

Factors Influencing Bangkokian Adults' Decision-Making in Choosing an English Language School

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine the factors influencing Bangkokian on decision-making in choosing an English language school. This study applied non-probability sampling as a sampling procedure. The questionnaires were distributed by snowballing sampling with 400 questionnaires distributed by both offline and online platforms. This study applied four statistical models including descriptive analysis, One-Way ANOVA, Pearson's Correlation and multiple regression analysis. Most of the respondents were female. The majority of the respondents were aged between 29 - 39 years old. 76.8% of the respondents worked as private company employees and 60.5% of them worked at the operational level. Most of respondents have incomes between 15,001 baht and 40,000 baht per month. The results from multiple linear regressions analysis showed that product, promotion, people and process have positive influence on adult's decision-making in choosing an English language school while age, occupation, job level, income, price, place, physical evidence do not have a positive influence on adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school.

Keywords: marketing mix elements, English language school, adults' decision making

Introduction

The global English Language Teaching industry has been forecasted to grow from 63.3 billion US dollars in 2012 to 193 billion US dollars in 2017 (New Horizons English, 2013). In 2013 Study Travel Magazine estimated the revenue of the eight leading countries of English language learning destinations. United States hold the majority at 31.7% followed by United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Malta, and South Africa. The demand for English learning is increasing especially in the countries with the low English proficiency.

According to British Council (2013), the top destinations for English Language learning markets are in Asia, three countries in Europe; France, Italy, and Germany and Brazil in Latin America.

According to EF Education First (2015), the average of English Proficiency Index 2015 was around 53.21% of an average of population at 218,966,743. Singapore was ranked as first with the high English Proficiency at 61.08% followed by Malaysia, India, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Pakistan, China, Sri Lanka, Kazakhstan, Thailand, Mongolia, and Cambodia. Adkins (2016) in his article on Ambient Insight's has forecasted the growth rate of digital English Language Learning in Asia Pacific at around 4.6% and the revenue will reach 2.0 billion dollars by 2020 from 1.6 billion in 2015. The countries in Asia Pacific identified in the forecast are Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam. Myanmar is ranked at the highest growth rate for digital English language learning market followed by Mongolia, Sri Lanka, and Laos.

Thailand, according to English First's latest English proficiency index in 2015, was the third worst in Asia. The English proficiency of Thai people remains low despite the large tourism industry in Thailand. Thailand's school system has performed poorly not only in English assessment but also assessments in all subject areas. Thais still have poor English skills even when Thailand spends a greater percentage (31.3%) of the budget on education (Fredrickson, 2015).

The primary drivers of this booming revenue are from the increasing demand of English language learning, the emerging of technology, the national policies in English learning, ASEAN Economic Community, the emerging tourism industry, and increasing demand of English for specialty (Adkins, 2016).

A Thai company saw an opportunity in English language learning market for adults. However, prior to entering the industry, the company did not do an in-depth study of the market. The school is suffering due to the lack of a good understanding of the English Language Learning markets in Thailand.

There are previous studies conducted to identify the factors that influence decision-making in choosing an English language school. However, these studies focused mostly on the tutoring schools or rather than English Language schools specifically for adults.

It is difficult for the company to continue the school business without knowing what customers' need in a language school and the what the English Language Learning industry needs.

The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the influence of demographic factors on Bangkokian adults' decision-making in choosing a language school.
2. To investigate service marketing mix elements influencing Bangkokian adults' decision-making in choosing a language school.
3. To identify the relationship between independent variables (demographic factors and service marketing mix elements) and dependent variable (decision-making) by using correlation.
4. To determine the strengths of the relationship between independent variables (demographic factors and service marketing mix elements) and dependent variable (decision-making) by using multiple regressions.

Hypotheses

H1o: Age does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H1a: Age has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H2o: Occupation does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H2a: Occupation has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H3o: Job level does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H3a: Job Level has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H4o: Income does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H4a: Income has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H5o: Product does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H5a: Product has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H6o: Price does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H6a: Price has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H7o: Place does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H7a: Place has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H8o: Promotion does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H8a: Promotion has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H9o: People do not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H9a: People have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H10o: Process does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H10a: Process has a significant relationship with decision-making.

H11o: Physical evidence does not have a significant relationship with decision-making.

H11a: Physical evidence has a significant relationship with decision-making.

Literature Review

Consumer decision-making process

Essays (2015) interpreted the consumer decision-making process model of Kotler et al (2009). The five stages of consumer decision-making process start with need recognition occurring when consumers have a need of a product or service and after that, consumer starts searching for information surrounding the product (Essays, 2015). Once the information has been gathered, then the consumer will evaluate alternatives based on consumer's personal interpretation in this stage of evaluation of alternatives. At purchase decision stage, consumer will decide what they will purchase (Essays, 2015). And, at the final stage of purchase evaluation, consumers will evaluate their purchase decision after the product/service has been purchased.

Demographics

Choowong (2015) conducted the study of factors influencing the decision to study English through Facebook. The 400 respondents were randomly selected from the list of English teaching Facebook fan page as non-probability sampling. The results found that demographic factors including gender, age, education, occupation and income have an influence on decision to study English.

Chinokhiao (2013) found that gender, age, education, occupation, and income were the cause of different consumer behavior in using service from English language institutes in Pathum Thani province. The sample of this study was 400 respondents studying in the English language institutes in Pathum Thani.

Marketing mix elements

Many studies have shown that the marketing mix elements have an influence on decision-making in choosing a language school but the result of each study showed different degree of influence of each marketing mix element.

Viranuvat (2010) found that marketing mix factors affecting decision on studying in language schools in Prachinburi province. The place element highly affected while promotion and physical evidence moderately affected students' decision.

The result of the study of Maringe (2006) on university and course choice showed the implications for positioning, recruitment and marketing. It also showed that product, price, and place were the most important factors in determining students' choice.

Soedijat and Pratminingsih (2011) studied impacts of marketing mix on students' choice of university and found that product, process, people and physical evidence have the strongest correlation than promotion, place and price in students' choice of university.

Chaidacha (2015) also found that the factors affecting decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses in tutorial schools in Muang District, Chiang Mai. The people element highly affected decisions of undergraduate students on taking extra English courses followed by product, promotion, place, process, physical evidence and price.

Sankham and Hamra (2016) found in their study that physical evidence, product, process, price and place had a significant effect on students' decision making in their study on factors affecting students' decisions to study at Asia-Pacific International University.

Chuenboekban (2010) showed that process, product and promotion had high impact on decision-making of adult in choosing an English language course in his study on the relationship between marketing mix and adult decision-making in choosing an English language course in Bangkok.

Chinokhiao (2013) also determined the influence of marketing factors on the consumer behavior in using service from English language institutes in Pathum Thani Province and found that the people element was the most significant factor on consumer behavior in using service from English Language Institutes.

Eadkhao (2011) conducted the study on factors affecting the selection of Japanese language school in Bangkok and found that people element was the most influential factor followed by product, place, process, physical evidence, promotion and price.

Theoretical Framework

The study of Choowong (2015) was conducted to examine the demographic factors including gender, age, educational level, occupation and income, personal behavior on Facebook, marketing mix including product and price and technology acceptance and perceived usefulness and ease of use factors influencing the decisions to study English language through Facebook shown in

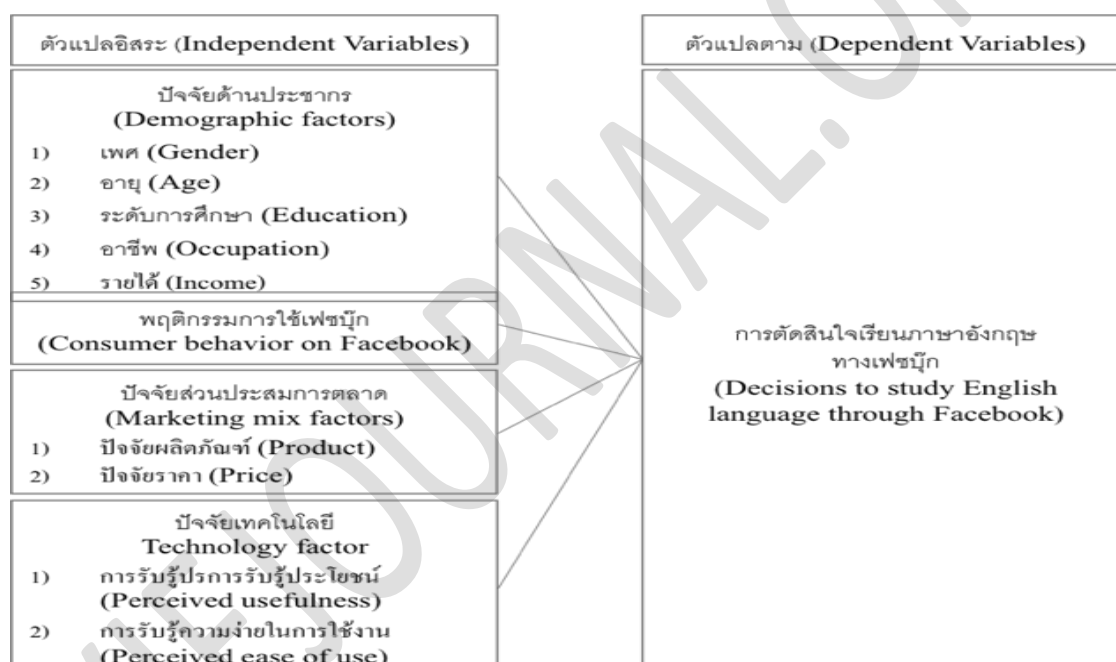


Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework

(Source: Choowong, 2015)

Chuenboekban (2010) presented the relationship between the seven service marketing mix consisting of product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence and decision-making of adult in choosing ECC, AUA and Wall Street as a language school. The study was conducted in Bangkok with both male and female respondents aged above 18 years old (Figure 2).

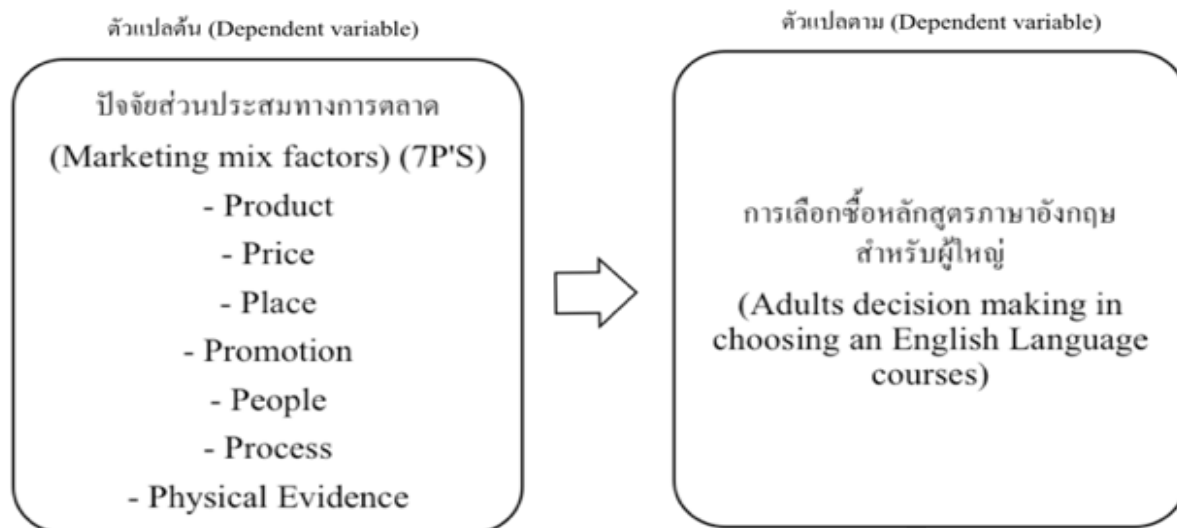


Figure 2. The Conceptual Framework

(Source: Chuenboekban, 2010)

The study of Sankham and Hamra (2016) examined the influence of personal factors including gender, religion, high school CGPA, parental monthly income, field of study and university recognition and service marketing mix factors consisting of product (curriculum), pricing (tuition fees), place (location), promotion (advertising), people (faculty and staff), process (service), and physical evidence (facilities) towards decision-making of undergraduate students who enrolled during the first and second semesters of the 2013/2014 academic year to study at AIU shown in Figure 3 below.

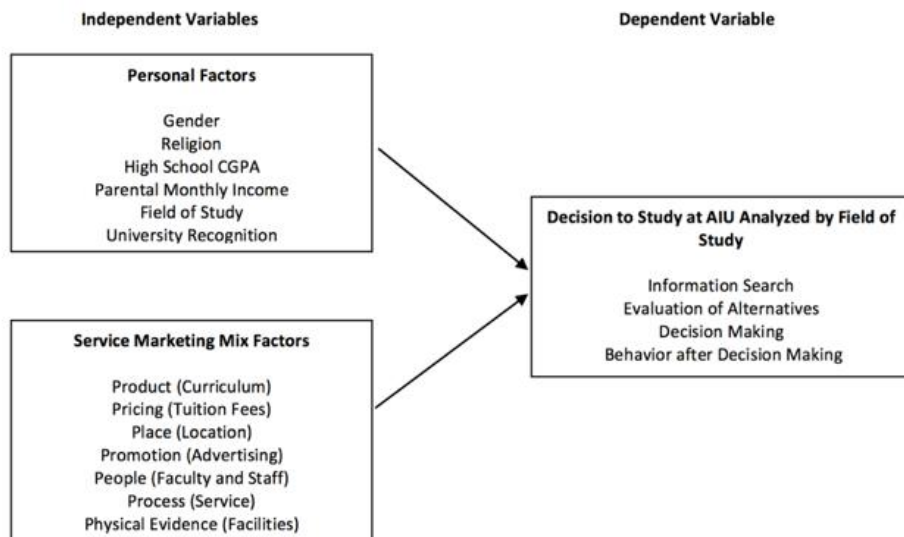


Figure 3. The Conceptual Framework

(Source: Sankham & Hamra, 2016)

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study has been developed from the above three theoretical frameworks (Figure 4). Demographic factors as independent variable in this study include age, income, occupation and degree of responsibility. Other independent variables include marketing mix elements include product, price, place, promotion, people, proess, and physical evidence. The dependennt variable is decision making in choosing a language school.

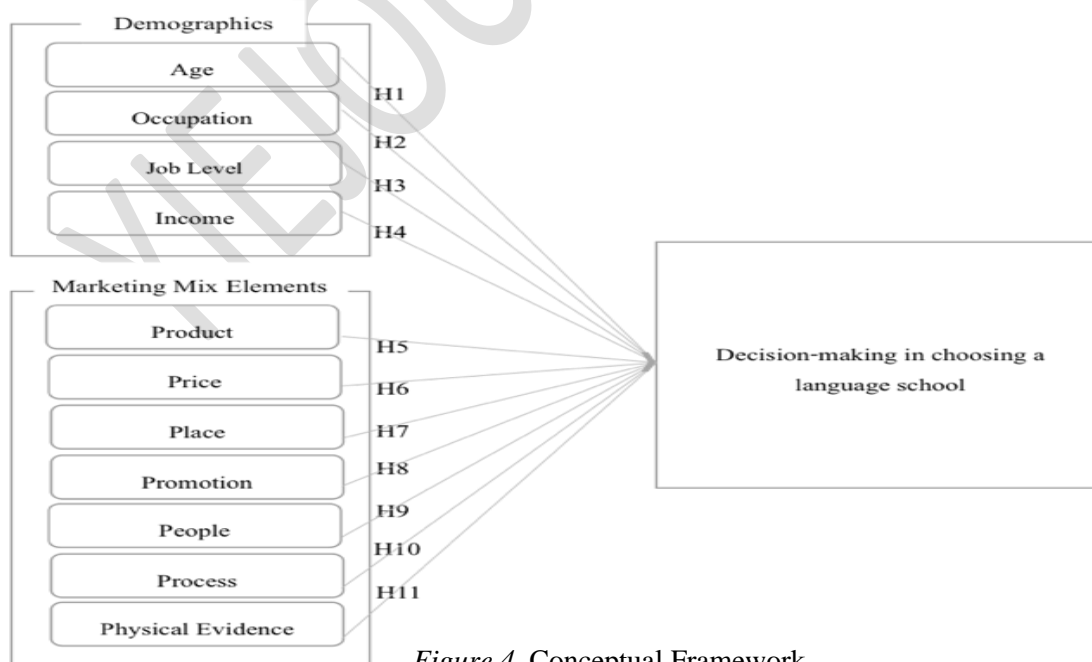


Figure 4. Conceptual Framework

Research Methodology

Methods of Research

Quantitative research was used to examine the influence of demographic factors and marketing mix elements on Bangkokian adults' decision-making in choosing a language school.

Sampling Procedures

The data for this study was collected from 400 Bangkokian adults aged from 18 to 60. Non-Probability Sampling was applied as a sampling procedure. The questionnaires were distributed to respondents by convenience and snowball sampling.

Research Questionnaire

This study used online and paper questionnaire with five-point Likert-type scales for independent variable (marketing mix elements) questions. The questionnaires consisted of three parts that were demographic factors, dependent variable and independent variables. 30 questionnaires out of 400 were firstly distributed as a pilot test to measure the reliability of questionnaire. Reliability of this questionnaire was measured by Cronbach's alpha, which is the most common measure of scale reliability (Field, 2005). Nunnally (1978) has indicated 0.7 to be an acceptable reliability coefficient. Reliability Analysis of this pilot test (Table 1) shows that the overall Cronbach's Alpha is .932 indicating an acceptable reliability coefficient. The reliability analysis of all independent variables exceeds 0.7 meaning these variables are reliable for further statistical analysis. The reliability of other variables are presented below.

Table 1.

Reliability Testing

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Product	4	.834
Price	4	.716
Place	4	.712
Promotion	4	.848
People	4	.883
Process	4	.839
Physical Evidence	4	.863
Decision-making	4	.828
All variables	32	.932

Data Collection Method

Online (Google form) and offline questionnaires were applied due to time limitation. 400 questionnaires from both offline and online platform were distributed to people aged from 18 to

60 living in Bangkok.

Statistical Treatment of Data

This research used a statistical analysis program to interpret raw data received from respondents. The hypotheses of this research were tested by statistical techniques, one-way ANOVA, correlation and multiple regression.

Data Analysis

Summary of Descriptive Analysis

The questionnaire of this study gathered 400 respondents based on the selecting sample size formula. Most of the respondents were female (70.5%). The majority of the respondents were aged between 29 - 39 years old. 76.8% of the respondents worked as private company employee and 60.5% of them work in the operational level. Most of respondents have incomes between 15,001 baht to 40,000 baht per month.

Table 2

Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Gender		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	282	70.5	70.5	70.5
	Male	118	29.5	29.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Age		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18 - 28 years old	156	39.0	39.0	39.0
	29 - 39 years old	201	50.3	50.3	89.3
	40 - 50 years old	43	10.8	10.8	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Occupation		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Government/State enterprise officer	25	6.3	6.3	6.3
	Private company employee	307	76.8	76.8	83.0
	Self-employment/Entrepreneur	26	6.5	6.5	89.5
	Student	42	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Job Level		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Advisory Level	75	18.8	18.8	18.8
	Middle Management Level	34	8.5	8.5	27.3
	Operational Level	242	60.5	60.5	87.8
	Top Management Level	7	1.8	1.8	89.5
	University Student	42	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Income		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	15,000 baht or under	38	9.5	9.5	9.5
	15,001 baht to 40,000 baht	247	61.8	61.8	71.3
	40,001 baht to 65,000 baht	71	17.8	17.8	89.0
	65,001 baht or over	44	11.0	11.0	100.0
	Total	400	100.0	100.0	

Summary of ANOVA Analysis

Table 3 shows that the significant value between demographic factors are higher than the statistical significant value of 0.05 so it can be interpreted that there is no statistically significant difference in decision-making in choosing English language school and the demographics.

Table 3

Summary of ANOVA Statistics

ANOVA					
Age	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.094	2	.047	.409	.664
Within Groups	45.371	397	.114		
Total	45.465	399			
Occupation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.398	3	.133	1.165	.323
Within Groups	45.067	396	.114		
Total	45.465	399			
Job Level	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.645	4	.161	1.421	.226
Within Groups	44.820	395	.113		
Total	45.465	399			
Income	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.247	3	.082	.720	.541
Within Groups	45.218	396	.114		
Total	45.465	399			

Summary of Correlation Analysis

Table 4 shows that all seven marketing mix variables' values are significant at 0.000. The level of correlation indicates that decision-making in choosing an English Language School has a positively strong relationship with people and process, a positively moderate relationship with promotion and product, and a weak relationship with price and place.

Table 4

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

Factors	Significant Value at 0.01 level (two tailed)	Level of Correlation	Correlation Coefficient
Product	.000	.561	There is a positively moderate relationship between product and decision-making.
Price	.000	.291	There is a weak relationship between price and decision-making.
Place	.000	.221	There is a weak relationship between place and decision-making.
Promotion	.000	.576	There is a positively moderate relationship between promotion and decision-making.
People	.000	.623	There is a positively strong relationship between people and decision-making.
Process	.000	.621	There is a positively strong relationship between process and decision-making.
Physical Evidence	.000	.370	There is a weak relationship between price and decision-making.

Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis

The significant values of product, promotion, people and process factors are at .000, lower than the significant level of 0.05 showing that these independent variables have statistical significance towards decision-making in choosing an English language school. However, another three independent variables price, place and physical evidence do not show any statistical significance as shown on Table 5.

Table 5

		Coefficients ^a					Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.269	.190		1.410	.159		
	Product	.191	.032	.222	5.939	.000	.679	1.473
	Price	-.035	.022	-.055	-1.571	.117	.771	1.297
	Place	-.006	.030	-.006	-.184	.854	.880	1.136
	Promotion	.263	.034	.279	7.763	.000	.740	1.352
	People	.250	.034	.282	7.350	.000	.645	1.550
	Process	.210	.034	.255	6.261	.000	.573	1.745
	Physical Evidence	.060	.031	.066	1.922	.055	.815	1.227

a. Dependent Variable: Decision-making

Model Summary of Multiple Regression

Hypotheses Testing

The results from multiple linear regressions analysis shows that H5a, H8a, H9a and H10a are supported, as they are all less than the significant value at 0.05. The rest hypotheses are rejected with higher significant value than .05. This could be concluded that product, promotion, people and process have positive influence on decision-making on choosing an English language school while age, occupation, job level, income, price, place, physical evidence do not have a positive influence in decision-making in choosing an English language school presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Hypotheses Testing Results

H(n)	Null Hypothesis	Status
H1o	Age does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H2o	Occupation does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H3o	Job level does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H4o	Income does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H5o	Product does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Rejected
H6o	Price does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H7o	Place does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Failed to reject
H8o	Promotion does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Rejected
H9o	People do not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Rejected
H10o	Process does not have a significant influence on decision-making.	Rejected
H11o	Physical evidence does not have a significant influence relationship on decision-making.	Failed to reject

Discussions and Conclusion

Demographics

There were four hypotheses regarding demographic factors that were tested and the analysis confirmed that demographic factors including age, occupation, job level and income do not have any influence on adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school. The result of this study does not support the previous study conducted by two Choowong (2015) in the topic of "Factors Influencing the Decision to Study English Through Facebook".

Product

From the analysis, product has an influence on adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school with the fourth rank of beta value at .222 among significant independent variables. The result supports the study of various researchers such as Chuenboekban, 2010; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012; Maringe, 2006; Sankham & Hamra, 2016; Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011; Viranuvat, 2010 influence is different.

Price

The statistical result of the study shows that price does not have an influence on adults' decision-making supporting the study of Chuenboekban (2010) that pointed out that price does not have an impact on the decision-making of adult in choosing an English language course. In contrast, this result does not support the study of several researchers (Chaidaecha, 2015; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012; Maringe, 2006; Sankham & Hamra, 2016; Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011; Viranuvat, 2010) since they presented that price has an influence towards decision-making.

Place

The statistical result shows that place does not have an influence on adults' decision-making. This result supports the study of Chuenboekban (2010) that states that place does not have an impact on decision-making of adult in choosing an English language course. On the other hand, this statistical result does not support the other researchers (Chaidaecha, 2015; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012; Maringe, 2006; Sankham & Hamra, 2016; Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011; Viranuvat, 2010).

Promotion

The statistical result of this study shows that promotion has an influence on adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school with the second rank of beta value at .279. The result supports various researchers (Chaidaecha, 2015; Chuenboekban, 2010; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012; Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011; Viranuvat, 2010).

People

The analysis showed that people is the most importance factor influencing adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school with the beta value at .282. The result supports the study of various researchers (Chuenboekban, 2010; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012) pointing out that people is the most influential factor towards decision-making. Moreover, this result also supports another research (Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011) shows that people has a strong correlation with students' choice of university.

Process

The statistical result of the study shows that process has an influence on adults' decision-making supporting the study of various researchers (Chaidaecha, 2015; Chuenboekban, 2010; Eadkhao, 2011; Embamrung, 2012; Sankham & Hamra, 2016; Soedijat & Pratminingsih, 2011) and the level of influence is the second similar to the study of Soedijat and Pratminingsih (2011).

Physical Evidence

The result of this research presents that physical evidence does not have an influence on adults' decision making in choosing an English language school supporting the study of Chuenboekban (2010) showing that physical evidence was rejected from their results.

In conclusion, product, promotion, people and process are factors influencing Bangkokian adults' decision-making in choosing an English language school. The most influential factors are people, promotion, process and product at the beta value at .282, .279, .255 and .222 respectively.

Recommendations

These findings could benefit the English language school to have a better understanding of the market in order to able to direct and continue the business. According to the findings, there is a need to focus on people, promotion, process and products.

In operating an educational business, the most important resources of course are instructors and service staff. The finding indicates that clients would consider the instructors and staff before making decision to study in a language school and they expect qualified and experienced native English speakers in teaching adults and also the service level from non-teaching staff or service staff. The school should give importance on recruiting and training teaching and non-teaching staff and on promoting the high-quality staff to potential clients.

When people of the school are ready to deliver the service, promotion is the second factor that the school should focus on. Promotion can be separated into two functions which are communication and sales promotions. From the findings, clients would prefer to see the school every often on advertising media and social network and having extra activities and events. Moreover, attractive sales promotion such as discount should also be offered.

To ensure efficient service is well delivered and meets students' expectation, the school should consider process as the third factor influencing decision-making. To encourage clients to make decision, the school should promote an orientation of the learning system, standardized

assessment tools throughout the course, learning aids throughout the course and the international standards of levels of target achievement.

The last indispensable factor is product element. Even product is not the most influential factors but it is a core element of the business that school has to focus on. Product from the findings of this study covers the offered courses that meet learners' purpose, the appropriate course length, the reputation and credibility of the school, and the certification and guarantee from the school. The school should also make sure that product goes along with the first three factors.

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