

Adopting the Motivation-Opportunity-Ability model to Evaluate the Intentions of Thai Students to Study Abroad

By

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Abstract

In recent year, the growth of globalization phenomenon and the world economy has posed a challenge to the education system which also has led to an increasing the number of students studying abroad. In Thailand, there are over 80,000 Thai students studying overseas every year and the number tends to be increasing dramatically each year. To find out factors of this newly trend is not only an economical but also educational concern. Therefore, this study focused on the underlying motivations of Thai students to study abroad. The hypotheses were developed based on a series of literature review and in depth interviews. The survey was conducted using 200 Thai students as the subjects. This study adopted the motivation – opportunity – ability model (MOA) to evaluate the intentions of Thai students to study abroad. The results indicated that motivation is the most important factor to facilitate Thai students to go abroad, followed by ability. Opportunity appeared to have insignificant influence. Furthermore, positive Word-of-mouth tended to enhance the influence of MOA on students' oversea study intention.

Keywords: *MOA, Word of Mouth (WOM), Intention to study abroad.*

1. Research Background and Motivation

Over the past decades, the national boundaries have lost their traditional significance through increased travel, global telecommunications, international trade and investment. This significant globalization has impacted on higher education such that there is an increasing flow of students across borders. Nowadays the education have been considered as a market commodity. Higher education is perceived as a 'service' or 'good' (Pimpa, 2004). The internationalization of education not only can add the cultural value to the institution but also means that the institution is benefiting economically and financially from the 'full-fee paying international students', (Ramburuth and Tani, 2009). The UK Government has sponsored several initiatives to attract more international students with the purpose of becoming the world's leading nation in international education (Binsardi and Ekwulugo, 2003). Also, the USA and Australia have been applying aggressive international marketing strategies for education (Mazzarol and Hosie, 1996 ; Michael, 1990). Thus, it is very important for marketers to know the factors influencing the intention of potential students to study abroad. Due to the increasing demand for educational services, marketers need to be more aware of the underlying factors considered by consumers when evaluating services (Ahmed et al., 2002). Although higher education is part of the increasing globalization of the trade in goods and services, the intention to study abroad choice process contains all types of capital described as influential in the student-choice construct. Each decision shapes the plausibility of potential options in subsequent decisions (Williamson, 2004). For example, when students select a study abroad program that fits their budget, they compare the expected costs and benefits in terms of additional direct or indirect costs, family income, and other elements of financial capital. When students select a program that meets their career goals, they consider their academic ability, achievement, educational and career aspirations, and the perceived potential of a study abroad experience to apply reaching those career goals. When students consider the curricular viability of a study abroad program, they may need to verify whether they can afford the additional costs to complete their degree as well as the possible value of added knowledge and experience.

Though there are many benefits associated with the study abroad experience, little is known about what influences students' choice to study abroad (Goldstein and Kim, 2006). Such research is needed in order to identify why students choose these educational experiences and what factors would serve the intention to study abroad to deter such endeavors.

Based on the above background and motivation, this study attempts to explore the motivation, opportunity and ability of Thai students to study abroad. The objectives of this study are as follows:

- To investigate the motivation, opportunity and ability of Thai students' intention to study abroad.
- To examine the role of word-of-mouth(WOM) as a moderator for the influences of MOA on intentions to study abroad.

2. Literature review

Intention to Study Abroad

A review of the literature reveals that several studies have dealt with the intentions to study abroad. The model stated by Cubillo et al. (2006) designed to help explain the factors that influence the purchase intention of international students. Their model try to explain the attribute involved in the decision making process for potential students on an overseas study destination. The growing importance of study abroad and the trend to accomplish the global competition in the marketplace, predicting intention to participate in study abroad is important for the schools and administrators that are involved with such programs in order to design and market these programs effectively (Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello, 2009; Rego, Billett, and Morgan, 2009).

Literatures revealed that the intention to study abroad is comprised of a range of decisions based on affordability, cultural accessibility, intellectual and professional applicability, and curricular viability (Williamson, 2004). The decision to study overseas is one of the most significant and expensive initiatives that students may ever undertake (Mazzarol, 1998). Furthermore, the high costs of studying abroad make it a complex decision. Most complex and expensive decisions are more likely to involve deeper buyer deliberation. The international education is not a frequent purchase and demands a high level of involvement from customers (Nicholls et al., 1995). In order to determine their preferences, prospective students consider what is important for them, and then make a conscious/unconscious trade-off among the attributes (Soutar and Turner, 2002).

The Motivation-Opportunity-Ability (MOA) Model

The MOA framework was originally proposed by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989). The Model reveals an individual's process information is based on three components: Motivation, Opportunity and Ability (MOA). Therefore, communication effectiveness can be proactively achieved by enhancing individuals' levels of the MOA elements (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997) broadened the outcomes associated with the MOA theory to include effortful behaviors in study situations.

The origins of the MOA framework lie in the theoretical discourse between industrial psychologists, who have traditionally viewed performance as a function of training and selection that sharpen employees' ability to perform (e.g., Lawshe, 1945), and research by social psychologists, who have emphasized the motivational component to performance (e.g., Wyatt, 1934). Opportunity was later added into this framework to capture all those exogenous factors that prevent employees from performing well (Peters & O'Connor, 1980; Blumberg and Pringle, 1982).

The MOA framework is well established as a theoretical basis for the explanation of work performance (Boudreau et al., 2003). It has been successfully employed to explain a wide array of behaviors such as consumer choice (MacInnis et al., 1991), firm-level decision making and social capital activation (Adler and Kwon, 2002). Motivation, opportunity, and ability are related constructs (Blumberg and Pringle,

1982). However, the precise direction of all causal relationships among MOA is difficult to justify theoretically; thus, we conceptualize them as correlated but distinct constructs.

Motivation to Study Abroad

Motivation is an important factor in a decision-making process as it affects both the direction and intensity of behavior (Bettman, 1979). It is commonly viewed as a force that directs individuals toward goals, and marketing research commonly examines ways that customers can be motivated to engage in behaviors, make decisions, and/or process information (Hoyer and MacInnis, 1997; MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989). Because moving to a different country is an important life-changing decision, it seems obvious that various reasons and motives, including economic, political, and religious ones (Hall, 2004) play a major role.

Opportunity to Study Abroad

Study abroad is an opportunity for students to learn more about themselves build self-confidence, meet new people, and experience new cultures along with numerous other positive outcomes. Opportunity is the second antecedent of the MOA model and is the circumstances that allow for or facilitate people to perform a behavior. Opportunity reflects the extent to which a situation is conducive to achieving a desired outcome. MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) outlined several situational factors such as the time available, cost, attention paid, number of distractions, or number of repetitions that something is available, all of which can either enhance or obstruct the desired outcome. Thus, opportunity can be approached from a positive view of availability or it can be viewed from a negative perspective of impediments (MacInnis et al., 1991). In broad terms, an opportunity may be the chance to meet a market need or interest through a creative combination of resources to deliver superior value (Schumpeter, 1934). But “opportunities” describe a range of phenomena that begin formless and become more developed through time.

MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) and MacInnis et al., (1991) outlined previously research about the cost and attention paid or in this context we defined as “Financial Factor” “Cultural Exposure” “Career Opportunity” which related to opportunity construct.

Financial Factor: Most students identified financial factors as a cost issues including the cost of fees, tuition fees, living expenses in foreign country, travel costs and social costs, and related expenses. Financial support might limit or expand the opportunity of their country choices, as their financial sponsors may support or constrain them to study in certain destinations or courses (Van Der Meid, 2003). The cost of accommodation, health benefits and living expenses are important considerations for students when making a decision regarding overseas study (Bourke 2000). The affordability can influence individual’s intentions. It has been recently suggested that the economic factors such as feasibility, or the availability of financial means when predicting intentions (Nabi and Holden, 2008). Financial factors may well apply in the perspective of study abroad programs, given the additional financial burden experienced by a population that could be said to be sensitive to financial factors, i.e. higher education students or cross-border higher education.

Cultural Exposure: ‘Culture’ has many definitions exist but according to Linton (1945) culture may be defined as that unique configuration of learned behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors whose individual components are shared by associates of a particular society. The aims of international education are the belief that culture is united among associates of a society. To begin to learn and appreciate a foreign culture to your own, it allows students the opportunity to enhance cross-cultural adaptation skills, increasingly vigorous in an interdependent world and to examine flexibility and initiative. Frisch (1990) reasoned that exposure to cultural diversity might challenge the established views of students who study abroad. Zorn (1996), Thompson et al. (2000) and Pross (2005) link increased cultural awareness to the experience of studying abroad. Huang (2008) found that international students from developing countries studying in the UK report a high level of satisfaction with British higher

education but that they would hope for improvements in dealing with the students' language concerns and more opportunities for cultural mixing with UK students. Moreover, socio-cultural adjustment relates to the attention or effort to 'fit in' or to negotiate aspects of the host culture as measured by the amount of difficulty experienced in managing everyday situations in that culture, Richardson (2000) indicates that good adjustment, it creates a positive experience and reduces the chance of premature.

Career Opportunity: Recently, educational sectors and study abroad professionals have come to focus more directly on the question of what students are learning abroad. Trooboff, Vandeberg and Raymon (2007) mentioned that there has been increasing speculation about the extent to which study abroad increases opportunities for employability following graduation. Common wisdom has it those undergraduates who study abroad have an advantage over those who stay at home. There is a sense—ranging from vague hope to strong conviction— among study abroad professionals, and among increasing numbers of parents that students who have studied abroad will have a leg up in the job market when they interview for first jobs following graduation. Study abroad is an opportunity for students to learn more about themselves build self-confidence, meet new people, and experience new cultures along with numerous other positive consequences. The future career opportunity for a graduate on returning home after studying abroad can be include higher job opportunities, higher wages and also a higher risk of skill mismatch (Wiers-Jenssen and Try, 2005). A report from Sweden indicates that employers prefer recruiting graduates who have parts of their education abroad, rather than graduates who have undertaken their entire studies abroad (Zadeh, 1999) graduates educated abroad to have better employment prospects in organizations with long traditions of employing people with foreign education (e.g., business and administration) organizations with an explicit need for international competence

Ability to Study Abroad

Ability is the extent to which the actors have the necessary resources (e.g., knowledge, intelligence, money) to make the outcome happen (Hoyer and MacInnis 1997). As individuals acquire the physical capital and natural capacity necessary for action, social production or sharing can become ubiquitous (Benkler, 2004). The “language ability” and “intellectual ability” are related to ability construct.

Language Ability: Study abroad offers one of the most effective means to obtain skills in a foreign language. Competency in a foreign language is particularly essential for professionals in countries where the national language is not one used internationally. For example, professionals in countries like Japan, Indonesia and Thailand seriously need knowledge of an international language such as English to be able to communicate with professionals in other parts of the world as well as in their own counties. Knowledge of an international language also broadens access to a wide range of academic materials of a diverse ideological nature such as Marxist regimes.

Intellectual Ability: Intellectual ability normally refers to the ability measured by performance on an intelligence test. Within the discipline of psychology, various approaches to human intelligence have been adopted. Intelligence tests are broadly used in educational, (Ritter, Kilinc, Navruz and Bae, 2011) business and military settings due to their efficacy in predicting behavior and it is most widely studied in humans. Intelligence has been defined in various ways such as self-adjustment, self-awareness, communication skill, planning, knowledge learning, reasoning, understanding, abstract thought and problem solving. Being an overseas student, especially one that is totally different from their own country, certainly necessitates adjustment. The obvious form of adjustment that international students have to make is academic as studying in a different country often involves a different education style and new kinds of demands and expectations (Burns, 1999; Holmes, 2000). The adjustment can be phenomenal for some, and many studies have reported that Asian students struggle in the different educational environment (Burns, 1991; Campbell, 2004; Holmes, 2000).

Word-of-Mouth (WOM)

WOM refers to informal communications directed at other consumers about the usage of particular products or services concerning evaluations of goods and services (Westbrook, 1987). One of the influential scholars of studying the influence of word-of-mouth to consumers' behavior was Arndt (1967) who defined the word-of-mouth as the oral, person to person communication between the senders and receivers, and the receiver considered the information of a brand, product or service reputation was non-commercial. This definition tried to define word-of-mouth study emphasizing the word of mouth was the oral, person to person transmission, and did not contain commercial purposes. Word-of-mouth literature has long proposed that the value of word-of-mouth information, in terms of both its effect on decision making and the impact on attitude formation, is a joint function of the receiver's involvement in the communication and the communicator's credibility (e.g., Hass, 1981).

3. Research Design and Methodology

Research Framework

According to the literature review and hypothesis as developed in previous section, the study develops the research framework which is depicted as Figure 1

The purpose of this research is attempt to evaluate the significant of Motivation, Opportunity, Ability (MOA) (MacInnis and Jaworski, 1989) on Intrinsic, Extrinsic, Opportunity, Ability and intention to study abroad of Thai students. The moderation role of Word-of-Mouth (WOM) is also examined. The MOA are related constructs (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982) but the precise direction of all causal relationships among MOA is difficult to justify. In order to measure the impact of the selected independent variables on a dependent variable, factor analysis, reliability test, CFA and SEM methodology were in this study. ANOVA also being used for examine the moderating role in this study.

Figure 1 Conceptual model

Research Hypotheses

According to the descriptions above, this study proposed five hypotheses.

Furthermore, in order to be more specific and clear for hypothesis to be tested in the latter sections, more detailed sub-hypotheses are also described after each hypothesis as following

H1. Student's motivation has a positive effect on their intention to study abroad

H2. Student's motivation has a positive effect on their ability

H3. Student's opportunity has a positive effect on their ability

H4. Student's opportunity has a positive effect on their intention to study abroad

H5. Student's ability has a positive effect on their intention to study abroad

H6. The positive relationship between motivation and intention to study will be stronger when the WOM is positive

H7. The positive relationship between opportunity and intention to study will be stronger when the WOM is positive.

Sample and Data Collecting

A decision about our sample size based on factors such as: time available, budget and necessary degree of precision. Considering all above and being statistical robust, the target sample is 200 students who study in Thailand. The respondents were selected through random sampling in the "Education UK Exhibition 2013" which was held during 19-20 January 2013 at Centara Grand and Bangkok Convention Center, Bangkok, Thailand. The exhibition is to provide significant information regarding the studying in the UK such as how to apply the UK visa, IELTS examination, UK scholarships. Representatives from 97 leading universities in the UK will also join in this event. According to the statistical number last year, the number of the participants on this event was around 10,000 However, the participant in this year (Education UK 2013) was recorded and stated that the number of visitors was increasing dramatically,

from 10,000 visitors last year leap up to 15,000 visitors this year and more than 4,400 visitors were student.

The questionnaire was separated into 2 parts; first parts was demographics information which included 9 questions, the second part was the question to each construct and in this part we breakdown into 5 sections. It comprised with section1: 12 questions for motivation construct, section2: 11 questions for opportunity construct, section3: 7 questions for ability, section4: 7 questions for word-of-mouth and last section was intention to study abroad with 6 questions in this construct.

After asking for the permission from the exhibitor administrators and several related sectors in the event, the questionnaire was issued and ready to distribute on 19-20 January 2013 in the “Education UK Exhibition 2013” in Bangkok. The event will be started at noon until six o’clock. The questionnaire was distributed in the event both days from 1200-1800 pm. and with the time constrain of collecting the target sample (2 days event from 19-20 January 2013).

The survey instrument used in this study consisted of a questionnaire with multiple-choice items demographic items on the front and the students were ask to indicate on a 7-point scale – anchored at one end by 1= Strongly Disagree and at the other end by 7=Strongly Agree (Likert scale and frequency).

4. Research Results

Characteristic of Respondents

Totally there are 200 respondents replied the questionnaire during the period starting from 19-20 January 2013. The distribution of male and female is 57% and 43% respectively. Moreover, the numbers of respondents whose age between 20-25 are accounted for 65.5% with people age between 26-30 are 17.5%, moreover the number of people whose age are below 20 is 13.5%. Lastly people whose age over 30 is only 3.5%. In terms of education, most of the respondents are undergraduate with 60%, 24% have education of postgraduate, 14.5% with high school degree and only 1.5% with Ph.D.

When it comes to income (Baht) 56.5% of the respondents earned their income below 20,000 baht, while 37.5% have income about 20,000-50,000 baht. 3% of the people got their income over 90,000 baht and with fewer respondents whose earn 50,001-70,000 and 70,001-90,000 are account to be 1.5%. It should be noted that the majority of respondents, 30.5% are state that they have no experience abroad. The second largest group is more than 1 year at 23%. Less than 1 month is accounted for 22.5%. Only 8.5% of the respondents have 7-12 months experience abroad. The respondents’ family education background is study in domestic with 85%, while 14.5% is overseas background.

In term of respondents’ hometown and subject area of interest for study abroad, more than 70% are from Bangkok (the capital city of Thailand), 9% and 5% are from Northern and Southern of Thailand. Additionally, 46.5% of the respondents choose Business and administration as their first priority when they decided to go abroad while 13% focused in Engineering and Technology, 12% in Arts and design and Humanities and social sciences, only 1% interested in Law.

Factor Analysis and Reliability Tests

To verify the reliability of the constructs, data purification processes are conducted in this study, including factor analysis, correlation analysis, and coefficient alpha analysis. For factor analysis examines the basic structure of the data. Correlation analysis confirms the multi-collinearity among variables, and coefficient (Cronbach’s) alpha accesses the internal consistency of each variable.

For each construct, factor analysis is adopted first to select the items with higher factor loading, and then to compare with the theoretically suggested items. After factor analysis, item-to-total correlation, coefficient alpha, and correlation matrix are considered to provide the internal consistency measurements

to each constructs. Confirmatory Analysis was conducted for all constructs as the data were taken and adapted from former research and following criterions were followed for the factor analysis:

- (1) Factor loadings higher than 0.5~0.6;
- (2) Communality value higher than 0.4;
- (3) Cross-factor loading (F max – F max-1) > 2.5~0.3;
- (4) Kaiser Meyer Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy, KMO > 0.5 & Bartlett's test Sig<0.05;
- (5) Eigen value>1;
- (6) Explained variance (accumulative) > 0.6.
- (7) While for the reliability test, this criterion was followed: Item-to-total correlation higher than 0.50; Cronbach's Alpha (α) > 0.7

Table 1 The result of Factor Analysis and Reliability test

Research Construct	Research Item	Factor Loading	Eigenvalue	Accumulative Explanation %	Item-to-Total Correlation	Cronbach's α
Motivation KMO=0.845 Barlett=0.000	Intrinsic Motivation	0.869-0.913	3.181	79.527	0.770-0.836	0.914
	External Regulation	0.888-0.888	1.576	78.802	0.576-0.576	
	Introjected Regulation	0.763-0.872	1.966	65.548	0.500-0.657	
	Identified Regulation	0.823-0.911	2.364	78.786	0.640-0.821	
Opportunity KMO=0.778 Barlett=0.000	Career Opportunity	0.831-0.920	3.154	78.848	0.715-0.845	0.874
	Cultural Exposure	0.833-0.884	2.234	74.466	0.636-0.725	
Ability KMO=0.747 Barlett=0.000	Language Ability	0.846-0.899	2.283	76.091	0.665-0.756	0.843
	Intellectual Ability	0.839-0.865	2.189	72.97	0.642-0.684	
Word-of-Mouth KMO=0.876 Barlett=0.000	Word-of-Mouth	0.647-0.865	3.592	68.83	0.553-0.668	0.833
Intention to Study Abroad KMO=0.834 Barlett=0.000	Intention to Study Abroad	0.749-0.852	3.853	64.217	0.643-0.770	0.888

The results as shown in Table 1 indicate that the dimensionality and reliability of the research construct are all fulfilled the set criteria.

Structural Equation Model (SEM) and Hypotheses Testing

This research aims to identify the relationships among Motivation, Opportunity, Ability and Intention to study abroad. To accomplish this objective, the structure equation model (SEM) is conducted to examine

and compare the relationships in the entire research model. Before was run, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used and found that the factor loading of each item was pass the criteria. Also the CFA analysis revealed that the financial factor in Opportunity construct has to be deleted from the construct due to their result was under the criteria.

The SEM is the overall model fit must be calculated to ensure that the model adequately represents the entire set of causal relationships. According to the approach of Arbuckle & Worthke (1999) and Vigoda (2000), this research uses chi-square, goodness of fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI) and root mean square residual (RMR) to evaluate the fitness of the full model.

Overall Model Fit assessments

1. χ^2 -chi-square—small is better _ $p < 0.05$; $\chi^2 / d.f. < 3$
2. Goodness of Fit (GFI) > 0.90
3. Adjust of Goodness of Fit (AGFI) > 0.80
4. Root Mean Square Residual Error (RMR) < 0.05
5. RMSEA < 0.08 Or NFI, CFI, TI > 0.90

Table 2 Results of Structural Equation Modeling

Relations		Standardized Coefficients	C. R.
Variables			
Motivation (MOV)	Intrinsic motivation(Ave_MOin)	0.526 ^{***}	7.571
	External regulation(Ave_MOex)	0.593 ^{***}	8.949
	Introjected regulation(Ave_MOir)	0.722 ^{***}	11.670
	Identified regulation(Ave_MOid)	0.874 ^{***}	A
Opportunity(OPP)	Career Opportunity(Ave_OPjob)	0.662 ^{***}	9.937
	Cultural Exposure(Ave_OPcul)	0.888 ^{***}	A
Ability (AB)	Language Ability(Ave_ABlan)	0.556 ^{***}	6.132
	Intellectual Ability(Ave_ABeq)	0.944 ^{***}	A
Intention to study abroad(INT)	Intention to study abroad (INT1)	0.666 ^{***}	9.773
	Intention to study abroad (INT2)	0.666 ^{***}	9.973
	Intention to study abroad(INT3)	0.686 ^{***}	10.154
	Intention to study abroad(INT4)	0.858 ^{***}	13.846
	Intention to study abroad(INT5)	0.811 ^{***}	A
	Intention to study abroad(INT6)	0.664 ^{***}	9.969
Paths			
H1: Motivation (MOV) → Intention to study abroad(INT)		0.948 ^{***}	9.177
H2: Motivation (MOV) → Ability (AB)		-0.338 ^{***}	-4.506
H3: Opportunity(OPP) → Ability (AB)		0.843 ^{***}	9.695
H4: Opportunity(OPP) → Intention to study abroad (INT)		-0.161	-1.164
H5: Ability (AB) → Intention to study abroad (INT)		0.241 ^{**}	1.925
Fit index			
Chi-Square (p-value)		80.902 (0.002)	
Degree of freedom (d. f)		48	
Chi-Square/ d. f.		1.685	
GFI		0.948	
AGFI		0.887	
RMR		0.085	

- Note : 1. ***p-value <0.001, **p-value <0.05, *p-value <0.1; using a significance level of 0.05, critical ratios (t-value) that exceed 1.96 would be called significant.
 2. A: the parameter compared by others is set as 1, therefore there is no C. R. It is determined as significant.

Table 2 shows the significance of the path coefficients between motivation and intention, between opportunity and ability, and between ability to intention are all highly significant, most of the relationships examined meet the criteria of a CR higher than 1.96 which provide strong support for H1, H3, and H5. The strongest relationship exists between motivation and intention to study abroad, while the weakest relationship is between ability and intention to study abroad. However, the path coefficients between motivation and ability, and the path between opportunity and intention were not meet the criteria, therefore it indicates that H2 and H4 are not significant.

In order to evaluate the overall fit of model, chi-square, CMIN/DF, GFI, AGFI and RMR is used to evaluate the fitness of the model. The value of Chi Square/d.f is 1.685 and does fit the criterion (should be less than 3). In addition, it shows a somewhat big, significant GFI is 0.948, AGFI is 0.887 with the chi-square number of (80.902), the GFI is larger than 0.9 and AGFI is larger than 0.85 also Modification indices indicate high fit of this model. Although the value of P-value is 0.002, $p < 0.05$ it may indicate that this model is a moderate fit model. Hence, it certainly provides substantial support to the fit between this research model and the real data.

In summary, with an acceptable goodness of fit of the model, the results indicate that Motivation is a key variable to influence the intention to study abroad. Opportunity is also the important indicator that supports the ability of the student in term of going to study abroad. As well as, ability can also lead to the intention to study abroad. However, the relation between opportunity and Intention to study abroad is in negative term which indicates that they are not a main variable that influence the student decision to study abroad. This may also indicate that opportunity to study abroad is too abundant in today’s international higher education market.

The Moderating Role of Word-of-mouth (WOM) toward Motivation

Table 3 Results of Cluster and ANOVA Analysis

Motivation and Word-of-mouth (WOM)				F-Value	P-Value	Duncan
Low Motivation		High Motivation				
negative WOM n = 73	positive WOM n = 69	negative WOM n = 23	positive WOM n = 35			
2.682	4.142	4.123	4.963	56.744	0.000	(1,34,2)

To examine the moderating effect of word-of-mouth (WOM) on Motivation, ANOVA and cluster analysis method were adopted. This study divides the respondents into four groups based on two levels of WOM (positive vs. negative) and Motivation (high vs. low). The results are shown in Table 3, and indicate that negative WOM bring low motivation. In contrast, high WOM bring the student high motivation (F=56.744, $p=0.000$).

The Moderating Role of Word-of-mouth (WOM) toward Opportunity

To examine the moderating effect of word-of-mouth (WOM) on Opportunity, ANOVA and cluster analysis method were adopted. This study divides the respondents into four groups based on two levels of

WOM (positive vs. negative) and Opportunity (high vs. low). The results are shown in Table 4, and indicate that negative WOM bring low opportunity. On the other hand, high WOM bring the student high opportunity ($F=42.514, p=0.000$).

Table 4 Results of Cluster and ANOVA Analysis

Opportunity and Word-of-mouth (WOM)				F-Value	P-Value	Duncan
Low Opportunity		High Opportunity				
negative WOM n = 52	positive WOM n = 44	negative WOM n = 38	positive WOM n = 66			
2.589	3.545	4.535	4.775	42.514	0.000	(1,2,34)

5. Conclusions and Suggestions

Research Conclusion and Contribution

The purposes of the research were to conduct an empirical test as an alternative study decision-making model and to examine the role of motivation, opportunity and ability on intention to study abroad. In general, most of our hypotheses were supported. Hypothesis 1, 3, 5, 6 and 7 were supported but hypothesis 2 and 4 the result were negative and were rejected by the data. We discovered that the level of motivation and ability can predicted the intention to study abroad of Thai students. Motivation which included self-determined in their decision to study abroad, revealing that students felt themselves standing personally behind this decision and not driven by other people’s expectations or external circumstances (Chirkov et al, 2007). Thai students which mostly decided to participate in the overseas study are based on the motivation indicator. The relationship between motivation and intention to study abroad are strongly support and significant. Ability is another indicator which expressions the connecting between the construct in the conduct framework. Intention to study and ability has a positive relationship. We address that individuals accumulate productive capacities (knowledge, understandings, talents, and skills), which can be enhanced through investments in education and exchanged for increased earnings, power, and occupational status (Becker, 1993; Paulsen, 2001& Rosenbaum, 1986). Common measures of human capital include a student’s academic ability or achievement, language ability, academic preparation, and educational accomplishment.

Besides, student’s opportunity has a positive effect on the ability. Since many Asian families including Thai families view the accumulation of wealth as a learned Western trait and one worth acquiring via an education abroad (Waters, 2006), Asian families then place a high value on education (Butcher and McGrath, 2004). The patterns of social influence of Thai students are similar.

Finally, the study examined the influence of the moderator Word-of-mouth (WOM) in the motivation and opportunity toward the intention to study abroad. The study provided evidence for these relationships were supported, which implied that those the value of word-of-mouth information effect on decision making and the impact on attitude foundation, is a joint function of the receiver’s involvement in the communication and the communicator’s credibility. This finding is according with the previous research with Hass (1981). Traditional communications theory considers WOM as having a powerful influence on consumer behavior, especially on consumers’ information search, evaluation, and subsequent decision making (Brown and Reingen, 1987; Mary, Gilly, and Graham, 1998). In the study WOM recommendation is important, information acquired through alumni networks, family and friends already living in a potential host country, and the existing attendance of international students, have also been found to be significant factors in the decision making of a prospective student. This argument is

confirmed by the study of Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). The results issued by Binsardi and Ekwulugo (2003) also show that the finest promotion strategies are based on student networks. The advice among students is a good channel for communicating the positive program image.

The theoretical contribution for this study is twofold. First, the researcher apply MOA theory, a robust and well-known framework compose by MacInnis and Jaworski (1989) to the context of intent to study abroad in Thai students. Secondly, we extend the extant literature on MOA by adding the word-of-mouth (WOM) as a mediator between the intentions, something that has not been done to our knowledge. So far, there are few studies tackle the behavioral intention of the Thai student from this integrated point of view.

In terms of marketing strategy for the education business, the contribution for this study in Thai society is to focus on the motivation attribute. The study explored the strong relationship between the motivation and the intention of Thai student to study abroad. Therefore, the marketing team need to put the best action to launch the strategies or campaign that concern on the motivation factor, it has to make it as a priority for promoting Thai student to study abroad.

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