of an international master's business program among Thai can be divided into four groups, the finding of this study evidenced that university location and traveling convenience and social norm and alumni network were the two factors posing the stronger influences on student choice of business program. The finding regarding university location and traveling convenience is consistent with other study, which also found that the factor is the most important factors influencing students' choice of university (Raposo & Alves, 2017; Schauer et al., 2014). The importance of university location and travelling convenience is due to the fact that proximity of

university indirectly reflects cost of living (Hossler & Gallagher, 2018; Schauer et al., 2014). Some study also found that social norm and alumni network is the most influential factors for students as the factor represents acceptance in the society and future business opportunity (Bozeman & Eadens, 2020). That being said, multiple studies have found that reputation of university and reputation of faculty members are the most influential factors as it reflects career opportunities and quality of teaching (Bathmaker, 2017; Gray et al., 2018; Jamjuree, 2018; Munisamy et al., 2019; Reginald et al., 2018).

5.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study found that the two most important factors that university offering international business program needs to acknowledge are university location and travelling convenience, and social norm and alumni network. Based on this finding, it is recommended that university that locates further away from public transportation provides free transport service such as shuttle bus from nearest public transport hub to university. For university that in remote areas, the university could consider offering a combination of offline and online course. In another words, some lectures could be taught online so that the student do not have to travel long distance to the university. That being said, it is also important for university to host on-campus lecture and activities so that the students can participate in group activities and also socialize in university setting. The on-site activities are also particularly important in the aspect of alumni network. University can enhance its alumni network by hosting events regularly between alumni and current students. In addition, to emphasize on alumni network, the university can include short clip of various alumni testimonials on all communication channels of the university both offline and online channels. To add, the university can feature their open house activity with alumni talk or meet the alumni session so that the potential students can ask questions about the university experience directly with the alumni. All in all, communication channels of the university should emphasize the operation targeting at these two factors to ensure that the contents can attract potential students.

5.3 Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are several limitations to this study. First, the questionnaire is relatively lengthy as it can take up to 20 minutes to complete the survey. Based on past study, an ideal survey length is 10 minutes (Revilla & Ochoa, 2017), which is half the time required by the questionnaire used in this study. As such, participants may lose their concentration and focus along the way before the end of the survey. Once their attention on the survey is gone, they might not read the question thoroughly and just simply choose untruthful answer just to complete the entire questionnaire. Thus, the results from this limitation may not be the representation of the true reality. Second, this study was performed among current students partaking an international master's business program. Being current students means that they are exposed to various characteristics of the program, which ultimately shape their satisfaction. However, the main aim of the research is to find factors that influence university choice. As such, it might be more appropriate to collect data from newly enrolled students or students who are currently looking to enroll in an international master's business program. By doing so, the data collected will be more relevant and unbiased from the experiences by being current students. Thus, future research could be done with a more concise questionnaire and among newly admitted students or potential students. Third, demographic variation was not included in the inclusion criteria of this study as such this study comprises of participants from variety of background. The differences in demography may influence the finding. For example, majority of the participants resides in Bangkok where the traffic is very bad. The nature of traffic in Bangkok could influence the individuals to seek for university that locates near their residence or university that offer traveling convenience. To be able to gain a more practical result, future study should be done by focusing more on demographic variation. Lastly, even though, the research tool has been used in past study, the tool has never been used among Thais as well the cultural variation may affect the effectiveness of the tool and lead to unfavorable outcome of the study.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION 1: INFORMED CONSENT

Dear participant,

First of all, thank you for accepting my invitation to participate in my study. My name is _____, current Master's degree study majoring in _____ at _____. The questionnaire is part of my independent. The title of my dissertation is 'Choice criteria among Thais towards choosing an international master's degree program in Thailand'. This study aims to explore the factors that influence Thai student choice in the selection of to pursue master's degree in an international program in Thailand. This survey will require around 15 to 20 minutes of your time. Please acknowledge that this survey complies to the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) of Thailand. This survey is anonymous, and all of the information collected from this survey will be kept confidential and will only be used for academic purposes. You also have full rights to refuse to participate or withdraw from this study up to and until 30th of August 2021. Upon your withdraw, the information collected from you will be deleted and omitted from this study. Thank you again for your kind participation. Should you have any questions regarding this study, please feel free to contact me at _____. Please tick the following box to agree that you have read this consent form and willing to participate in this study

SECTION 2: SCREENING QUESTIONS

1. Have you completed any international master's business program or are you currently partaking any international master's business program?

- Yes
- No (This is the end of the survey, thank you for your contribution)

SECTION 3: INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR MASTER'S BUSINESS PROGRAM

2. Which of the following statement best describe the master's business program you have achieved/currently partaking?

- International master's business program in Thailand (Thai university)
- International master's business program in Thailand (Foreign brand)

SECTION 4: CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING AN INTERNATIONAL MASTER'S BUSINESS PROGRAM AMONG THAIS

This section concerns the remaining objectives of the study. For the following questions, please rate each factor in term of its importance as a selection criteria when you are choosing an international master's business program, where 1 being strongly disagree, and 4 being strongly agree

| | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 3 | My own ability is an influential factor towards my university choice | | | | |
| 4 | Most people who are important to me expects me to choose a certain university | | | | |
| 5 | My parents expect me to choose a certain university | | | | |
| 6 | I think it is important that international master's business program is taught by international lecturer | | | | |
| 7 | Reputation of faculty members is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 8 | I prefer university with faculty members whose name is widely recognizable | | | | |
| 9 | I prefer university that has convenient access to public transportation | | | | |
| 10 | I prefer university that locates within close proximity to my home/accommodation | | | | |
| 11 | I prefer university with faculty members that has multiple research publications | | | | |
| 12 | Variety of the courses is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 13 | I prefer university that offers multiple availability of academic programs | | | | |
| 14 | I prefer university that have multiple meeting rooms | | | | |

| | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|--|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | I prefer university that offers exchange program to other country as part of the international master's business program | | | | |
| 16 | I prefer to choose university that matches my capability | | | | |
| 17 | I prefer university that host multiple events that allow current students to meet with the alumni | | | | |
| 18 | I prefer university that has reputable alumni network | | | | |
| 19 | Alumni network is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 20 | International lecturers are an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 21 | I prefer international master's business program that allow me to graduate as soon as possible | | | | |
| 22 | Affordable tuition fee is an important factor I think about when choosing international master's business program | | | | |
| 23 | I prefer university that has international recognition | | | | |
| 24 | Reputation of the university is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 25 | I prefer university that is easy to commute to | | | | |
| 26 | Tuition fee is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 27 | I prefer university which offers many elective courses | | | | |
| 28 | I prefer international master's business program that will be taught by Thai lecturers who have international degree | | | | |
| 29 | University infrastructures and facilities is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 30 | Availability of exchange program is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 31 | I prefer university with alumni network that will allow me to have stronger business connection | | | | |
| 32 | Social norm is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 33 | I prefer university that have common room where I can interact and work with my friends. | | | | |
| 34 | Courses duration is an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 35 | I prefer university that listed highly on university ranking site | | | | |
| 36 | I prefer university that offers international master's business program at a reasonable price | | | | |
| 37 | I prefer a university that is located close to my work location | | | | |
| 38 | I prefer international master's business program that lasted only a year | | | | |
| 39 | I prefer university that has positive reputation | | | | |

| | Statement | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|----|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 40 | I prefer to study at a university whose name is widely recognizable in my country | | | | |
| 41 | I prefer university that have decent library | | | | |
| 42 | I prefer university with faculty members with extensive work experiences in well-known company | | | | |
| 43 | Location and travelling convenience are an influential factor toward my university choice | | | | |
| 44 | I prefer university with faculty members that is well known for good teaching quality | | | | |
| 45 | The shorter the international master's business program the better | | | | |
| 46 | People in my circle expect me to choose a certain university | | | | |
| 47 | I prefer international master's business program that will be taught by international lecturer | | | | |
| 48 | It is important that university provides opportunity for its students to study aboard as part of their exchange program | | | | |
| 49 | I prefer university with strong alumni network | | | | |
| 50 | My friends expect me to choose a certain university | | | | |
| 51 | I evaluate myself and my academic capability before choosing a university | | | | |
| 52 | I prefer university that offers diverse range of courses | | | | |
| 53 | I prefer university that have various facilities to support its students | | | | |

SECTION 5: OVERALL SATISFACTION AND WOM RECOMMENDATION

54. Please rate the overall satisfaction of the master's international business program you are currently partaking or have accomplished

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

55. How likely are you to recommend the master's international business program you are currently partaking or have accomplished to someone you know?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Not likely at all

56. How confident are you with the choice you made in choosing the master's international business program you are currently partaking or have accomplished

- Very confident
- Confident
- Unconfident
- Not at all confident

SECTION 6: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

57. Please tell me what is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

58. Please tell me what is your age?

- Below 18
- 18 – 25
- 26 – 30
- 31 – 40
- 41 – 50
- Above 50

59. Please tell me which part of Thailand are you from?

- The northern region of Thailand
- The northeast (Isarn) region of Thailand
- The central region of Thailand
- Bangkok and metropolis
- The western region of Thailand
- The eastern region of Thailand
- The southern region of Thailand

60. Please tell me what is your average personal monthly income?

- Less than 15,000 THB
- 15,001 – 20,000 THB
- 20,001 – 25,000 THB
- 25,001 – 30,000 THB
- 30,001 – 50,000 THB
- 50,001 – 100,000 THB
- 100,001 and above

61. Please tell me if you re Thai

- Yes
- No

The end of the survey

Please send the URL of this survey to somebody who are currently partaking international master's business program or have achieve one.

Thank you again for your participation