

Decision Making Model of Vietnamese Students Studying Higher Education in England

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Abstract

Universities in England are now paying more attention to the Vietnamese student market for purposes of campus diversity and recruitment. The primary purpose of this paper is to have a better understanding of Vietnamese students' motives and drives to study abroad. More specifically, this study targets students studying in a public research university in England. To examine Vietnamese students' decision-making processes for choosing a university, the research is conducted in two stages: focus groups and then structured interviews. Findings reveal that the primary reason why Vietnamese students want to study abroad is because of parents' demands and English higher education qualifications. Secondly, it is because they want to achieve better qualifications to improve job prospects. Students do not fully trust agencies; however, they receive the most significant amount of information from agencies and subsequently verify their information with friends, alumni, and other independent authorities. Regarding choosing a university, the first and most influential factor is tuition fees and living costs, followed by course modules. In general, students are satisfied with course modules and services at the university. Although the findings are limited to the sample respondents that were Vietnamese students at this particular university, they are useful for university management and international recruitment offices to improve services provided to students during the recruitment process. This study provides a better understanding of factors influencing Vietnamese international students' decision-making process.

Keywords: decision making process, international students, study abroad, Vietnamese, England

British universities are falling behind international universities in the world. The number of universities and colleges in England with a financial deficit has jumped by almost 70% in just one year (Rhodes, 2019). In real terms, the teaching budget for 2019/2020 is 74% below the 2011/2012 budget (Bolton, 2019). This is raising fears that the British universities' status among the global elite is decreasing (Busby, 2018). With the prospect of a bleak financial outlook and the continued drop in ranking, universities and polytechnics in England are seeking other sources of revenue such as international students. International students are defined as students who sought higher education outside their home country and hold temporary student visas (Andrade, 2006). International students in UK universities are charged higher tuition fees than the local students; as a result, international students contribute a considerable amount of money towards the funds (Binsardi & Ekwulugo, 2003) as well as contribute their talent and bring diversity to campuses (Rhodes, 2019). In 2017, international students contributed more than £25 billion to the economy (Universities UK, 2017). Many other countries have also undertaken various marketing and recruiting activities directed at international students. In 2016, there were over 4.8 million international students, up from 2 million in 2000 (Migration Data Portal, 2017). More than half of these were enrolled in educational programs in six countries: the US, the UK, Australia, France, Germany and the Russian Federation. The UK accounted for around 10% of these international students (Study International News, 2018).

Vietnam is emerging as a country and worth paying attention to. The number of Vietnamese students who choose to study abroad has been increasing gradually year by year. In 2018, approximately 130,000 Vietnamese students studied abroad and spent about USD 4 billion (Vnexpress, 2018). However, only 12,000 Vietnamese students were studying in the UK in 2018 (Ha Phuong, 2018), accounting for only a small percentage of these Vietnamese overseas students. The statistics suggest that the United Kingdom is not as attractive as other countries for Vietnamese students. To attract and to market to Vietnamese students, it is necessary for English universities to understand their perceptions and behaviors in order to attract them. The purpose of this study is to investigate factors influencing university enrolment decision-making processes of Vietnamese students. More specifically, this study will look at Vietnamese students at a public university in England. Privacy and discretion of participants are central to ethical research practice in social research (Wiles, Crow, Heath, & Charles, 2008). This study is a low risk study. However, every effort is made to ensure that the data cannot be traced back to the participants or "the university". To preserve anonymity and confidentiality we use pseudonyms for participants and also for the location of the research.

Literature Review

The decision to study abroad is complex and involves deep deliberation in all stages in the decision-making process. The literature identifies five stages: problem recognition, information search, alternative evaluation, purchase decision, and post-purchase behavior (Solomon, 2017). Most students have limited experience, if any, of overseas higher educational opportunities, so they are involved in extensive information searching (Rafi, 2018). Studying abroad also involves high costs such as tuition fees, living costs abroad, and reduction of savings (Cebolla-Boado, Hu, & Soysal, 2018), as well as cultural and physiological costs (Madden & McMillan, 2018). Hence, students extensively evaluate benefits they might gain during and after studying abroad and subsequently worry about progress and performance in the course (Petzold & Moog, 2018).

Perceptions and behaviors of students are different from country to country. Hence, it is not possible to apply one strategy to all markets (Ma & Garcia-Murillo, 2018). Although overseas students from Asian countries share similarities such as sharing the Confucian heritage and moving to another country with a different culture for study, it would be problematic if these students are seen as homogeneous (Norazlyn, Sweeney, & Soutar, 2016). For instance, Malaysian students are found to be more cost-sensitive than Chinese students and prefer to study in the UK, while the latter favored Australia (Norazlyn et al., 2016). For Singaporean students, the Singaporean dollar stayed strong against the Australian dollar and British pound over the last few years. As a result, more and more of the island country's citizens gained the means to study abroad in the latter two countries (Study International News, 2017).

Problem Recognition and Information Search

When students near the end of high school, they wonder what they want to do with their lives: continue their studies at a university, go to work, or travel. If other students talk about their university plans, this may trigger studying further (Chen & Zimitat, 2006). Parents, especially those from a wealthy and highly-educated background, also play a crucial role in inspiring and supporting students to study overseas (Hulstrand, 2017). Many studies also find that studying abroad is believed to increase job prospects, provide a better opportunity to improve their English language skills, and enhance their understanding of different cultures and traditions (Moogan, Baron, & Harris, 1999). Liwinski (2019) finds that Polish students studying abroad earn, on average, 22 percent more in their first job than those who never studied in a foreign country. Despite the pressure from the government, higher education institutions in Vietnam are unable to provide statistics of employment rates to ensure their graduates' employability (Tong, 2019).

Students primarily receive their information through commercial channels. For instance, recruitment agents can make students' choices easier and the application procedures simpler because they have a vast network to obtain information. However, students also worry that recruitment agents may give false or biased information (Rafi, 2018). University rankings are unbiased reviews from experts to provide students with reliable and comparable information about higher education institutions worldwide, helping them make well-informed choices (Hou, Morse, & Shao, 2012). Electronic sources of information such as forums, blogs, and social networks also play an essential role in the decision-making process of prospective Asian students (Zhu, 2019). Unlike British and European students, Asian students are rarely able to attend open days at universities before deciding which university to choose because of geographic distance, so they rely heavily on the Internet to receive direct information from universities (Marsden, Ibanez-Tirado, McMurray, Yusopov, & Halliel, 2019; Wilkins & Huisman, 2015).

Alternative Evaluation, Purchase Decision, and Post-Purchase Behavior

Medina and Duffy (1998) suggest that evaluative criteria to choose a university involve five primary dimensions: learning environment, reputation, graduate career prospects, destination image, and cultural integration. Students choose English universities because of their reputation; other reasons are the effective and efficient procedures of admissions and immigration, and the opportunity of finding a job while studying in England as well as back in their home countries (Sá & Sabzalieva, 2018). The influence of parents is especially true if they are paying for their children's education, and parents have an immense influence regarding this decision (Hulstrand, 2017). Other factors influencing students' choice of an English university include visa requirements by the UK Border Agency (UKBA), English proficiency,

and evidence of funding (Tannock, 2018). In terms of English proficiency, many empirical studies indicate that English proficiency is an important indicator of academic success for international students (Martirosyan, Hwang, & Wanjohi, 2015). English proficiency plays a crucial role for international students in completing their studies in English language as well as adapting with different educational systems, teaching styles, and relationships with teachers and friends (Martirosyan et al., 2015). For example, those with weak English language skills have poor academic performance because they do not understand well a course's requirements and lessons (Martirosyan et al., 2015). They are also more likely to be isolated from local students and faculty members (Jehangir & Khan, 2015).

Students' educational experiences with a university's academic programs and augmented services provided over the courses influence student satisfaction with the institution (Elsharnouby, 2016). Augmented services consist of administrative services, staff, physical characteristics of academic facilities, and social environment and advising support (Parahoo, Harvey, & Tamim, 2013). Among these augmented services, maintenance activities (i.e., housing, food, and clothing) and campus life (i.e., availability of social and recreational activities, library services, quality of classroom instruction) significantly influence international students' satisfaction (Elsharnouby, 2016). According to Solomon (2017), universities that score high in student satisfaction often have a competitive advantage through an enhanced reputation that aids in the recruitment of additional students. Satisfied students are more likely to communicate openly, make constructive and insightful suggestions to a university, maintain the relationships with their institutions after graduation, and be potential donors in the role of alumni (Parahoo et al., 2013). In contrast, dissatisfied students tend to leave the institutions quietly or share their negative experiences with their circle of friends (Eisingerich, Auh & Merlo, 2013).

Research Method

This study includes two stages: focus groups (qualitative) followed by structured interview surveys (quantitative). We followed the steps suggested by Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest, & Namely (2005) for focus group qualitative study. In this study non-probability sampling was used with Vietnamese students studying at a public research university in England. Focus group interviews were conducted to have a better understanding of the participants' decision-making processes. The focus group consisted of three males and four females. All participants were obtaining master degrees. The focus group sessions were conducted in English instead of Vietnamese and tape-recorded to avoid biases and inaccuracy. The discussions during focus group sessions were subsequently transcribed verbatim, summarized and grouped into five categories corresponding with the five stages of the decision-making process. These transcripts were analyzed to discover factors and explore themes, patterns, and relationships between factors to form the questionnaire for the structured interviews. For ethical reasons, participants' names and information are kept anonymous. The names mentioned in this study are fictional.

The questionnaire consisted of two main parts. The first part included demographic questions: gender, age, hometown, courses, and financial sources. The second part included identified variables from the focus groups arranged in the five stages of the decision-making process: problem recognition, information search, evaluation, purchase and post-purchase. Statements were measured using multiple-choice, a five-point Likert scale, and ranking. Thirty-three

Vietnamese students agreed and completed the questionnaire in the structured interviews. SPSS was used to analyze the data.

Findings

Qualitative Findings from the Focus Groups

Reasons to study abroad (Problem-Recognition Behavior). Participants note that the Vietnamese education system cannot satisfy their demand in knowledge provision and that the teaching style is passive and boring. Studying abroad is believed to help them gain international educational experience, working with lecturers, tutors, and international students from all over the world. Hence, to them, the Vietnamese labor market seems to favor those with foreign qualifications over those with local ones. Respondents' reasons to study abroad are summarized below:

- “I don't like the Vietnamese teaching style because it lacks communication between students and lecturers”.
- “I think the assessment in Vietnamese universities is unfair because sometimes when I took an exam, I knew about the questions in advance; teachers recycled questions from the previous years, so I can gain a very high mark without studying hard”.
- “I would like to learn some practical things instead of theoretical knowledge as in the Vietnamese education system”.
- “Studying abroad is one of the requirements of my university. To teach my undergraduate students, I, have to get a master degree from a foreign university within three years”.
- “In Vietnam, we don't have two kinds of classes like here (in England): lectures and seminars. We just have lectures in which lecturers keep speaking, and students keep listening”.
- “Vietnam is a developing country and there are an increasing number of foreign companies opening branches in Vietnam. So, if I study abroad, I can have better English and better qualifications to broaden my job opportunities in the future”.
- “The Vietnamese government wants to improve educational quality, so they give a lot of scholarships for students to study abroad”.
- “I think a lot of companies are willing to recruit students who studied abroad. So these students will have more job opportunities with higher salaries than those students studying domestically”.
- “My father really wants me to study abroad to gain the new experience from other foreigners such as living or working styles. He always asked me, "Why don't you study abroad like your friends?" He is willing to support me financially, so I think there is no reason for not going. But I chose where to go”.
- “If around you, a lot of friends study abroad, you also want to study abroad. You also want something similar to what your friends do. It gradually becomes a demand in your mind”
- “If I can pay more than 700 million VND to study abroad, I think I do not need to worry much about the living costs here. But I still want to have a part-time job because I want to socialize with British people to learn more about British culture and life”.
- “The Vietnamese education system is not as good as that in England. Not all international companies accept a Vietnamese degree, but with an English degree, we can apply for any company in the world”.

Information search about universities (Information Search Behavior). Focus group participants collect information from five main sources: friends, agencies, website/Internet, conferences, and university ranking tables. However, all participants consider information from friends the most reliable source. Some participants think that agencies can help save time and prepare profiles properly. Nevertheless, the participants do not fully trust the information provided by agencies because they perceive the information to be distorted to benefit agencies rather than students. Therefore, the participants double-check the information with alumni from the universities where they intend to go in order to compensate for this distortion. Respondents' answers to their source of information are summarized below:

- “At that time, some colleagues of mine already studied at this university and told me that this university is very good. I trusted them. Then I went to the official website of the university to search my course, read requirements, and apply for it. I did not compare this university with others. To me, university ranking is not important because I don't view the university's history important, but I care about its social life.”
- “I searched for information about education in England on the Internet, for example, in some forums”.
- “I searched Google to find some agents who could assist me to prepare documents to study in England”.
- “Moreover, I asked friends on Facebook who used to study in England regarding social life, teaching methods, campuses... On Facebook, I searched the phrase "Vietnamese Student Union in Sheffield", "Vietnamese Student Union in Birmingham", or "Vietnamese Student Union in Manchester" ...”.
- “I also attended several educational conferences to get information and communicate with alumni. Sometimes, I also submitted my CVs there, but I see that my profiles later are handled by an agency”.
- “After I finished my undergraduate degree, I didn't have much time to prepare my application profile and find information about universities in England”.
- “I tried one agency and it persuades me to study at the London Met, but when I came home and searched on the Internet, I received a lot of bad comments about this university. So, I thought this agency was not good. I did not choose the London Met and also changed to another agency. And it was lucky for me when I did not choose it because this university collapsed some months ago”.
- “So, I chose an agency recommended by my cousin. This agency made everything easier for me because they knew almost everything in England. They were very professional and had good relationships with universities in England”.
- “I think the most important source is from my friends because they are my friends and because they are studying there. They know exactly what happens in England, so they can tell me exactly about the social life or teaching styles are”.
- “When I was in Vietnam, I had very little information about what exactly happens here (in England). To me, ranking tables are one reliable source of information about how good a university is”.
- “It is quite convenient to have an agency's assistance. They provided me with information about the English requirements of universities in England, living costs in each city, especially a list of which universities were available for January intake because I started studying in January”.

Why do Vietnamese students choose England? (Alternative-Evaluation Behavior).

Compared to other countries such as the USA and Australia, England is a chosen destination because of its reputation in education, shorter time for studying, lower living costs and tuition fees, and lower English requirements. Other participants also note that they want to improve their English in England – the homeland of the English language and can travel to Europe easily during the summer holiday. Respondents' criteria to choose a university are:

- “I like the structure of modules and the program or courses at this university compared to others. The English requirement is also low, just IELTS 6.0”.
- “I want to study in an English-speaking country because I can improve my English much faster. It is good when this university accepts IELTS 6.0 but such low requirements may affect the quality of learning and teaching”.
- “I compare Australia to England. Both of them have a good reputation in education. However, I choose England because of several advantages. First of all, studying duration in England is less than in Australia. As you know, in Australia, one Master course lasts for one and a half year, so if I learn in England, I can save my money, save time. Second, the exchange rate from AUD to VND or from USD to VND increases; whereas due to Brexit, the exchange rate from GBP to VND decreases, so the total costs for studying in England seems cheaper than other countries”.
- “The agency gave me a list of universities based on my scores, budget, and interest, but I chose this university because my close friend is here. He had been studying in England for 3 months before I came here. I think he could support me when I study here”.
- “My father only wants me to study abroad at an affordable university with a good reputation. Choosing which country or university is my own decision”.
- “The first thing I am concerned with when I choose a university is whether it has an available course in January or not. I had to finish my work before I went to study, so I missed the September intake but I did not want to wait till the next September”.
- “I chose this university because my friends said that this university was more practical than some of the other universities. English requirements here are low also. It is good at the beginning for enrolment, but then it may affect the quality of the programs”.

Satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the current choice (Post-Purchase Behavior). In general, all participants are satisfied with this university. First, they enjoy the small class sizes with 25 or 30 students where they can interact more with fellow students and instructors; in Vietnam, classes have at least 60 or 70 students. Second, teaching methods at this university are more active and practical than in Vietnam with two kinds of classes: lectures and seminars, while Vietnam provides only lecture classes. Third, lecturers and staff are helpful, friendly, enthusiastic, sympathetic toward international students' English skills, and especially reply to inquiries promptly. Fourth, library, online databases (i.e. Library Gateway, Google Scholar, ebooks, ...), computers, or books at this university are considered to be better than in Vietnamese universities. However, some participants note that they are dissatisfied with course programs because the courses are not as practical as they thought and because there are a limited number of optional modules for January intakes compared to September intakes. In addition, some participants complain that there are too many Chinese and Vietnamese students rather than the diversity of students they were seeking. Satisfaction and dissatisfaction of the participants with this university can be summarized as:

- “Small classes with 20-25 students”.

- “One thing that I'm not really satisfied with is the program. I studied Bachelor in International Hospitality and Tourism Management and expected that I could get more real information, more knowledge, and more case studies at the Master course at this university; but when I came here, I just study, write, and read with all subjects which are not really new. I study what I already studied in the bachelor degree program. Nothing new”.
- “I know that the environment with too many Vietnamese students hinders my ability from speaking English. So when I study here, I want to choose a course which has only one Vietnamese student – that's me - in the class. I think I am happier than those students whose courses have more than 10 Vietnamese students. I want to learn more about foreign culture. It doesn't mean that Vietnamese students here are not good; it's just because I want to learn different things”.
- “I think our module looks quite practical, but honestly, it is not that practical. Like my friends, they study in Leicester; they have very good practical modules and long-term projects for finance-and-banking students. At this university, projects are mainly for marketing students”.
- “Our aim is to get practical knowledge to work after we finish the course, not to get a higher degree like a PhD but we don't have enough practical knowledge. It (the knowledge taught at this university) is just based on the books and articles. They are not practical things”.
- “There are quite a lot of Asian people, especially Chinese in my class. They always speak in Chinese. It's very difficult for us to communicate with them”.
- “I think the best place at this university is assets center (library). I have spent quite a lot of time here. I think the technicians and librarians support me quite well. The system sometimes has some small technical problems, but I think it is alright”.
- “There are too many Vietnamese students in my class. I feel that I am studying in a Vietnamese university, not an English university.”
- “I'm January-intake student in Finance and Banking. I see that a September intake has about five or six optional modules to choose, and those modules are very exciting, while my course has only two optional modules”.
- “I will consider a prospective student's ability first before I recommend this university to their friends and relatives. If he or she wants to gain practical knowledge and had an average ability and budget, I am willing to recommend this university. However, if he or she has a higher ability to study, larger budget, or want to gain better academic knowledge, I would recommend other universities with a higher rank in university ranking tables”.

Quantitative Findings from the Structured Interviews

The sample size was 33 people with over 90% between the ages of 22 and 28, and two thirds (63.64%) females. Almost all (97%) were studying for their master's with the remaining studying other qualifications such as bachelor's degree, PhD, or English certificates at this university. Approximately 85% of interviewees earned their last degree in Hanoi with the remaining from other provinces in Vietnam such as Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, or Can Tho, suggesting that the students in Hanoi seem to favor England more than students in other provinces. Nearly 80% were sponsored by their parents, indicating that financial support from families is very important. Finally, two-thirds of the respondents are studying in January intake.

Problem recognition. The data, as shown in Table 1, indicate that parents trigger the demand for studying abroad in students with 24.2% Strongly Agree and 60.6% Agree, while friends do not really influence at this stage (48.5% Disagree and 12.1% Strongly Disagree). English higher education qualifications are considered to be more valuable than Vietnamese qualifications (94% Agree and Strongly Agree).

Table 1: Reasons for the decision to study abroad

Statement No.		SA	A	UN	D	SD
1. The Vietnamese education system cannot satisfy my demand in knowledge provision.	n	5	12	9	7	0
	%	15.2	36.2	27.3	21.2	0
2. My company requires me to have a foreign higher education degree.	n	2	10	11	11	0
	%	6.1	30.3	30.3	33.3	0
3. English higher education qualifications are more valuable than Vietnamese qualifications.	n	17	14	1	0	1
	%	51.5	42.5	3.0	0	3.0
4. A lot of my friends study abroad, so I want to study abroad, too.	n	4	5	4	16	4
	%	12.1	15.2	12.1	48.5	12.1
5. My parents always encourage me to study further, especially studying abroad.	n	8	20	4	1	0
	%	24.2	60.6	12.1	3.0	0
6. I come of age to live independently from my parents and experience a new culture.	n	11	20	2	0	0
	%	30.3	66.6	6.1	0	0

Information search. Friends, Website/Internet, and Agencies appear to be the three most important sources with 81.8%, 75.8%, and 72.7% respectively. However, as demonstrated in Table 2, the difference between sources of information is minimal.

Table 2: Source of information for the decision to study abroad

	Friends		Agencies		Website/ Internet		Conferences		University Ranking	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	27	81.8	24	72.7	25	75.8	17	51.5	22	66.7
No	6	18.2	9	27.3	8	24.2	16	48.5	11	33.3
Total	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100

Table 3 shows that Tuition Fees/ Living Costs, Course Modules/ Programs, and Facilities are considered to be the most important criteria for the students seeking to study (84.8%, 87.9% and 87.9% respectively).

Table 3: Criteria for the decision to choose university abroad

	Tuition fees & living costs		Scholarship/ financial aids		Teaching methods		Course modules/ programs		Lecturers & staff		University reputation		Facilities	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	28	84.8	22	66.7	25	75.8	29	87.9	21	63.6	21	63.6	29	87.9
No	5	15.2	11	33.3	8	24.2	4	12.1	12	36.4	12	36.4	4	12.1
Total	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100

Alternative evaluation. The most influential factor for choosing a university in UK is the shorter duration of the master's degree programs compared to other countries (81.8% Strongly Agree and Agree), but tuition fees and living costs are not (48.5% Disagree and Strongly Disagree). This result agrees with the findings in the focus groups that finds England is chosen because of the duration of courses in England is less than that in other countries. Most of the participants agree that they choose England because of job prospects, English improvements, cultural experience, English requirements and travelling as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Reasons for the decision to choose an English university

Statement No.		SA	A	UN	D	SD
9. I want to improve my job prospects	n	20	13	0	0	0
	%	60.6	39.4	0	0	0
10. English qualifications are recognized over the world	n	12	19	2	0	0
	%	36.4	57.6	6.1	0	0
11. The duration for higher education programs in England is less than in other countries.	n	13	14	4	2	0
	%	39.4	42.4	12.1	6.1	3.0
12. Tuition fees and living costs in England are less than in other countries	n	1	8	8	13	3
	%	3.0	24.2	24.2	39.4	9.1
13. I want to improve English in the homeland of this language	n	16	12	5	0	0
	%	48.5	36.4	15.2	0	0
14. I want to experience Western culture	n	9	17	6	1	0
	%	27.3	51.5	18.2	3.0	0
15. English higher education requires only IELTS whereas other countries such as the USA require more certificates such as TOEFL, GMAT, or GREE	n	3	13	10	6	1
	%	9.1	39.4	30.3	18.2	3.0
16. I want to travel in Europe while studying in England	n	7	18	7	1	0
	%	21.2	54.5	21.2	3.0	0

The most important factor to choose this university is low tuition fees and living costs (87.9%), followed by interesting course modules (75.8%). The influence of friends is the least important factor (18.2%).

Table 5: Factors influencing students to choose this English university

	January intake		Interesting course modules		Practical teaching methods		Tuition fees & living costs		Requirement in IELTS		Scholarship & financial aids		My friends studying here	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	19	57.6	25	75.8	19	57.6	29	87.9	16	48.5	14	42.4	6	18.2
No	14	42.4	8	24.2	14	42.4	4	12.1	17	51.5	19	57.6	27	81.8
Total	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100

Purchase decision. This part examines who influenced students' decision to choose this public university. The data shown in Table 6 indicate that parents, friends and alumni are most influential with 48.50%, 54.50% and 33.30%, respectively.

Table 6: Individuals influencing a student to make this decision

	My parents		My friends		My other family members such as brothers, sisters, or cousins		My teachers		My boss		Alumni	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Yes	16	48.5	18	54.5	8	24.2	9	27.3	4	12.1	11	33.3
No	17	51.5	15	45.5	25	75.8	24	72.7	29	87.9	22	66.7
Total	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100	33	100

Post-Purchase Behavior. The findings shown in Table 7 indicate that Vietnamese participants do not like too many Chinese students in the class (78.8% Strongly Agree and agree). They also report that they want to have more Western students (45.5% Strongly Agree and 42.4% Agree). In general, this university has received very good feedback from participants, including suitable course (84.9% for Strongly Agree and Agree), helpful and friendly staff and lecturers (84.9% for Strongly Agree and Agree), good facilities (78.8% Strongly Agree and Agree), peaceful campus and nice local people (72.7% Strongly Agree and Agree).

Table 7. Students' satisfaction with their choice of this university

Statement No.		SA	A	UN	D	SD
19. The course program is very suitable for my ability	n	5	23	3	1	1
	%	15.2	69.7	9.1	3.0	3.0
20. Staff and lecturers are very helpful and friendly	n	6	22	4	1	0
	%	18.2	66.7	12.1	3.0	0
21. Facilities such as the library, computers, or books are very good	n	10	16	6	1	0
	%	30.3	48.5	18.2	3.0	0
22. This city is peaceful and local people are very nice and friendly.	n	7	17	5	2	2
	%	21.2	51.5	15.2	6.1	6.1
23. The course is not as practical as I expected	n	2	8	10	11	2
	%	6.1	24.2	30.3	33.3	6.1
	n	8	11	11	3	0

24. There is a limited number of optional modules for January-intake students (If you are a January-intake student)	%	24.2	33.3	33.3	9.1	0
25. There are too many Chinese and Vietnamese classmates	n	16	10	3	3	1
	%	48.5	30.3	9.1	9.1	3.0
26. I wish my class would have more Western students	n	15	14	4	0	0
	%	45.5	42.4	12.1	0	0

Discussion

Problem Recognition

Results from the focus groups and structured interviews reveal two important interdependent details. First, the Vietnamese educational system, employers' requirements, and preferences toward English qualifications over local qualifications trigger Vietnamese students to study abroad. Secondly, Vietnamese students believe that English qualifications can improve their job prospects. English language skills provide opportunities for exchange of cultures as well as travel while studying. These findings point to the fact that Vietnamese students prefer overseas education qualifications to local qualifications.

Nearly 80% of the participants studying at this university are sponsored by their parents. Results from the quantitative data indicate that parents strongly influence students to study abroad, but friends do not. Findings fully support the research of Hulstrand (2017) and Wadhwa (2016) regarding the role of parents, but challenge the research of Chen & Zimitat (2006) in terms of the role of friends. Hence, it is important to inform and communicate with Vietnamese students' parents as well.

Information Search

Results show that Vietnamese students seek information from many sources such as friends, agencies, website/Internet, conferences, and university ranking tables. The participants receive the largest amount of needed information from agencies, but check again with their friends and alumni from the universities where they want to study. Prospective students trust that the information coming from personal sources (friends, family) or public sources (student associations, university rankings) are independent and unbiased. This supports the findings of Rafi (2018) and Wadhwa (2016). They argue that friends and relatives are the primary sources of information used by prospective students followed by institutional coaching centers, the Internet, agents and education fairs. Hence, the university should have a close relationship with agencies and should build a strong alumni network for their significance to gain the trust of prospective students and support information from agencies.

Alternative Evaluation

Focus group results (stage 1) indicate several factors influencing the choice of England over other countries. These factors include worldwide-recognized qualifications, shorter course duration, lower tuition fees and living costs, the homeland of the English language, ease of application procedures, and ease of travelling around Europe. In addition, some participants mentioned Brexit, which caused the low exchange rate from GDP to VND, benefiting Vietnamese students to study and spend in England. Except for low tuition fees and living costs, results agree with the finding from the structured interviews. Hence, universities should

carefully review tuition fees and living costs in England compared with those in the USA and Australia to attract international students.

Reasons to choose this public research university over others in England are low tuition fees and living costs, practical teaching methods, January intakes, lower English requirements, a larger number of scholarships and financial aid, and friends currently studying at this university. From the structured interview results, low tuition fees/living costs are the two most important factors to choose this university. This suggests the university appeals more to Vietnamese students who are cost-sensitive. Respondents recommend this university to those prospective students who have average ability and limited budget. These findings are consistent with Wadhwa (2016) who found that tuition and institution fees, availability of scholarships and financial aid, and quality of faculty influenced students to choose a particular host institution. Lee (2014) also found that cost issues most influenced international students' decision-making processes whereas recommendation from others was the least important. This suggests that the affordability of the university appeals to the Vietnamese students who are cost-sensitive.

Post-Purchase Behaviour

The participants consider the quality of course modules much more critical than university services, given that the degree quality would positively affect their job prospects. However, they find it hard to evaluate the degree quality because they are still studying at this university and job prospects are in the future. Therefore, participants tend to examine their satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on the immediate environment or factors such as courses, lecturers, facilities, and classmates. This finding supports the outcomes of the Medina and Duffy (1998) study. In general, participants are satisfied with the university's course modules, library, local people and a peaceful city.

Lower English requirements are one of the reasons that participants choose this public research university, but such low standards may restrict Vietnamese students from participating in class and socializing with local people, leading them to isolation or mental problems. This finding is fully consistent with Martirosyan et al. (2015) and Jehangir and Khan (2015). In the long run, this issue may erode perceived satisfaction among students. Vietnamese students want to associate with more Western rather than Asian students to improve their English and cultural exchange; however, their courses are dominated by Chinese and Vietnamese students.

Conclusion

English university qualifications are perceived as more valuable than Vietnamese university qualifications. Also, the Vietnamese Dong has stayed strong against the British pound over the last few years, which makes British universities more affordable to Vietnamese students. English universities should take advantage of this point to promote higher education programs to Vietnamese students. English universities can not only attract students to England, but also export the programs to Vietnam through dual-degree programs with Vietnamese universities. Such a strategy would help some Vietnamese students solve some problems related to visa requirements, English proficiency and evidence of funding as requested by UK Border Agency. These dual-degree programs may also avoid brain drain and immigration issues in England after students' graduation.

As parents are the major sponsors for Vietnamese students to study abroad, marketing strategies should address both students and parents. The information provided by friends, alumni, or independent authorities such as university ranking establishments is more credible than commercial agencies. Therefore, English universities should build close relationships with alumni networks and build reputation and recognition from trusted independent authorities.

The two most important factors in choosing this university are low tuition fees and living costs. This university seems to attract students who are cost-sensitive with average ability. To attract more talented students, the university should provide more financial aid to students.

Regarding post-purchase behavior, the core benefit of English qualifications is job prospects. However, students find it hard to determine that while they are still studying. Hence, students tend to evaluate their satisfaction or dissatisfaction based on the surrounding environment. Students' observations include: course modules, financial, employment opportunities while in school and after graduation. Furthermore, students rely on well-informed advisors to help them adjust to course modules, the knowledge conveyed, teaching methods, and classmate diversity. In general, Vietnamese students are satisfied with course modules and services at this university. However, some students are worried about low requirements for English capacity for international students that may negatively impact their learning quality in higher education. They are also worried about social isolation from local students. Thus, pairing international and host students may assist international students to adapt to the new culture and learning methods better. Moreover, Vietnamese students have a desire to associate with Western students rather than Asian students (i.e., Chinese or other Vietnamese students) to improve their English and cultural exchange. Given this, universities may wish to implement a diversification strategy in student recruitment to provide a diverse student body of domestic and international students.

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