



Report on

**ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
AND STAFF MOBILITY EXPERIENCE: NARRATIVES FROM
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND ACADEMICS ACROSS
DIFFERENT REGIONS IN THAILAND**

NAVAPORN SANPRASERT SNODIN, PHD.

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ABSTRACT

Internationalisation is identified as contributing significantly to Thailand's aspiration to become an educational hub in Southeast Asia, and since the 1990s, internationalisation has grown to become an agenda of Thai higher education. However, it is ironic that there is a lack of locally based research that focuses on the lived experiences of international people who are one of the key players. In order to better respond to market needs and enable Thailand to achieve the aspiration to become the regional education hub, to attract international academic talents and to gain the momentum in the global student market competition, it is crucial to gain a clear understanding of the factors that induce the inflow of international people to the country and the quality of mobility experience of international people in Thailand. This study uncovers pull factors of Thailand and Thai higher education institutions through narratives of international cohorts working and studying in different universities across different regions in Thailand. What made these people choose Thailand as their preferred destination for academic migration is an interesting area to explore as very little exploration has been made of international people in new emerging educational hubs in non-native English language countries such as Thailand. To this end, we are documenting stories of foreign people's experience of working or studying in Thai universities by using an ethnographic approach. The institutions involved in this project are public and private universities across different regions in Thailand. Interviews were with 49 international people working and studying in Thai universities and there were five follow-up focus group interviews. The findings show that availability of scholarships, word-of-mouth referrals, and geographical and cultural proximity to home country appear to be important pull factors of Thailand. A series of interviews with international students, who were from many different cultures, from both developed and developing countries, yield some surprising insights including strong research support in some disciplines and that academic life is personalised in Thai universities. Most international academic staff reported freedom and the pastoral relationship between academics and students, poor assimilation with local staff, and lack of involvement in management and administration. Their major difficulties were language barriers and visa complications. This study provides a valuable first approach to the understanding of the international people experience in Thai higher education, what motivates them to be mobile, what attracts them

to Thailand, and what encourages them to stay or leave. These understandings could potentially inform internationalisation policies and practices for Thai universities.

Keywords: internationalisation; mobility; students; academics; university; higher education; Thailand; academic migration

บทคัดย่อ

การพัฒนาสู่ความเป็นสากลถือว่ามีส่วนสำคัญอย่างยิ่งให้ประเทศไทยบรรลุเป้าหมายในการเป็นศูนย์กลางการศึกษาในภูมิภาคเอเชียตะวันออกเฉียงใต้ และตั้งแต่ พ.ศ. ๒๕๓๓ การพัฒนาสู่ความเป็นสากลถือเป็นหนึ่งในนโยบายหลักของแผนพัฒนาอุดมศึกษาไทย อย่างไรก็ตาม ความย้อนแย้งที่เกิดขึ้นคือจำนวนงานวิจัยในประเทศไทยที่มุ่งศึกษาประสบการณ์การใช้ชีวิตของชาวต่างชาติซึ่งถือเป็นองค์ประกอบสำคัญประการหนึ่งนั้น ยังมีอยู่น้อยมาก จึงจำเป็นต้องมีความรู้ความเข้าใจที่ชัดเจนเกี่ยวกับปัจจัยที่ส่งเสริมให้ชาวต่างชาติเดินทางเข้าสู่ประเทศไทยและสร้างประสบการณ์การเคลื่อนย้ายที่ดีให้กับคนกลุ่มนี้ เพื่อที่จะตอบสนองต่อความต้องการของตลาดได้ดีขึ้น ตลอดจนสานฝันประเทศไทยในการเป็นศูนย์กลางการศึกษาของภูมิภาค เป็นจุดหมายปลายทางของเหล่าหัวกะทิด้านการศึกษา และกลับมาเป็นหยดอย่างอย่างแข็งแกร่งในตลาดการแข่งขันการรับนักศึกษาในระดับนานาชาติ ผู้วิจัยมุ่งศึกษาเหตุผลที่ชาวต่างชาติเลือกเดินทางมาเรียน สอนและทำวิจัยในมหาวิทยาลัยไทยและความจริงในหลากหลายมิติของนักศึกษาและนักวิชาการชาวต่างชาติในสถาบันอุดมศึกษาไทยโดยใช้วิธีการศึกษาเชิงชาติพันธุ์วรรณา ผู้วิจัยสัมภาษณ์นักศึกษาและนักวิชาการชาวต่างชาติจากสถาบันการศึกษาทั้งในกรุงเทพมหานครและภูมิภาคต่างๆของประเทศทั้งหมด 49 คนและสัมภาษณ์เชิงลึกแบบกลุ่มจำนวน 5 กลุ่ม ผลการวิจัยพบว่าความพร้อมด้านทุนการศึกษา การประชาสัมพันธ์ต่อแบบปากต่อปาก และความใกล้ชิดทางภูมิศาสตร์และวัฒนธรรมกับประเทศบ้านเกิดนั้นเป็นปัจจัยดึงดูดสำคัญของประเทศไทยที่ให้นักศึกษาต่างชาติเลือกประเทศไทยเป็นจุดหมายปลายทางในการมาเรียนที่ประเทศไทย วิธีการการสัมภาษณ์ที่ใช้กับนักศึกษาต่างชาติกลุ่มนี้ที่มาจากหลากหลายวัฒนธรรม จากทั้งประเทศกำลังพัฒนาและประเทศที่พัฒนาแล้ว ช่วยให้ผู้วิจัยเข้าใจประเด็นบางอย่างที่ไม่ได้คาดการณ์ไว้ก่อน ได้แก่ ข้อมูลเรื่องการสนับสนุนด้านการวิจัยอย่างเต็มที่ในบางสาขาวิชา และประเด็นที่ว่าความสัมพันธ์เฉพาะบุคคลได้ปรากฏขึ้นในแวดวงวิชาการในมหาวิทยาลัยในประเทศไทย อาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติส่วนใหญ่รายงานถึงอิสระและความสัมพันธ์อันใกล้ชิดระหว่างอาจารย์และนักศึกษา ปัญหาในการปรับตัวกับเจ้าหน้าที่และ

อาจารย์ไทย การขาดการมีส่วนร่วมในการบริหารจัดการ อุปสรรคสำคัญที่สะท้อนผ่านมุมมองของ อาจารย์ชาวต่างชาติ ได้แก่ กำแพงภาษา และปัญหาเกี่ยวกับวีซ่า งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้มีความสำคัญยิ่งในการ สร้างความรู้ความเข้าใจเกี่ยวกับทัศนคติและประสบการณ์ของนักวิชาการและนักศึกษาต่างชาติใน อุดมศึกษาไทย รวมถึงเหตุผลในการเคลื่อนย้ายของคนกลุ่มนี้ เหตุใดจึงเลือกที่จะมาเรียนหรือทำงาน หรือลาออกจากมหาวิทยาลัยไทย ความเข้าใจเหล่านี้เป็นข้อมูลสำคัญที่จะช่วยในการกำหนดกลยุทธ์และ แนวปฏิบัติที่เกี่ยวข้องเนื่องกับการพัฒนาสู่ความเป็นสากลของมหาวิทยาลัยไทยได้

คำสำคัญ: การพัฒนาสู่ความเป็นสากล; การเคลื่อนย้าย; นักศึกษา; นักวิชาการ; มหาวิทยาลัย; อุดมศึกษา; ประเทศไทย; การอพยพไปอยู่ที่ยื่นเพื่อเหตุผลทางวิชาการ

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Internationalisation is identified as contributing significantly to Thailand's aspiration to become an educational hub in Southeast Asia, and since the 1990s, internationalisation has grown to become an agenda of Thai higher education. However, it is ironic that there is a lack of locally based research that focuses on the lived experiences of international people who are one of the key players. In terms of mobility, Thailand has set targets to recruit 100,000 international students but, in reality, the internationalisation of Thai higher education has not yet been marketable on a regional or global scale. It is recorded that the number of international students in Thai universities is currently around 18,000 only. In order to better respond to market needs and enable Thailand to achieve the aspiration to become the regional education hub, to attract international academic talents and to gain the momentum in the global student market competition, it is crucial to gain a clear understanding of the factors that induce the inflow of international people to the country and the quality of experience of international people in Thailand.

Objectives

1. To describe the pull factors of Thailand and Thai universities that attract or motivate international people to come to study or work in Thai higher education institutions
2. To analyse the perceptions and experiences reported by international cohorts in Thai universities
3. To inform internationalisation policies and practices regarding inbound mobility for Thai universities

Methodology

The student participants consisted of twenty international students from Cambodia, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, Turkey, Uganda, and Vietnam. They were enrolling as a full-time degree-seeking student in Thai universities across different regions in Thailand. The participants who were academic staff consisted of 29 international people from 20 different countries i.e. Australia, Austria, Cambodia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Myanmar, New Zealand, Spain, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam. They

were lecturing in Thai universities across different regions in Thailand. The narrative interviews were conducted in person for 60-90 minutes each. During the interviews, detailed notes were taken, and the conversations were taped recorded, and then transcribed verbatim and analysed. The analytic approach adopted was a thematic analysis and followed the SRQR standards for reporting qualitative research. There were 49 transcripts of 370,941 words to analyse. NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 11, 2017) was used to help organise and analyse the data. Query functions were also used to explore the data.

Summary of Findings

The findings show that availability of scholarships, word-of-mouth referrals, and geographical and cultural proximity to home country appear to be important pull factors of Thailand and Thai higher education to attract international students. A series of interviews with international students, who were from many different cultures, from both developed and developing countries, yield some surprising insights including strong research support in some disciplines and that academic life is personalised in Thai universities. Most international academic staff reported freedom and the pastoral relationship between academics and students, poor assimilation with local staff, and lack of involvement in management and administration. Their major difficulties were language barriers and visa complications.

Recommendations

Engaging returnees as ambassadors, creating links between international student community and home student community before, during, and after the education abroad experience could potentially help Thai HE to be more marketable at a global scale. International students have potentials to be future contacts for inducing the flow of international students evident by the social network or word-of-mouth referrals as one of the prominent pull factors.

Many universities in Thailand are aware of the role of scholarships as another important pull factor to attract international students to study in their institutions as seen in the information regarding financial support for international students in their prospectus or websites. However, some universities have underestimated the significance of such information.

A lack of access to higher education among some countries in Southeast Asia currently benefits Thailand as it has been a key driver for much of the present international flow that has taken place for a decade. However, this might not last for long, and if the Thai State has an agenda to increase the quantity and the quality of inbound mobility, there is a need to establish a national brand for Thai Higher Education as suggested by McDermott (2013).

Thai universities need to have proper analysis and understanding of what needs to be done regarding English language policies and practices and administration to bring themselves in line with the international status they claim as the weakness in this area is indeed harming an effort to implement quality international mobility experience.

Academic adjustment to local norms, expectations, and practices is the hardest area to adjust to for most international academics due to the language barrier and the lack of familiarity with the norms and politics of the local academic system.

Engaging international academics in management and administration is recommended especially for Thai universities that suffer from general lack of external and international experience. International staff may potentially bring new ideas and insights into existing routines and suggest innovative ways to tackle problems regarding internationalising Thai universities.

Using the local faculty as a mentor can help the international staff adjust better to the local system and achieve a better understanding of the local norms and practices.

Creating campus cultures well equipped to welcome international people; such as, providing English signs and documents and language support should be practised; this should fix the language barrier challenges and help international people 'fit in' better.

If a university seeks international faculty to improve research and teaching for ranking and for building academic excellence, relying on word-of-mouth or domestic advertisement alone is not a good strategy to achieve such goal. Thailand needs to rethink about university hiring processes which presently adopts closed faculty recruitment practices.

Some of the current problems cannot be solved at the institutional level. The policy environment at the national level is a crucial dimension of the international faculty story and affects the success in attracting and retaining them for working for Thai universities. There needs to be the policy framework that actively stimulates the recruitment of international academic talents and legal or professional status in the country, from the legal possibility to work to longer-term nature of work contracts and visas.

Impact

This study provides a valuable first approach to the understanding of the international people experience in Thai higher education, what motivates them to be mobile, what attracts them to Thailand, and what encourages them to stay or leave. These understandings could potentially inform internationalisation policies and practices for Thai universities.

INTRODUCTION

Thailand has set targets to recruit 100,000 international students (Sinhaneti, 2011) but, in reality, the internationalisation of Thai higher education has not yet been marketable on a regional or global scale. In terms of quantity, it is recorded that the number of international students in Thai universities gradually increased from 16,000 to 20,000 from the year 2008 to 2011 (OHEC, 2011), but decreased to around 18,000 in 2013, which is the latest statistics that the Thai state collected and has made available. On the other hand, other countries in the region like Singapore and Malaysia have increased the number of international students to two or three folds in a decade. In 2014, Singapore welcomed 52,959 international students from 120 countries; Malaysia had 63,625 international students from 160 nations (Do and Pham, 2016). Malaysia had only around 22,000 international students in 2005 but is becoming an increasingly active player in international education and has articulated goals of becoming the world's sixth-biggest education-exporting country by 2020 with a target of 200,000 international students (ibid.). It is apparent that the global student market is becoming more competitive, and new competitors in the region, including Vietnam, are emerging, and new demand is created. In order to better respond to market needs and enable Thailand to achieve the aspiration to become the regional education hub and to gain the momentum in the global student market competition, it is crucial to gain a clear understanding of the factors that induce the inflow of international students to the country and the quality of experience of international students in Thailand.

In terms of the inbound mobility of international academics, the topic of migration of these highly skilled people to Thailand has been under-studied, and to our knowledge, there is a very limited number of prior study, either academic research or popular works, regarding international academics working in Thai universities. Previous studies, both scholarly focus and popular works, did not portray foreigners, especially Westerners, who worked in Thailand in a very positive light, such as depicting them with the “low-end” male stereotype (Fuller, 2007; Howard, 2009) or stating that some were troubled with alcoholism and money problems after being cheated by other foreigners and/ or Thai women (Ziesing, 1996). In fact, there has been a flow to Thailand of highly skilled or academics who, in Howard's term, ‘marginals’ from various regions across the world, some of whom wanted to stay in Thailand

for life. The migration of these highly-skilled professionals is often perceived by locals and authorities as a temporary migration since it is hard to believe that one will compromise their career and move to less economically and intellectually developed country such as Thailand which ranks well below Western nations on quality of life indices. Hence, there seems to be no long-term strategic plans or policies in relation to the inbound mobility of international academics at both national and institutional levels.

This study is also a response to a special report on Thailand's Higher Education Internationalisation Policy and Strategy funded by the European Union (EU) in cooperation with Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Thailand. In the report, McDermott, (2013) recommended Thailand establish a national brand for Thai Higher Education with a defined strategy for driving inbound mobility. To date, there has been a limited number of study investigating international people in Thai higher education, both students and academics, especially regarding their actual experiences in Thailand and Thai universities. If Thailand is seeking to find strategies for driving inbound mobility, how do we know what works for international students and staff and what does not? There is a need for locally based research that focuses on lived experiences of international cohorts who have been peripheral and marginalised in developing plans for internationalising Thai higher education. Since they are the direct receiver of the inbound mobility policies and practices, their perceptions and experiences are worthy to investigate.

Also, the HE internationalisation is identified as contributing significantly to Thailand's economic growth and to its aspirations to become an educational hub in Southeast Asia. It is ironic that there is a lack of locally based research that focuses on lived experiences and voices of international people from various nations who are one of the key players in internationalising Thai higher education, but at the same time might have been marginalised or alienated. The focus on what attracts international people to Thailand, their actual experiences working for or studying in a Thai university, and the reasons why they chose to stay in Thai HE or leave are vital in informing contingency plans for quality mobility for inbound international people.

Last but not least, in an attempt to contribute to the body of knowledge in international education, this study will make an important critique of current theories of academic mobility

that primarily focus on developed countries. Current literature in international education favours native English language countries and overlooks experiences of international students in developing countries (Ahmad & Buchanan, 2016) which makes sense as five English speaking countries, i.e. the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand received nearly 50% of all international students around the world (Shields, 2013). However, the growth in international student enrolment in non-Anglophone countries such as China, India, and South Korea, have been very high in recent years (30.1%, 47.4 and 60.7% respectively) between 2002-2007, far outpaced those in the US and the UK (0.8% and 9.2%) (Shields and Edwards, 2010). This suggests that the advantage of major destination countries may be weakening and the research interest in inbound mobility of international students might need to shift to non-Anglophone countries. This study will contribute to existing literature which is lacking in reported perceptions and experiences of international students in Asian countries, particularly in the new emerging educational hub in Southeast Asia like Thailand. This study includes experiences of students from developed countries such as Canada, France, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States, filling in the gap in the current literature that dominantly reports experiences of Asian students in the developed English-speaking countries. Additionally, this study also reports the experiences of international students from the countries that are lesser known in the context of international education, including Cambodia, Egypt, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan and Uganda.

Likewise, the latest statistics regarding the inbound international academics in Thailand has also shown a significant change as the number of foreign residents employed in Thai higher education institutions has increased by 66.3 per cent, from 15,858 in 2010 to 26,371 in 2018 (Department of Employment, 2018). There is extensive research on academic migration from the developing world to the developed world whereas studies regarding the flow from the latter to the former are scarce. In addition, the current literature on academic mobility and migration primarily discusses student mobility and neglects issues regarding the mobility of international academics, especially in the Thai HE context. Therefore, this present study potentially fills the significant gap in the academic literature regarding international academics moving to the developing world.

To this end, we investigated the multiple realities of international people in Thai universities by using an ethnographic approach. We broadly define international cohorts in this study as people working as academics, or studying at either undergraduate or postgraduate level, in a Thai Higher Education Institution (HEI) and whose countries of origin is not Thailand and whose primary education was in a country other than Thailand. As for the international academics, we included only those people who held a full-time appointment in a Thai higher education institution. We did not include international faculty who were hired on a part-time basis who held their main appointment outside of Thailand and spent part of the academic year in Thailand. The participants in this study were from many different cultures, and investigating their experiences could enable us to contribute to the realisation of effective policy and practice for Thailand. The main objective is to achieve a better understanding of the changing phenomenon regarding challenges of and potential for increased international recruitment and enhancement of the teaching and learning experience in Thai universities. The stories of international cohorts in this study vary from those who are studying or working in big cities to those in smaller and more rural provinces across regions in Thailand. The focus on what made these people choose Thailand, and each particular region in the country as their preferred destinations to study or work, and their actual perceptions and experiences in Thai universities, are two main foci of this study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

International Student and Academic Staff Mobility in Thai Higher Education

The statistics and patterns of student mobility especially inbound mobility are not well-documented in Thailand. The most up-to-date statistics concerning international students were the data collected in the year 2013 by the Office of Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education. According to this governmental document, there were 18,814 foreign students from 139 countries enrolling in Thai universities in 2013 (OHEC, 2016), of which 68.98% were self-funded whereas 3,083 and 1,064 students were granted funding by Thai and overseas organisations respectively (ibid.). The majority of the international students (62.64%) were at the undergraduate level (OHEC, 2016). This figure of the total international

students published by OHEC included 85 non-Thai students with no information about their countries of origin, and another 44 students from ethnic groups of Thailand. The current study focuses only on international students who migrated to Thailand and whose countries of origin could be identified. We intended to exclude 44 students from ethnic groups of Thailand as they were not considered internationally mobile students; they were stateless, born and lived in Thailand, and they were not granted a Thai ID card or passport to enable them to travel or study overseas. Therefore, they did not migrate to Thailand to study, or study in Thailand by choice.

In terms of the international students' profile in Thailand, students from China, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia are the five largest groups of international students as shown in Table 1. The number of international students classified by region of origin is shown in Figure 2.

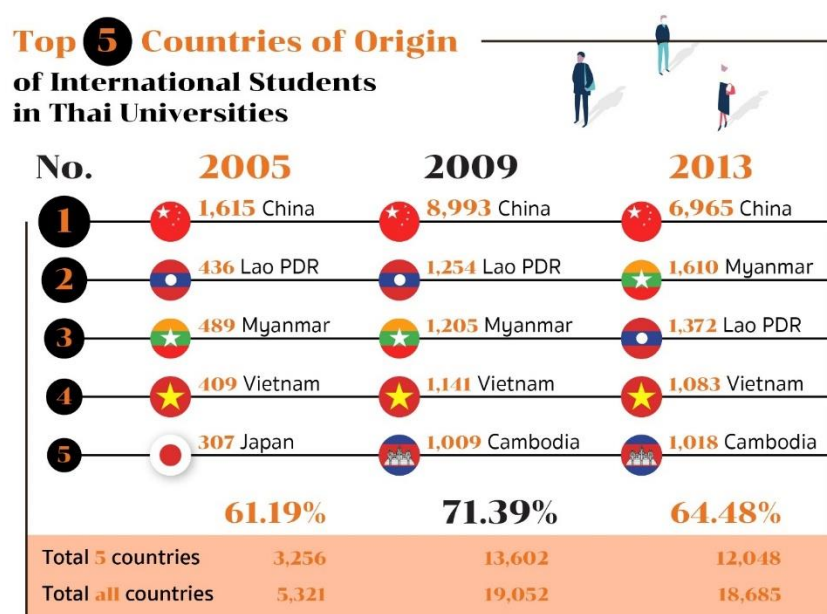


Figure 1: Top Five Countries of Origin of International Students in Thai Universities in the Year 2005, 2009 and 2013.

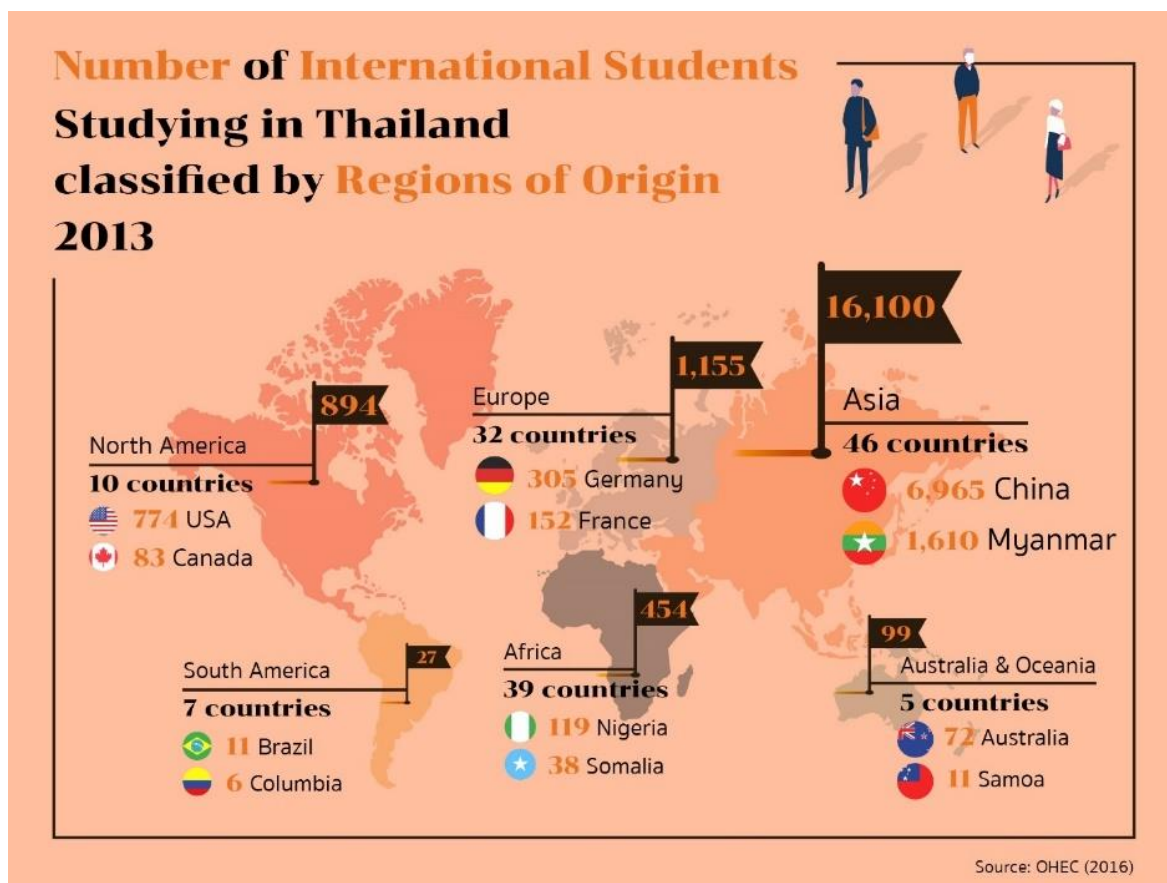


Figure 2: Number of International Students Studying in Thailand Classified by Regions of Origin, 2013.

In 2013, the most frequent field of study of inbound students in Thailand was Business (20.59%) of all international students, followed by Thai language (10.86%), English language (7.47%), Hotel and Tourism (6.24%) and Buddhism (2.47%). Table 3 shows the data with respect to areas of study in the year 2013, in comparison with the year 2005 and 2009. The areas of study popular among international students in Thailand remain more or less the same within the past ten years.

Top **5** Fields of Study among International Students in Thailand



Source: OHEC (2016) and UNESCO (2013)

Figure 3: Top Five Fields of Study among International Students in Thailand in the Year 2005, 2009 and 2013.

It is important to note that the author could not get any official statistics on the current number of international people working in Thai higher education from the Ministry of Education of Thailand. In fact, the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC), Ministry of Education of Thailand has never collected such information, which is a common scenario for most countries. It is speculated that there are tens of thousands internationally mobile academics on the move globally today although there are no accurate statistics concerning the numbers of globally mobile academics (Cradden, 2007; Teichler, Ferencz & Wächter, 2011; Yudkevich et al., 2017).

METHODOLOGY

The qualitative approach is considered suitable for this study as it allows depth in understanding the lived experiences of international people and challenges Thai higher education is presently facing with respect to improving their mobility experience. A qualitative approach through narrative interviews was selected as the researchers did not want to constrain this study with preconceived notions that might unduly steer the findings. In addition, the narrative interview is eminently suitable for undertaking inquiries with people from many different cultures whose worldviews may differ significantly from those of the researchers (Trahar, 2011). This approach focuses on 'the meanings that people ascribe to their experiences, seeking to provide insight into the complexity of human lives' (Trahar, 2014: 220). It is located within social constructionist philosophical principles, reflecting a belief in multiple realities and the social construction of those realities. The purpose of the interview for this particular project is to let stories be told, the stories of international cohorts who are one of key players in internationalising Thai higher education, but at the same time might have been marginalised or alienated.

The participants were invited to talk about their experience in Thailand and in particular in Thai higher education. The interview method is based on the unstructured, open-ended interview format, or it could be regarded as 'open' conversations in which there was no set of pre-determined questions to ask, and the researchers usually had no set agenda rather than to listen to whatever the participants wanted to share as the goal was to obtain their perspectives without 'leading' (Morse, 2012), entailing an opportunity to 'grasp the complexity of stories that may not be told otherwise' (Kim, 2016: 165). Interview skills, how attentive, sensitive, and responsive the researchers were would be critical in generating interviewee responses that yielded meaningful data; therefore, prior to the data collection, the researchers undertook special training on how to do a narrative interview with an expert in the methodology. To ensure consistency between interviews, the researchers followed the steps as shown in Table 1.

Phases	Rules
Preparation	Exploring the field Formulating exmanent questions
1. Initiation	Formulating initial topic for narration Using visual aids
2. Main narration	No interruption Only non-verbal encouragement to continue story-telling Only 'What happened then?'
3. Questioning phase	No opinion and attitude questions No arguing on contradictions No-why-questions Exmanent into immanent questions Stop recording
4. Concluding talk	Why-questions allowed Memory protocol immediately after interview

Source: Jovchelovitch & Bauer (2007)

Table I: Procedures of the Narrative Interview Used in This Study

Purposive and snowball sampling was undertaken, usually through assistance from local lecturers in different regions in Thailand. It should be noted that the researchers were also based in the research context. Familiarity with the setting ensured that the researchers were more readily accepted than an unknown researcher may have been. The student participants consisted of twenty international students from Cambodia, Canada, China, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, South Africa, Sudan, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, Turkey, Uganda, and Vietnam. They were enrolling as a full-time degree-seeking student in Thai universities across different regions in Thailand. The participants who were academic staff consisted of 29 international people from

20 different countries i.e. Australia, Austria, Cambodia, Canada, China, France, Germany, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Lao PDR, Myanmar, New Zealand, Spain, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam. They were lecturing in Thai universities across different regions in Thailand. Other additional information concerning the regions where they studied or worked, their gender, age, level and area of study/ expertise shown in Figure 4 and 5. The pseudonyms were chosen by the interviewees themselves.

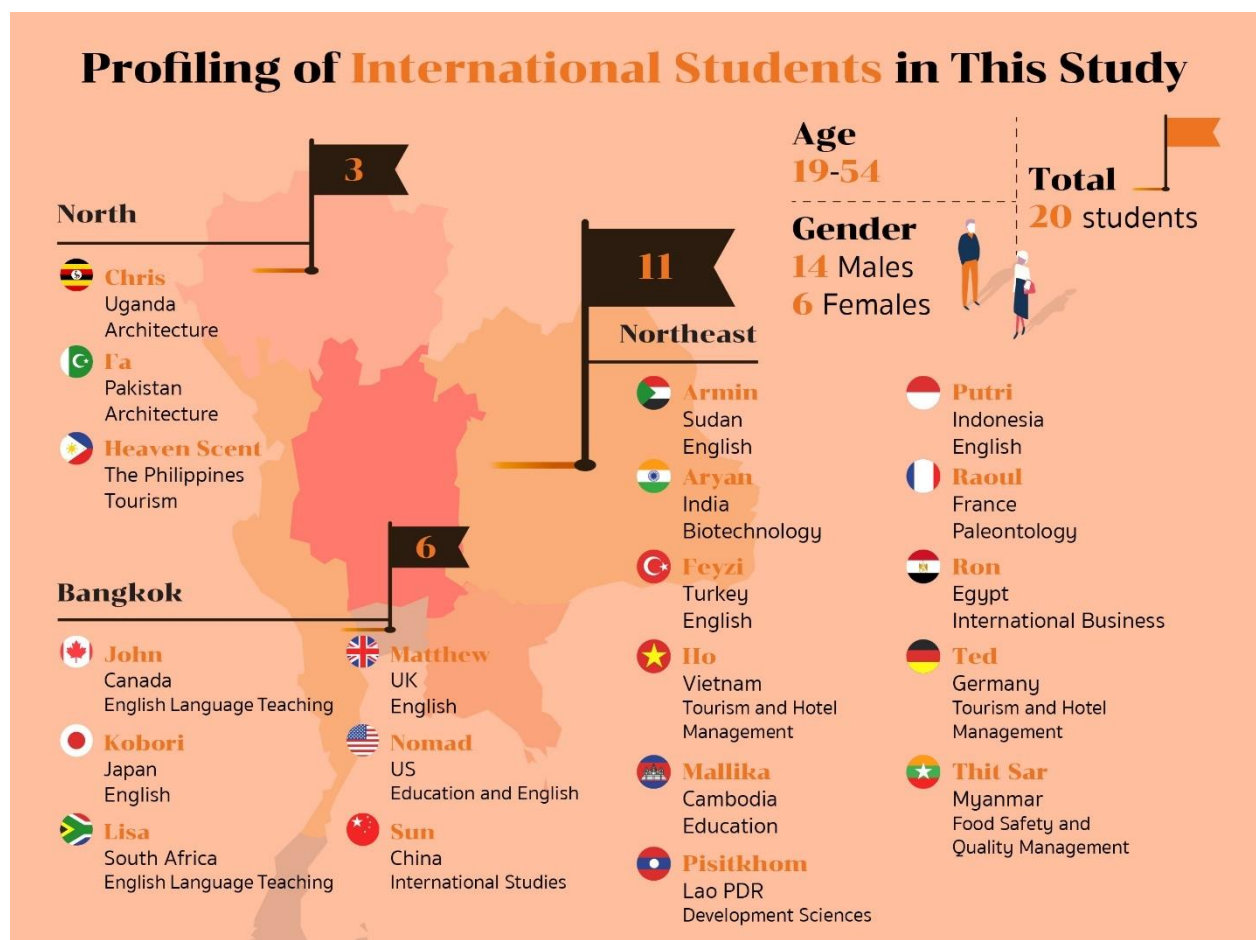


Figure 4: Profiling of International Students in this Study

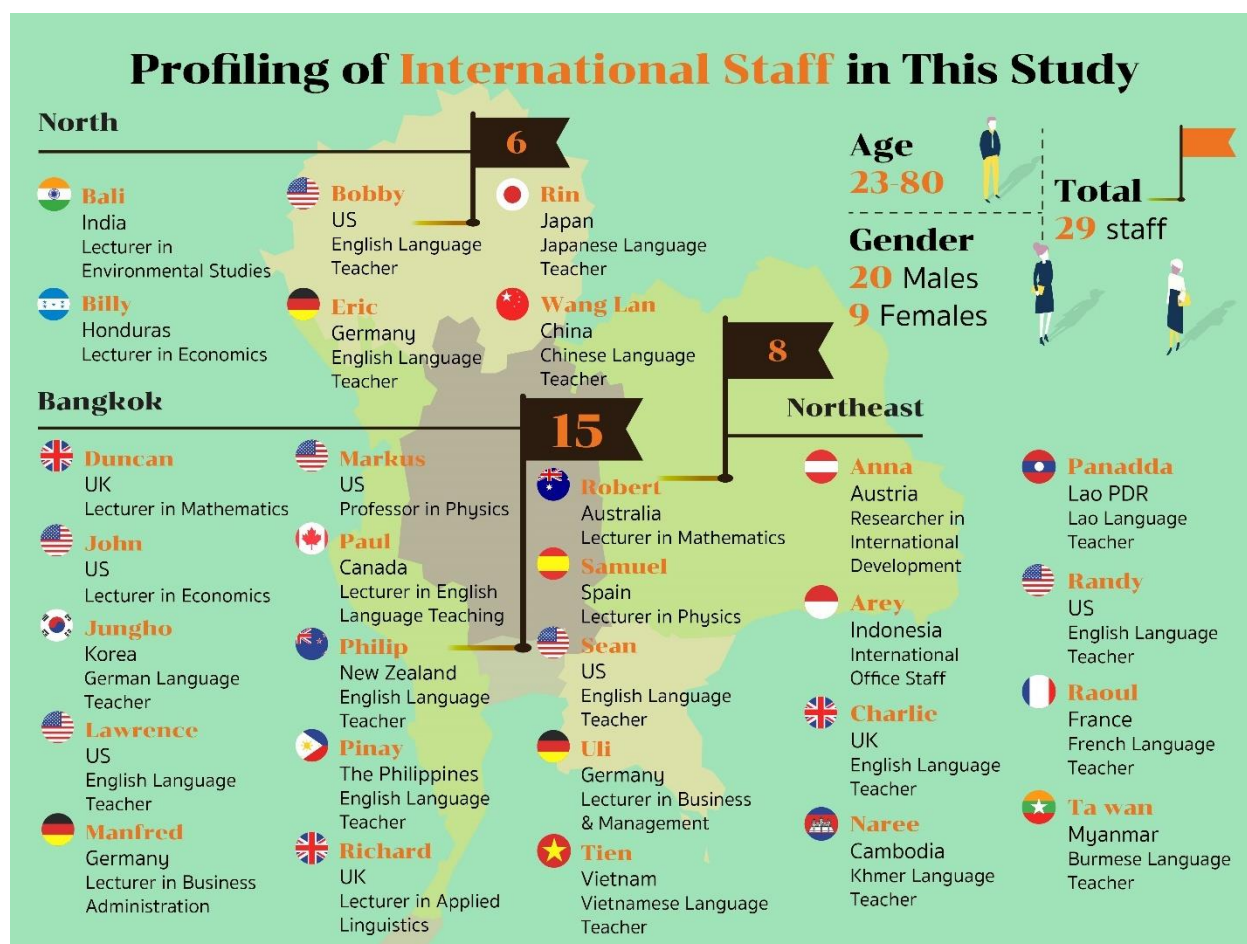


Figure 5: Profiling of International Academic Staff in this Study

The narrative interviews were conducted in person in English for 60-90 minutes each. There were eight interviews that were conducted in Thai as Thai proficiency of the students from Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and the lecturers from Cambodia, China, Japan, Laos and Myanmar was near-native, and they felt more comfortable talking about their experiences in Thai, rather than in English. During the interviews, detailed notes were taken, and the conversations were taped recorded, and then transcribed verbatim and analysed. Altogether there were 49 transcripts of 370,941 words to analyse. It is important to point out that the researchers did not set out to make comparisons between the experiences of international people who studied, taught/ researched in different disciplines, or between men and women, or to investigate whether there were distinctive differences in experience between those from the west and those from Asia or Africa. The analytic approach adopted was a thematic analysis (Rapley and Silverman 2011). It followed the SRQR standards for reporting qualitative

research (O'Brien et al. 2014). The interviewers carried out regular discussion of emerging themes and carried out the coding of data. NVivo qualitative data analysis software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 11, 2017) was used to help organise and analyse the data. Query functions were also used to explore the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Mobility Experience of International Students

1.1 What attracts or motivates international students to come to Thailand to study?

Three dominant themes emerged as the pull factors of Thailand and Thai universities i.e. 'scholarship', 'word-of-mouth referrals', and 'geographical and cultural proximity'.

(1) Availability of Scholarships

The first dominant pull factors emerging from the data was availability of scholarships. Seven students (from Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, and the Philippines) in the study chose to study in Thailand because of this reason. Some universities in Thailand used this strategically to attract international students and it was apparent that this strategy worked in pulling more international students to study in their institutions. There were also some other available scholarships, such as, scholarships from their home countries, the ASEAN Scholarship, the GMS (Greater Mekong Subregion) Scholarship, and the HRH Princess Sirindhorn Scholarship; all of these are available funds for international students to come to study in Thailand, as illustrated in the following stories:

'And after completing my Bachelor's Degree, I was searching for some scholarship since I was like ... it's really expensive to study abroad you know, so I was searching for the scholarship and applied in many countries like China, Italy, and several countries I applied. Suddenly, something popped up on my social you know networking website in my com. So something popped up and that was the advertisement of scholarship at [the name of the university she is currently studying in Thailand]. I just applied for it and then I forgot. Then, actually after applying several universities, I got response from China, and even from my own country, some of the universities...So I got an offer from China and Italy and some other countries and after you know, in some other countries, they were offering me partial scholarship while in Italy, there was a chance

of fully-funded scholarship. It was just an 80% chance. They said that we'll surely give you a scholarship, so in that case, I just chose Italy because it is very rich in culture, arts and architecture. So I've been in architect. In history and architecture, I thought it is the best country to study. I was processing my visa and you know, meanwhile, I got e-mail from [the name of the university she is currently studying in Thailand]. Since I already said that, I just applied and forgot. Then I got the e-mail that "Congratulations! You got a scholarship from [the name of the university she is currently studying in Thailand]" and that was fully-funded scholarship. And at that time, I thought while I was going to Italy, Thailand is also the country which is rich in culture, so like I had two options at that time, Italy and Thailand. Either to choose Italy or Thailand, it was totally up to me. But my parents say ... they already offered you scholarship. In Italy, you have 80% chance to get full scholarship. They are not quite sure that you'll be getting scholarship or not. It again depends on your visa and other matters, things and other stuffs, so in that case, I chose Thailand since my parents decide that you'd better choose Thailand.'

(Fa, Pakistan)

However, the students who were self-funded highlighted the low cost of studying for a degree in Thailand, especially in comparison to their home countries, as seen from the following:

'I chose [the name of a university in Thailand] mainly for two reasons. One, it is the cheapest I could find.'

(Matt, UK)

'It makes sense economically. I mean I'm sure you're aware of how much it costs to study here [in Thailand]. Most Americans don't have degrees actually. A very small number of US citizens have higher education degrees because it costs too much. Actually, to tell you the truth, it's the best investment that I made in my life. It was coming to Thailand and getting an education. It really was. It was not much money and the benefits that, that I got out of it just helps me improve my life so much. If I had stayed in the United States, I'd probably still be working in a garage or a body shop, which is not a bad thing, but I'm doing something that I like better. My lifestyle was better. I got a wife and kids that I can take care of. I can have a comfortable life.'

(Nomad, US)

Lastly, unlike most universities in the West where international students were charged at a more expensive rate than home students, many Thai universities use the flat rate system so it would cost the same for Thai and foreign students.

‘The fee was for the three years ... it’s about 30,000 per semester, 35,000. I pay the same fee as the Thai students. I do not pay extra.’

(Lisa, South Africa)

Lisa added on regarding the reason why it was inexpensive:

‘They told us at [the name of the university she was attending] that the Master’s and the Doctorate Program don’t make money at all. They use the, umm, the other, like all the programs in the undergraduate course to support for the program. I think that’s why they encourage people to go study there, so that’s good.’

This accords with some university policies and stories shared by a number of Thai academics that many universities establish an international postgraduate programme for their academic reputation, with an aim to up their game in the international ranking. Income generation was not the main agenda of such program of study.

(2) Word-of-Mouth Referrals or Personal Social Network in Thailand

The narratives from the international students revealed that word-of-mouth referrals play an important role for them in making the decision to come to study in Thailand. The majority of the students (14 out of 20 students) in this study had known some individuals in Thailand, most of which were people from their home countries who gave recommendation and assistance before and when they arrived:

‘People from my city actually... a lot. They are studying in [Prince of] Songkhla University, Naresuan, Chulalongkorn, Mahidol... Actually, sometimes we get information from our friends who study in Thailand. We filled the application and we then sent here.’

(Putri, Indonesia)

‘That time ah... not really. Ah... let me think it’s been years I might...[long pause] ... Yes! A few other countries. I was in touch with some other universities. A few from Africa, a few from Europe. I was emailing with the departments of these universities.

But I ... you see I didn't know anyone from those countries but I have a friend here. I just came in. He helped me a lot. He's the one who took me from the airport, rode here to the faculty, and helped me with application.'

(Feyzi, Turkey)

'One of my friends was doing a Ph.D. in Thailand as well. When I had a chat with him, he recommended things like come to Thailand if you want a good university, very friendly atmosphere and very kind people. I got impressions about Thailand, and the other reason was like family reason. They wanted me to be better closer, so I am stuck in Asia. That was the main reason why I picked Thailand.'

(Aryan, India)

(3) Geographical and Cultural Proximity to Home Country

The data also reveal that many students choose Thailand as their destination for study because of the location and cultural proximity. This is particularly true to mature students and Asian students as families play an important role in their decision, as seen in the following narratives:

'I had two options. One was Belgium and the other one was Thailand. I decided to choose somewhere closer to India. I opted for Thailand. That's why I got here. In Indian families, they tend to be really close. They want everyone to be together. I was out of my home town then I was doing my studies. From my hometown, it was like six or seven hours. I visited my family maybe twice a month, not every weekend. I was away from home. When I finished my masters, then I wanted to do more again. My family was not willing to send me out, so I said "Okay, let me be where I can come home easily." I feel like I can come home.'

(Aryan, India)

'One of my reasons, yes. Especially, my father ... he he's old and sick now. I want to spend some time with him before it's too late... See? In this case we are not in the western. You don't just fly away when you are 18 and forget about your parents, find a job and ... We are very close. We don't move out that quick. Many families don't let their children before they get married.'

(Feyzi, Turkey)

A student from Lao PDR chose to study for a PhD in the Northeast of Thailand in spite of being offered a full scholarship by a university in China because of the linguistic and cultural

proximity between the Northeast of Thailand and Laos. In addition, he also commented that the weather in Thailand and Laos were very similar unlike China where it would be too cold for him in winter as seen in the following story:

'I have a family, but I wouldn't be able to go back to them easily when I missed them. [He was thinking about studying in China.] The good thing about studying here [in Thailand] is I know the lecturer, the environment and the educational system as a graduate student. And I wonder if it'd be easier for me, well, it'd be better to study here. But even in Thailand, I did choose where to study. I did this when I studied for my Master. It is near, not far from my hometown and it's the Northeastern part, among other factors. If I'd chosen to study in Bangkok, I'd have had to adjust myself more. But here, when the lecturer teaches, they can speak Lao to me, and when I have a puzzled look on my face, they will lecture in Lao as they'd been to Laos many times. They know some words that Lao people find it hard to understand.'

(Pisitkhom, Lao PDR)

Some students chose a particular programme of study in a regional university of Thailand, rather than enrolling in a university in Bangkok that might have a better reputation or ranking because of the same reason as seen in the case of the French student in the study i.e. he chose to study for a PhD in Thailand and in a particular university where it was close to where his Thai wife and his children lived so that he could take care of them.

'because of the international program and because to stay close to my family in Kalasin... Because they said nobody dies wishing he had spent more time in the office. You know like family always comes first. The family is very important.'

(Raoul, France)

It was exceptional for the two cases of the Chinese and the Sudanese students in this study who were quite young. They chose to come to Thailand to study, rather than, Singapore and Malaysia respectively as those countries have similarities in terms of language or cultures with their home countries, which was perceived as a disadvantage for them in learning new languages and cultures as seen in the following stories:

‘My parents want me to live abroad to practice. If I live in Singapore, they have a lot of Chinese people there. So I mean if I live in Singapore, I don’t need to speak English. I just speak Chinese. That’s another reason that my mother and my father want me to come to Thailand because at first, I can learn Thai and second I can practice my English. It’s very helpful to, you know, to get good jobs if you can speak a lot of languages.’

(Sun, China)

‘At that time, I got to know about Thai people. Actually I was looking for different culture because my religion is Muslim. So they [Malaysians] are Muslim too. There are many Sudanese and many Arab. I changed my mind to study. I was in Malaysia. So I changed my mind to study in Thailand.’

(Armin, Sudan)

There are other pull factors of studying in Thailand apparent in the stories of other international students, for example, an advantage of learning about the emerging regional cooperation in Southeast Asia and more opportunities of using English than their home countries as apparent in the case of students from China, Japan and Sudan in this study:

‘...there is a new community called ASEAN, right? All Asian countries. And it has good economic connection for every country in the ASEAN. And that... I just think it’s new community and China has very good relationship with countries in the ASEAN. Maybe they can provide more opportunities to know or just get more job for new generations. And now this community is growing. And in the future maybe it’s growing stronger like Europe community. In fact, I just think that it can provide good financial connection for everyone.’

(Sun, China)

‘I spent six years in the U.S., learning and working. I experienced 9/11. I was still in the U.S. Economic condition and the change in immigration policies became strict for foreigners, so I made up my mind to go back to Japan. I was not satisfied because I wanted to make use of my English skill. But the English language skill is not required in Japan at all. That was one of the reasons I came to Thailand... Japanese people never speak English. In terms of English speaking ability, I think Thai people have higher performance than Japanese people do. Actually, I’m satisfied with it. And also considering that English is not Thai native language, Thai people speak English very well.’

(Kobori, Japan)

‘We don’t speak English. We just speak Arabic. And the government nowadays around 25 years. Before that in my country, people could speak English. But now they just focus on Arabic language. It’s difficult for me if I learn English in my country. They don’t speak English.’

(Armin, Sudan)

The Vietnamese student in this study also emphasised that he did not only learn how to speak Thai after studying in Thailand for a year, but his English significantly improved through his study in an international programme and through socialising with other international friends on campus. On a daily basis, he used English to communicate with his flatmate from Egypt although both of them were learning Thai and could talk to each other in Thai.

1.2 What are the international students’ perceptions and experiences in Thai universities?

There are two positive themes, i.e. ‘relationship’ and ‘research support’ and two negative themes, i.e. ‘language barrier’ and ‘bureaucracy’ emerging from the data.

(1) Relationship

It seemed that professional life in Thailand has been personalised, if not informalised, and it was perceived in a positive light as in the case of the Egyptian student in this study who had prior experience in a more hierarchical and formal relationship between teachers and students in Egypt.

‘In Egypt is like when people come to the class. I think there is not like a good relationship between them and the teacher. They are just a doctor, so they just teach, and they just take the homework, and that’s it. Then they go to the exam. But I think that’s because of a lot of students...But here is like we can go and talk to teachers about anything you want and we can have a relationship with teachers. It’s a really good relationship. We can invite teachers to go out. It’s fine here. But I think in Egypt, it doesn’t have it.’

(Ron, Egypt)

This accords with the story shared by an Indian student:

‘When I compare education in Thailand with India, I think it’s more relaxed here. There seems to be a very friendly relationship between the staff and students.’

(Aryan, India)

There was also evidence of integration between international students and home students, and in some cases with locals, such as the following stories, despite vast cultural differences:

‘I’ve made a lot of friends. Friends in this part I have a few, but a lot of Thai people know me. In some parts, they call me or message me “Hey! Can you help me with English sentences?” “Why not? No problems. I can make it done for you. That’s fine.” Mostly Thai people that I have seen are friendly. And this area mostly in Isaan [northeast of Thailand], always works in their house, have lunch together. I don’t have foreign friends. I don’t know. I just have Thai friends. But sometimes I go travel too. Like my friend, I can borrow his car. We are good friends, close friends. So I just borrow his car. I just drive to Khonkaen and come back again. It’s okay... I cannot stay with foreigners because if I had foreign friends, we would always speak and talk about our countries. I don’t want to know it.’

(Ted, Germany)

‘I got on with travelling to...like Phitsanulok, Sakon Nakhon, et cetera, et cetera, several places. So, during my free time, some Thai friends invite me to go, like, five days there, three days spent in other provinces’.

(Heaven Scent, the Philippines)

‘Actually I see Thai people are more helpful. When I need help, they get help easy. Someone cannot speak English if I ask my friends to help me. If they are busy, they can’t help me. But normally I get help from my friends.’

(Armin, Sudan)

The personalised relationship also included some extra efforts that a Thai lecturer made, especially to accommodate international students. This was not recognised by the university, or there was no matrix in any quality assurance to acknowledge this personalised relationship

that enhanced the teaching and learning experience for international students. However, it was well appreciated by the international student, as apparent in the following narrative:

Chris: there was a time I studied some course unit because I want to do some design. I'm allowed to do pick some courses. I picked some undergraduate course for Bachelors. It's supposed to be taught in Thai, but I picked it, and the lecturer designed for me in English.

Interviewer: They read the texts in English, or just the materials are prepared especially for you in English?

Chris: *No, it wasn't prepared for me, but only for me*, I think he designed it from the Thai version, translated and edited, just for me, so I was sitting in the same classroom with Thai students. It's a Thai program remember?

(Chris, Uganda)

Lastly, the good relationship was also extended to an institutional level as seen in the following:

'I have a good relationship with the Graduate School. People there most of the time are quite responsive.'

(Raoul, France)

(2) Research support

Unlike a popular belief in Thailand that research support is one of the weaknesses of Thai universities, some international students in the study highlighted research support they received from the university, for example, research facilities, international research network, and funding to go overseas for training or conference, as apparent in the following stories:

'The fact that they were so high with their international publications was a big thing for me because that pushes up the QA, and that shows they have connection with different international universities. Well, so that was good for me. The fact that in my two years, I was able to go on three study trips overseas, I just went on one, but we went to Hong Kong. We were connected with the Hong Kong University there, connected with universities in England and America ... that we have with ... one of the, the writers who I was actually researching for my paper. So the connection that they have is very international and that's a good thing that I saw is one of the aspects to their advantage. 'Yes. We went to Hong Kong. I went to Hong Kong. The next year,

they went to Korea and Singapore and so on, but I didn't go. Umm, they went to Hong Kong, and we went to see Hong Kong University, Baptist University of Hong Kong, umm, the Technical College ... College ... Hong Kong College and there was another one that we went to ... And within those four days, we went to see all four of those universities. I got to meet Hyland. I got to meet umm, what's his name? ... Hyland's friend [laugh]. Anyway, he does a lot on independent learning, and he was there. We met him. Really, it was good to connect and we saw different aspects of the school, of the universities, and we got to meet people and interact with people as well, so it was good. It's subsidized. So we pay 10,000 and the university pay 10,000 or something, so we didn't have to pay a lot. So 10,000 for about I think 5 days and that includes the flights and the hotels, and yeah, that was pretty good, including everything, so the university pays some.'

(Lisa, South Africa)

'So if we need this book, but there's none in the university libraries, we can just give them the book title, and they'll purchase it for us. The University provided the Internet for us to get access to the database of good journals around the world, which makes us proud and happy. We're glad that they understand our academic needs. Yeah, when it comes to education, they fully support us. We're also happy we can ask for research funding and even for thesis, we can ask for more financial support, but on condition that we have to prepare more documents and do something more, and that's a more difficult process. They also help us with the conference presentation e.g. the airfare. Everything is good. It's ok.'

(Pisitkhom, Lao PDR)

'The lab I am doing is biotechnology, so the obvious thing about having some good facilities is like labs. When I came here as a researcher, I got really good equipment in my lab and even the lab assistants. They were really kind and willing to give you any sort of help. When you needed help or anything to do with your labs, they were really willing to do that for you. I was impressed with it.'

(Aryan, India)

Some international students seemed to be impressed with the quality of the programmes offered and the standard of research in the Thai universities they were attending:

'Paleontology research lab is doing well. A lot of papers, I think one of the first research facilities in terms of the number of publications. We are the first class of Paleontology in terms of research.'

(Raoul, France)

'Yeah, I feel that the research here is quite harder than in our own country... one class is Research Methodology something like that. And in this class, they teach us how to conduct the research. So this way, I got to know how to conduct the research here. Then I got to know that the research level is quite high than in my own country, so then, I was telling people, my friends who were telling me that like 'Are you really going for study in Thailand?' so I just kept them the answer ... 'Yeah, I'm here for study, and I'm learning a lot here. The research level is quite high, so I'm glad to be here. I was telling them that I'm really glad to be here. I'm having a good experience with Thai people as well, not even in terms of cultural aspect, but in terms of academic as well.'

(Fa, Pakistan)

'My lecturer pushed me to publish in PASAA because I think it's the No.1, so I think you get, the university gets a lot of credits for QA, so they push it, and they push for international publications and things like that, so they're very strict at which publication or which journals were allowed to publish. And we were allowed to go to conferences and things like that. It keeps up the standard...Difficult ... Yeah. I thought it would be much easier. Umm, I was a little bit nervous because I had this preconceived idea that it would be easy, you know, no one fails [laugh]. And yeah, it was ... especially when I got my first paper. At my first paper, I got 65%. That's not good enough for me, and I was really upset by it. I went to the lecturer, and I said 'why is it?' and he showed me 'this and this and this and this.' Okay, I'm going to have to pull up my socks now. So my first paper, I did really badly. And then I decided that this is not Mickey Mouse that we want [laugh]. This is, this is a real international program. Our lecturers are international lecturers. We have lots of students from Burma, from Laos, from where else ... Japanese, so we have quite a lot of international students.'

(Lisa, South Africa)

(3) Language barrier

Some universities in Thailand are presenting themselves as 'international', but their English language policies do not necessarily reflect this, as seen through the eyes of some international students:

'You may know that but for first-year student, bachelor's students, there is a form in English and Thai now. Which I don't see why because we don't have many international students coming for a bachelor. But now slowly for a master and then for a PhD. It means that in the internationalization process, it seems to me as in the Science Faculty and the Register Officer, they move from the bottom of the pyramid. Maybe it makes sense for some reasons I don't know why and it's going to the top. It means, and it's quite slow for me because I have been here for four years. I didn't see any of the registration pages online which is an English version which is broken mostly and where you can't really register because nothing really works.'

(Raoul, France)

Some international programmes recruit Thai students who couldn't understand English, and the lecturers sometimes had to lecture in Thai which was perceived negatively by international students:

'Sometimes, some teachers teach in Thai, so they don't teach everything in English. And there is one thing I don't like about is that in International Business in [the name of the university he was attending] compare to other universities that they accept students who cannot speak English. And I always talk to my friend like why you guys don't try to practice English. You are international program students. They can't hear and communicate with me in English. They just write. Ok, they are good at writing and listening. But in speaking, I told them that people in other faculties like from here study in English major, they are better.... But the issue is when the people apply, when they accept a student who cannot communicate in English is a big problem, you just skip them, just study everything in English..... Like, let's say for example in our class, we have 90 students. I think in Khon Kaen international college I think maybe 20 or 15, but they can speak English. But here they accept a lot of students maybe like me and a few people who can speak English and the rest, if I speak with them, they do not understand.'

(Ron, Egypt)

(4) *Bureaucracy*

Thai Higher Education has an aspiration to become 'international'. However, its bureaucratic and administrative system does not necessarily reflect this, even as international bodies grow within the country, as seen through the eyes of some international students:

'It was... It's like something from a hundred years ago. I've never seen anything quite like it. The first thing... okay... you need what's called the Certificate of Equivalence to enter the university, which shows you finished high school to Mathayom 6, right? Same as Thai, right? Shows that your exams are the same as Thai. This is where the problem starts because number 1, [at] the office where you have to go to get your certificate, they don't speak English... or any other language, only Thai. I don't know why, because Thai people don't need the certificate, so why don't they put an English speaker there? Okay, first problem. The second problem is they don't recognize any education system except the Thai one. They understand America because it's the same as Thai. So, here you have a GPA. You have a transcript for high school, right? In Europe, we don't. There's no GPA, no transcript, no exams. You start at 12. There is an exam when you're 16, and that's it. Finished. Your Ministry of Education doesn't understand that, and they constantly ask "Where's the transcript?", "Where's the GPA?". And they send letters to the school in England and ask for these, which they don't provide. The school... in England, the schools don't keep exam records because

the exams are not issued by the school. They are issued by the government.'

(Matt, UK)

'One of the negative things I found was when I first came into this particular university, it seemed to be very unorganized, extremely unorganized. I don't wanna go into details about how unorganized it was, but the administration was very chaotic at times. I just felt kind of lost, and then when the leadership changed and the university things started to improve. It gets much better, but overall, I think the learning experience was very good. The administrative side was bad in many cases. It was also okay in other cases, but the learning experience and the instruction that I got from the instructors was pretty good.'

(Nomad, US)

'Every time I need to register. No, more important one. When I registered, it was 3-4 years ago and since then the Graduate School of Science went through, I think people told me, three different policies maybe four. So, rules were constantly changing at that time and the rules I registered under were not the rules the graduate school has to apply now. But it seems to have a kind of with the presidents. When I asked something to the Graduate School. I have a good relationship with the Graduate School. People there most of the time are quite responsive. But they seem to be confused themselves. So when we are not clear with the rules, how can they explain to foreign students who struggle with the language to explain them clearly what they need to do? That is one thing. This is purely I would say the administrative thing. And that happens very often. It took me years to understand the process to register and last semester, there was a big one. People felt like, I felt like I don't know what to do and people, the administrative part, always fear of dealing with me because they don't know how to explain to me or maybe they don't know what I should do or don't know. It's always in an awkward situation looking at each other and like "Where is my link?" I went to the register office. I do like every student needs to deal with the same services and all the same rules as the Thai students which is quite normal. And they just do not communicate. Yes. But the problem is that we are not sharing the same level of language. I was asked a few times to produce letters, official letters almost specific format which is something that PhD students do in Thailand, which is all of PhD which I can't do. When I confronted with it and I had the people who gave me instructions what should I do. They don't know what to say because they are like "well, that's the rules" Thailand is important to follow rules. Thai administration, you need to follow the rules. So, I had to submit papers sometimes 2-3 times and, eventually, I ended up finding a Thai student who is willing to help me and do it for me.'

(Raoul, France)

In a nutshell, the mobility experience of international students in Thai higher education can be presented by Figure 6:

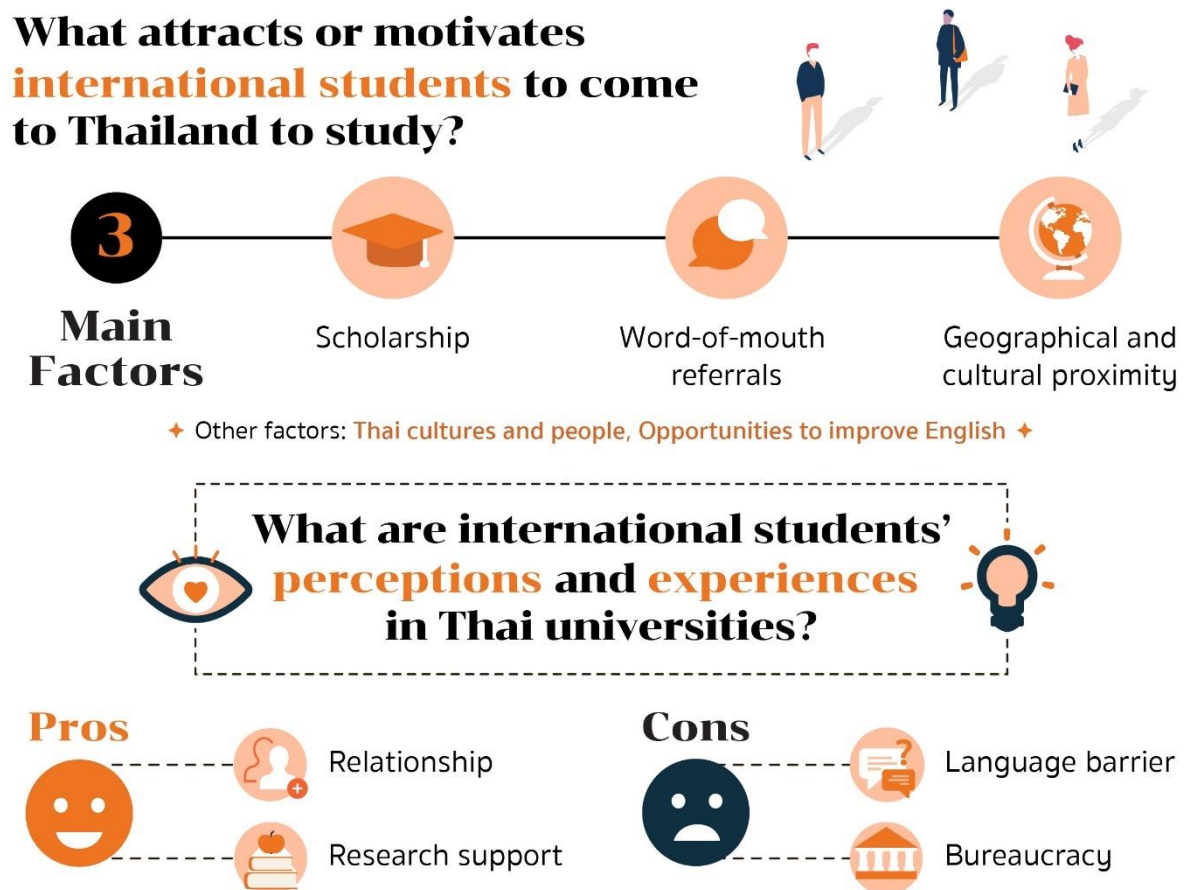


Figure 6: What International Students Think about Thai Higher Education: Pull Factors of Thailand & Experiences of Students from around the World in Thai Universities

These lived experiences of international students in Thailand accord with what Lao (2015) described internationalisation of Thai higher education. That is, there is a paradox between the overt embracement of modernity and persistent rhetoric of traditionalism as a challenge for the development of the Thai HE. Thai policymakers might be enthusiastic about the process of internationalisation, but they continue to preach the importance of Thai cultural

values and system, and ‘selective’ borrowing from the West as a part of the larger policy agenda (ibid.).

In addition, the pull factors of Thai Higher Education reflected through the stories shared by the international students in this study are in line with push-pull factors proposed by Mazzarol and Soutar (2002). The decisions to study overseas are usually made over a long period, and influenced by complex factors, especially when one has a wide range of alternatives. The findings from this study suggested that engaging returnees as ambassadors, creating links between international student community and home student community before, during, and after the education abroad experience could potentially help Thai HE to be more marketable at a global scale. International students have potentials to be future contacts for inducing the flow of international students evident by the social network or word-of-mouth referrals as one of the prominent pull factors. Many universities in Thailand are aware of the role of scholarships as another important pull factor to attract international students to study in their institutions as seen in the information regarding financial support for international students in their prospectus or websites. However, some universities have underestimated the significance of such information.

A lack of access to higher education among some countries in Southeast Asia currently benefits Thailand as it has been a key driver for much of the present international flow that has taken place for a decade. However, this might not last for long, and if the Thai State has an agenda to increase the quantity and the quality of inbound mobility, there is a need to establish a national brand for Thai Higher Education as suggested by McDermott (2013). So

far, internationalisation endeavours for Thai HE are highly fragmented from one university to another without formal, integrated, systematic and structured influence from the Thai government (McBride, 2012). The findings suggest that Thai universities need to have proper analysis and understanding of what needs to be done regarding English language policies and practices and administration to bring themselves in line with the international status they claim as the weakness in this area is indeed harming an effort to implement quality international mobility experience.

2. Mobility Experience of International Academics in Thai Universities

2.1 Common academic migration motives to Thailand

Three dominant themes emerged as the pull factors of Thailand and Thai universities for international academics, i.e. 'a social network in Thailand or having a Thai partner,' 'an interest in Thai lifestyle and cultures,' and 'seeking better social and economic conditions.'

(1) A social network in Thailand or having a Thai partner

Contrary to the popular belief that foreign academics moved to Thailand because they all had a Thai partner, only five people in this study (from India, Honduras, the UK, the US, and France) out of 29 moved to Thailand and were working in a Thai university because of this reason. However, the majority of them had a social network in Thailand, especially in the university where they got a position as seen in the case of Charlie:

'I know websites that do find jobs in other countries, but in my case, I had a friend who recommended me this university. A friend of my family. I was also informed that they were looking for someone at the time. So, it was the only place I applied to. But, of course, I had to gain a CELTA course. In this case, I was lucky enough to apply for this place, do a Skype interview and get feedback very quickly. So, I ended up just applying here and just coming here.'

(Charlie, UK)

A lecturing position in Thai HE is advertised at domestic level mainly. International people usually applied for such a position through word-of-mouth, with the exception of the case of Manfred whose position in Thailand was advertised on jobs.ac.uk. He had no social network in Thailand nor visited the country before.

(2) An interest in Thai lifestyle and cultures

It is not uncommon for the international academics in this study to come to Thailand at first as a tourist. There were similar stories across the dataset that they enjoyed Thai cultures and lifestyle including warm climate so much that they decided to look for a teaching job as it provided an opportunity to live in the country. In the case of Markus, he got interested in Thai cultures and Thai people through a few Thai friends he met while doing a PhD in the US, and decided to visit them in Thailand without any idea that he would end up moving to Thailand for life:

‘I visited Thailand and fell in love with the place, spent a month in various places, including a village that had no electricity [laugh]. And then started daydreaming after that that maybe when I’ve got my PhD, I could go and teach in Thailand.’

(Markus, US)

(3) Seeking better social and economic conditions

For migrants from Laos, Cambodia, and Myanmar, they intended to work in Thailand temporarily and apply what they learned from Thailand to develop their home countries. They usually get a higher salary and better healthcare working in Thailand than in their country of origin. On the contrary, migrants from the west compromised with the lower income in Thailand, but they claimed that they moved to Thailand because of lower living cost and better social conditions as exemplified through the stories of Lawrence and Paul:

'In general, the cost of living is lower. Labor is significantly lower. If I want to hire a nanny for my children or a gardener or some person to do repairs on the house, all of these seem significantly less than they are in the United States. Housing generally is cheaper although that is variable. Some places in Thailand are quite expensive, specifically in Bangkok and other cities. But in comparison to Los Angeles, it's still cheaper. Los Angeles is quite expensive. There are areas in the US that are not expensive in terms of housing. But in terms of food, food expenses for Thai food are very reasonable, typical, miraculous, maybe 35 baht, whereas in the US, if you go to a restaurant, you're spending probably over 300 baht, and most likely 450 or 600 baht for just a basic meal. Ah, so food expenses are a lot cheaper.'

(Lawrence, US)

'Actually, I feel kind of special here, rather than in Canada or the United States. They treat me a different kind of "kind" from Thais. They treat Thais with kindness that is the culture or the effects of culture. But I think, the fact that you're a foreigner from a different country. I don't know they're just very polite people.'

(Paul, Canada)

2.2 Experiences of international academics in Thai Higher Education

Eight themes, i.e. 'freedom,' 'relationship,' 'lack of assimilation with local staff,' 'lack of involvement in management,' 'corruption,' 'language barrier,' 'bureaucracy,' and 'visa complications' emerged from the data.

(1) Freedom

The term 'freedom' was used largely by the majority of international staff in this study in describing their experience working for a Thai university. Like academics in many countries, international lecturers in Thailand have some degree of flexibility about when and where they complete their work as told by Tien:

'My friends, they get jealous of me because I only work nine hours per week. The other, I can work in my office or I can work in my room. It's not compulsory to sit in the office. Flexible time.'

(Tien, Vietnam)

However, this 'freedom' was sometimes seen as counter-productive as reflected by Manfred:

'I've been given a lot of freedom in my job..., so I really enjoy that. I can initiate new projects, runs projects...umm... relatively unsupervised, which is pros and cons. Sometimes it's good because you can just run off and you don't have someone continuously watching you. But sometimes I do wish there was a very big shot professor who would like after me or something like this... yeah... that's something I'm missing just a little bit...And I'm running a little bit my own projects well and even when you're teaching a class, no one's telling me exactly which books I'm going to use or exactly how I have to teach. Over the years, I've built enough rapport that they trust me that I can teach my own class and something like this.'

(Manfred, Germany)

(2) A pastoral relationship between academics and students

The majority of the international staff in this study reported the strong pastoral relationship between themselves and students:

'It's more like the culture of the program that we had to make sure that these students are getting what they are paying for. Because they are always in the building, so you see them. Sometimes it gets personal as well. Sometimes you will get a student calling you in the middle of the night. They are in some sort of situation. And the teachers we have to do things to help them, especially when we have Chinese students. They make a lot of serious troubles. I mean one time I got a call. The student was really drunk, and we had to go and take him. Something like that. They are paying for the apartment inside and outside. I was like alright I didn't know how to handle this. We tried to talk to them that it's not good if you stay outside some days and inside some days because you are paying for both. We have MOU with the university that we will take care of everything.'

(Pinay, the Philippines)

It was reported by many international academics that professional life in Thailand was personalised, if not informalised. It was not uncommon for teachers and students to socialise outside of academic context, or even after graduation, and it was perceived in a positive light by both sides.

(3) Lack of assimilation with local staff

On the contrary from the positive aspect regarding the relationship with students, based on experience shared by many international academics in this study, the international staff seemed to be isolated and experienced lack of integration with the local staff (e.g. 'I didn't have to interact with a lot of people.', 'I had an office on a different floor to everyone else. I had the floor to myself. And I didn't see anyone, so I didn't, it was a bit frustrating', 'you are a little bit excluded if you are international,' 'I'm a loner. I'm by myself all the time,' 'No one told me anything. I didn't know how to do my marks or teach my class. There's no communication.'). Some long-term Western residents are burned-out and are cynical about Thai colleagues, and a similar phenomenon was reported in Howard (2009). It seemed to be the case of some international staff in this study such as Sean:

'Oh, God [pauses to think]. I suppose, when they've given a, you know, two-year contract. They give me only a one-year contract, even though they give another person a two-year contract and that person couldn't teach his way out of a paper bag. I thought it was sort of like; I might have upset them somewhere along the line, so this is the way they get ah khad [hold grudges], you know. That's another thing, too. Umm... you find that Thais are very good at bullying, you know, in-a-very-subtle-way bullying. And, you know, one person gets to beat them, and then five people come and kick them. I find that to be sort of true; maybe because I'm sort of like "tell them like it is".'

(Sean, US)

(4) Lack of involvement in management and administration

The majority of the international staff in this study reported that they had no role in management and administration, and they were not invited to the faculty's or the department's meetings as the meeting is usually conducted in Thai. Some international staffs were critical of nontransparent decisions which affected their lives such as contract renewals. Duncan's story is a good illustration of how difficult for an international academic to fully integrate to

the system when they are not asked to do much else apart from teaching and being used only for a face value to advertise the institution's international program:

'So, sometimes, you just feel like, you know, the other token foreign person and there because I look foreign, not because I can actually do anything or of any use for them, so that, that's how I feel at the moment. So, if I was to tell them something, that's what I'd probably tell them. I'd say this, you know, I feel that you know, I'm just a token foreign person, and I don't, I'm not. I have many skills, umm, that at the moment, I'm just not being utilised. I'm just going to waste. I can do a lot. When I go, I go to visit the UK, I go to visit the department in the UK, and whenever I go, they'll always say 'so, when can you come back again?' They always say when can you come back because they need me to go there because I really helped them a lot with their research and their work, and they really enjoy doing that. Umm, you know, it just doesn't happen, it's like you know, they have a resource which is me, and ... it's frustrating if you have a lot of skills, then you can get quite unhappy. You feel as if your time, you're not being put to good use ... They allocated some money or positions so that they can hire some foreign members, but they don't really, they don't really think about how they want to utilise them effectively or how they could. Umm, so maybe they don't care because they have so few, so maybe it's not worth. So, if somebody comes along and says, you know, "Can I have a position here?" They'll say "Oh, yes, you can because we have some money and maybe it looks nice because you look foreign, and it's good, it's good for our image."

(Duncan, UK)

For Duncan, he could not imagine himself working in Thailand until retirement, knowing that as a foreigner, he would never receive a pension. Also, he wanted to be in a place where people knew all the good things he had done and valued them. Therefore, all he could do now was doing the best job he could while trying to figure out ways to escape from this very frustrating environment in Thailand. Many parts of the interview showed well how much he understood what was happening, and it was evident that he had tried his best to make sense of it. He did not expect the university environment to change as it was very difficult. Instead, he seemed to be choosing to change and move to where he would feel the better sense of belonging. A similar experience was shared by some other international staff in this study who had no clear

responsibilities and had no idea about their position in the organisation. To them, the department did not value the significance of having them as one competent member and did not fully utilise them as much as it should be. Other international staff in this study used terms such as, 'second-class citizen,' 'mascot,' 'token' or 'face validity' to describe how they felt about their status at work. Also, there was reported inequality regarding the rewards and incentives when Thai and foreign staff members published research papers in some Thai universities.

(5) Corruption

Corruption is perceived to be a national issue in Thailand, and some international staff in this study reported that they had experience encountering bribery or other forms of corrupt practice, including academic corruption, as seen from Robert's story:

'It's sad. It's also sad that... what would be regarded as corruption in other countries is part of Thai culture. One and obvious example is if someone does something to help you, you normally give them a gift. Now at some level, this goes from being a gift that you give as part thanking someone for doing something to outright bribery... One thing that happens is that it's not uncommon for people to put their name on papers they have nothing to do with. I hear about cases where someone is basically using the work of other

people. Someone of fairly high position just used the work of other people and got promoted even higher.'

(Robert, Australia)

(6) Language barrier

The majority of international staff in this study identified language barrier as the main obstacle to participate fully in the social and professional life in their host institutions as most of the administrative processes are conducted in Thai, such as meetings, quality assurance as seen in the case of Samuel:

‘The evaluation for the courses are normally based on the forms submitted by previous Thai teachers and also even for the graduate courses which are in the international program, everything is taught in English, but all the Mor Kor Or [QA documents] are in Thai and the description of the course, the topics to be covered, everything is in Thai, and it makes me use a lot of extra time just to know what I have to do with that and even try to edit it. So, I must confess that sometimes I just... umm... submit something that is not perfectly worked... take it from the last time that I did it and change something small because it would take a long time to do it correctly... and it makes me a bit frustrated actually.’

(Samuel, Spain)

Not knowing the local language which is dominant in the Thai academic context also deprived them of opportunities to advance in their academic career, such as getting a managerial role and applying for research funding as described here:

‘In Thailand, I mean, for funding in Thailand for international, I think it is close to impossible. Already the funding is advertised in Thai. That’s already where it stops. And then, you have to have a name with you, especially if you’re not from an absolute top university. When you’re going to... to the Ministry or whatever you’re going to... the meetings to propose your projects, you can only do it in a team with someone senior Thai, I think. That’s my experience anyway. While the international fund that is available, you can go for it.’

(Manfred, Germany)

Sean who had worked for a Thai university for the past 40 years and could speak and write Thai fluently gave an interesting view as follows:

‘You know, I mean, farangs [foreigners] are expected to understand Thai and Thai people, but it’s a two-way street—Thais have got to understand farangs too. Very often they don’t.’

(Sean, US)

(7) *Bureaucracy*

Thai Higher Education has an aspiration to become ‘international.’ However, its bureaucratic system does not necessarily reflect this, as seen through the eyes of some international staff. Two main areas perceived as the most problematic that affect their professional life concern

the top-down policy regarding curriculum and procedures to apply for research funding, as told by Bali and Richard:

‘Ah...yes, yes. The OHEC [Office of the Higher Education Commission] allows us to make new curriculum...depends on the institution. Institution wants it to occur, they allow. But they are asking about the process you can make. Make it clear and compare with other institutes and OHEC standard. If you reach this standard, they will approve. They don’t look at the curriculum deeper – they don’t look. Only the frame.’

(Bali, India)

‘I’m on their list of eligible people for things like, for example, [a prestigious research grant scheme in Thailand] Scholarship. I’m eligible supervisor on their database, things like that. But I can’t be bothered to apply for funding for any of them because the bureaucracy is ridiculous. The number of forms I have... I don’t think I was lead researcher on one. I was... a secondary researcher which we went for funding at Wor Shor or Sor Kor Or. And the amount of documents they want is not worth it. Within the faculty, the faculty funds... I run that anyway... I’ve run it for 12 years... is easy-going and document-free. Because research shows that one reason people don’t do research is the amount of administrative work involved in doing research, so we try to keep administrative work about research at the minimum. I had four-million-baht funding from the university for projects 15 years ago. Yes, I’ve had, but funding doesn’t strike me as important generally... They... their main fund... the application documents... I think 30 pages long. And you’re supposed to send them 15 copies, hard copies of it and the CD. It is all so... 1989... 1980 [laughs]. And then, they require... I don’t know... three-monthly or six-monthly reports on the progress of the project and each of which is ten pages long. That’s [acts speechless]. It’s just bureaucracy. I mean, you’ll just end up spending your time filling forms. I’m on the university’s research committees, three or four of these research committees and... I don’t know how these people have the energy or whatever who do all these applications actually manage anything when you look at all the forms and all the stuff about it. It is absolutely ridiculous for what they’re getting.’

(Richard, UK)

(8) *Visa complications*

Most foreigners have an annually renewable visa at best (Howard, 2009). Every international staff in this study complained about visa complications and felt ‘unwelcoming’ due to the visa procedures (e.g. ‘currently, I need a visa renewal every year, work permit renewal every 2 years and then 90-day reporting for where I reside every 90 days,’ ‘there’re more hoops to

jump through every year,’ ‘instead of treating me like a valued asset for the society, I’m treated like a criminal. So, you come in every 90 days to report,’ ‘it’s dehumanizing that I have to have a medical certificate showing I am syphilis-free every time I need to renew my work permit,’ ‘you need more and more pieces of documentation every year which is absurd, and sometimes you only find out when you go,’ ‘I have a family here. It’s horrible. It’s absolutely horrible if I get fired. I can’t do anything. I have to leave the country within seven days. In seven days! That’s crazy. It is crazy, and if I were to change jobs, I would have to leave the country.’).

Visa complications seemed to hinder an attempt to do international collaboration and internationalising Thai universities, as told by Markus:

‘I had a visitor once for six months who was from China. I should say that the university has also failed to appreciate that people who don’t have Thai citizenship must go through, you can even call “harassment,” from Thai government, like this 90-day check-out. Every 90 days you have to go to an office very far away in northern Bangkok and tell them about...stand in line all day to tell them that they exist and silly things like that. A key issue’s, for example, I often hire...several times I have hired a post-doc or researcher who the university will support them whether they are Thai or foreign. However, they don’t really appreciate that foreigners need a contract to enter Thailand in order to get a work permit and get the visa to come to Thailand. And universities are usually sloppy about that. They want to hire someone first, make somebody start working first and later give them the contract, give them salaries a few months later and they...just normal behaviours for Thais at universities. But for foreigners, that doesn’t work because they have to have a contract to get into the country. So, they need to appreciate that as well.’

(Markus, US)

The visa policies of the Thai government allow skilled migration into Thailand for short periods but mainly aim ‘to preserve Thailand for the Thais’ (Huguet, 2005), discouraging permanent residence (Iredale et al., 2004). Legal immigration rates are low (0 per 1000

according to the CIA World Factbook cited in Howard 2009). Permanent residence and citizenship are hard for foreigners to acquire. Permanent residence quotas of 100 maximum annually per nation were introduced, with citizenship possible only after ten years of continuous residence.

In a nutshell, the mobility experience of international academics in Thai higher education can be presented by Figure 7:

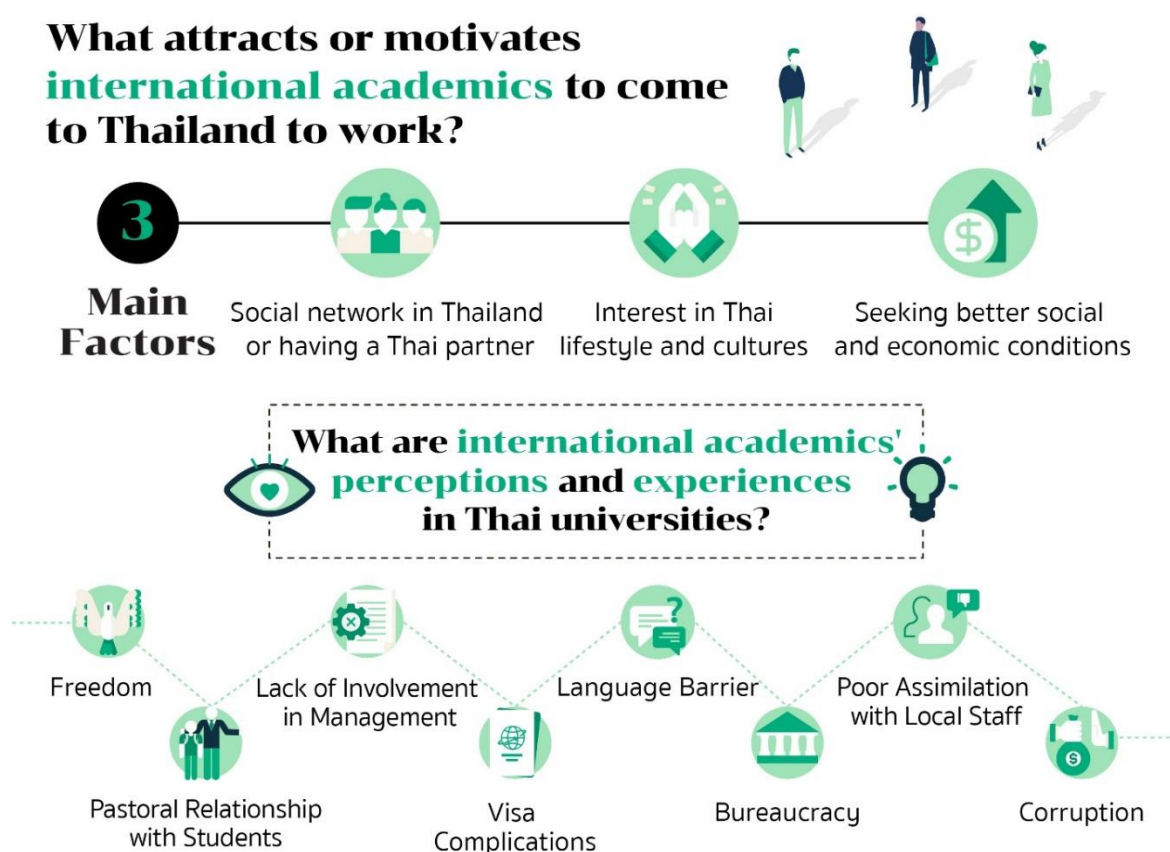


Figure 7: What International Academics Think about Thai Higher Education: Pull Factors of Thailand & Experiences of Academics from around the World in Thai Universities.

There are many commonalities in experiences among international staff and students in Thai universities regarding the pastoral relationship between teachers and students, language barrier, and bureaucracy problems. The motives of international people to come to work for Thai higher education are not academic-oriented, which are different from the commonly

referenced pull factors for highly skilled workers and academics (Altbach, 1998; Altbach, 2007; Cantwell, 2011; Cradden, 2007; Mahroum, 2000). The long-term mobile faculty in Thailand are not 'star' faculty moving to prestigious institutions outside of their home countries, but, as described in Mihut et al. (2017)'s term, 'worker bee' academics moving towards demand-driven Thai tertiary education system, with economic and social-oriented motives. Usually, better income is often cited as a motivation for academic migration (Altbach et al., 2012; Janger & Campbell, 2014; Janger & Nowotny, 2013) and most elite academics move to countries with high gross domestic product (GDP) levels and more resources. As a developing country, Thailand might not be able to compete in this respect to attract international academics. However, based on the findings from this study, Thailand has potentials in creating a competitive index on country characteristics which are currently one of the present main pull factors.

There are three discussion points based on the findings we would like to make. First, academic adjustment to local norms, expectations, and practices is the hardest area to adjust to for most international academics. Due to the language barrier and the lack of familiarity with the norms and politics of the local academic system, international staff are often not effectively integrated into the internationalisation strategies and have very limited participation in governance and other university functions in comparison to the local faculty. The lack of involvement in management and administration is not exclusive for foreign academics in Thailand as it is a common experience shared by the international faculty in other parts of the world as stated by Altbach and Yudkevich (2017). Engaging international academics in management and administration might not be widely practised due to several limitations; however, this may be a good idea for Thai universities that suffer from general lack of external and international experience. International staff may potentially bring new ideas and insights into existing routines and suggest innovative ways to tackle problems regarding internationalising Thai universities. Using the local faculty as a mentor can help the international staff adjust better to the local system and achieve a better understanding of the local norms and practices. Creating campus cultures well equipped to welcome international academics; such as, providing English signs and documents and language support should be practised; this should fix the language barrier challenges and help foreign academics 'fit in' better.

Secondly, Thailand seems to lack experience and procedures in recruiting academics on the international market. If a university seeks international faculty to improve research and teaching for ranking and for building academic excellence, relying on word-of-mouth or domestic advertisement alone is not a good strategy to achieve such goal. Potential talented academics who might have an interest in migrating to Thailand for an academic position might not have access to such information advertised internally in the Thai language. Thailand needs to rethink about university hiring processes which presently adopts closed faculty recruitment practices. Contracts in English describing the entire detailed of mutual obligations and expectations, rather than the current version of the general framework of responsibilities need to be written as well. To put it into perspective, for other countries in the region, such as Malaysia and Singapore, the attraction of high-quality international scholars is a strongly articulated objective in their attempt to become higher education hubs in Southeast Asia.

Thirdly, the findings of this study suggest that some of the current problems cannot be solved at the institutional level. Several key aspects emerging from the data suggest that the policy environment at the national level is a crucial dimension of the international faculty story and affects the success in attracting and retaining them for working for Thai universities. There needs to be the policy framework that actively stimulates their recruitment and legal or professional status in the country, from the legal possibility to work to longer-term nature of work contracts and visas. Currently, Thai government visa policies include every 90-day report and allow migration into Thailand for short periods as the country is a transit point for people smuggling (Chantavanich, 1999; Huguet and Punpuing, 2005) and has over one million undocumented foreign residents (Amarapibal, 2003). Although there are exceptions, allowing certain highly-paid workers long-term visas, these largely do not apply to academic migrants who earn a significantly smaller salary from Thai universities than foreigners who work in business sectors.

Last but not least, it is vital to point out that the international faculty is an increasingly important part of the globalised academia of the 21st century and the ratio of international faculty to domestic faculty is one of the information collected for global university rankings. Thai universities are no exception to this powerful internationalisation trends. Today, international staffs are a growing and increasingly important part of the process of

internationalising Thai higher education, but many Thai universities and the Thai state do not seem to have an articulated policy, or an outline of objectives and practices, related to long-term inbound mobility of international academics or the attraction of foreign talent. The present realities of mobility experience of international scholars in Thailand presented in this study raise more questions than it answers regarding the Thai State's aspiration to become the educational hub of the region. This research began by highlighting the significance of investigating international cohorts in Thailand. We then presented their mobility experience through the lens of pull factors of Thailand and the perceived experience of international people working in Thai higher education institutions. It is suggested that more research is needed, as well as the development of the institutional-level and national-level policies to attract and retain highly skilled individuals from outside the country.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Thailand has been reputable as one of the top destinations for tourism, but not yet as a popular destination for academic migration. It is important for the Thai government and universities to develop strategies to create a conducive learning environment for both home and international students and staff to achieve the Thai state's aspiration of becoming a regional higher education hub and capture greater international student market and international education. The findings from this study provide advice and guidance on how values-based, rather than purely numbers-driven strategies can help Thai HEIs across the country to be more attractive to international people and to enhance their experience once they come to work or study in Thai HEIs. Given the growing competitions within Southeast Asia for international education, it has become increasingly imperative for Thai universities to have a full understanding of factors that influence student selection and decision to study in Thailand and also factors that attract more international academic talents.

This study might provide qualitative in-depth stories of international people in Thai Higher Education, but it has limitations including a relatively small sample size of international cohorts, of which the majority is studying or working in Thai public universities. Future research would benefit from wider sampling including those in private universities. It would also be useful to

add longitudinal elements of retrospective reports of international people who already left Thailand. Some elements to consider in future studies might relate to how Thai universities could optimise the benefits that home students and Thai academics could receive from the presence of these international people regarding enhancing linguistic and intercultural competence and their global perspectives.

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APPENDIX I: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Navaporn Snodin is an Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics at Kasetsart University, Thailand. She was Head of Research and International Affairs for Department of Foreign Languages, Kasetsart University from 2013-2017. She holds a PhD degree in Educational and Applied Linguistics from Newcastle University, UK. She was a visiting scholar at the Department of English and American Studies, the University of Vienna, Austria, under the scheme of the ASEA-UNINET Staff Exchange. She was a holder of a Newton Advanced Fellowship from the British Academy from 2016 to 2018. Her research focuses on World Englishes, English Language Education, Blended Learning, Learner Autonomy and Internationalisation of Higher Education. She has published articles in journals including *World Englishes*, *Asian Englishes*, *System*, *Computers & Education*, the *RELC Journal*, and co-authored a book chapter in the *Routledge Handbook of English Language Teacher Education*. She organised a Newton Fund Workshop in 2016, bringing together a group of researchers from the UK and Thailand to address the challenge of promoting value-based internationalisation. In 2018, she organised another Newton Fund Workshop under the theme of English as an ASEAN lingua franca: Implications for language and education policy and practice. Both workshops were funded by the British Council and Thailand Research Fund.

APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PARTNER

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Tony Young is currently a Reader in Applied Linguistics and Communication and Director of Excellence in Learning and Teaching, School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University, UK. He was an English language teacher, Director of Studies, curriculum advisor and Head of School for the British Council and the Bell Education Trust, among others, and worked in the UK, USA, Spain, Italy and Malaysia between 1984 and 2002. He lectured in applied linguistics, and the social psychology of communication at Birkbeck, the University of London between 2002 and 2004. He was Head of the Applied Linguistics section of the School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences at Newcastle University between 2010 and 2015, and was President of the International Association of Language and Social Psychology from 2014 to 2016. His area of expertise is intercultural and intergroup communication. He has published articles in journals including *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, *European Journal of Higher Education*, *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, and *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*.

APPENDIX III: RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

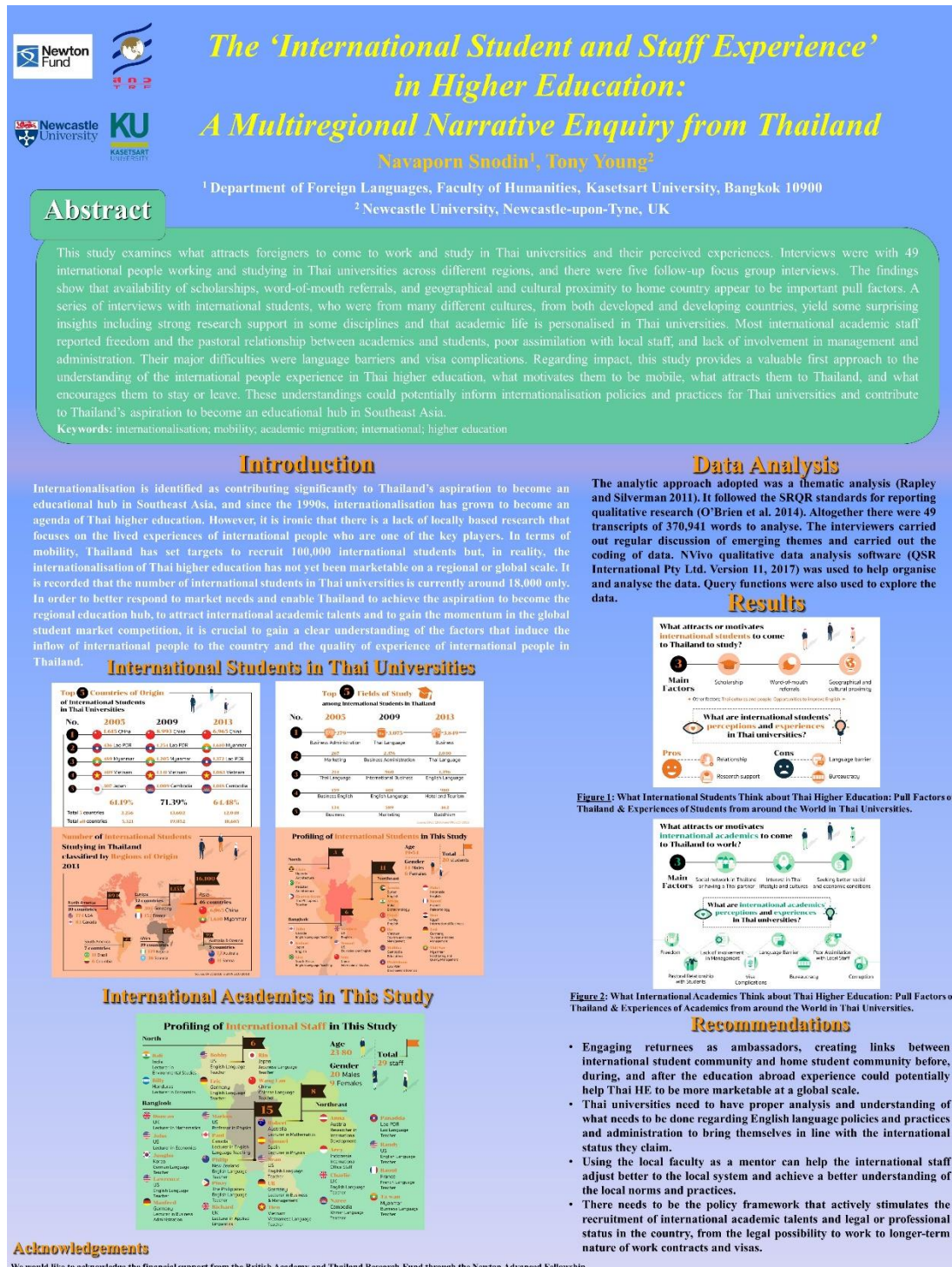
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APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH DISSEMINATION & INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

- (1) Poster presentation on 'A Narrative Inquiry of International Student and Staff Mobility Experience in Thailand' at the Asian Conference on Education & International Development (ACEID2017), 26-29 March 2017, at the Art Center Kobe, Kobe, Japan.
- (2) Oral presentation on "I Thought People Should Know That This is Not a Tourist Country Only": International Student Mobility Experience in Thailand at the IAFOR International Conference on Education 2018 (IICEDubai2018), 16-18 February 2018, at the InterContinental Festival City Event Centre, Dubai, UAE.
- (3) Oral presentation on the 'International Student and Staff Experience' in Higher Education: A Multiregional Narrative Enquiry from Thailand at the Global Conference on Education and Research (GLOCER 2018), 17-20 April 2018, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.
- (4) Oral presentation on 'Mobility Experiences of International Students and Academics in Thai Higher Education' at the IUNC Eurasia 2018: International Universities Networking Conference, 14-17 May 2018, at the State University of Management, Moscow, Russia.

APPENDIX V: RESEARCH PROJECT POSTER



APPENDIX VI: THE ACADEMIC MIGRATION TO THAILAND WEBSITE (www.academicmigrationtothailand.co)

This website is one of the outputs of the research project. It serves as a valuable reference point for developing internationalisation of Thai higher education, particularly regarding inbound mobility. The website contains recent statistics, infographics, articles, conference papers, publications, news about the project dissemination activities, and video clips on various aspects of international education, showcasing voices from international students and academics across different regions in Thailand.