

A STUDY OF EXPECTATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THAI SELF-FUNDED STUDENTS EARNING MASTER'S DEGREES
IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1997 TO 2003

A MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
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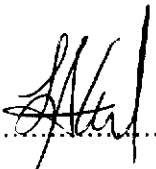
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for the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakarinwirot University

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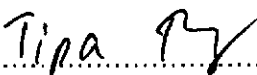
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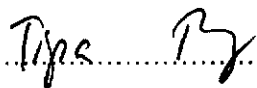

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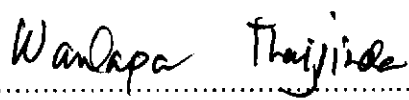
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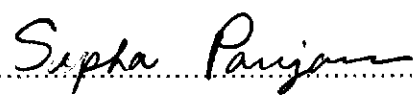
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

An early record of Thai students studying abroad is found during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, Rama V, who began his rule in 1868 and sent his children to study in the West. In 1887 the King asked one of his princes, Devawongse, to initiate a study of European forms of government and how European institutions might be fruitfully adapted to Thai political affairs. When his son acceded to the throne in 1911, King Vajiravudh, Rama VI, continued the practice of sending young men abroad for further education. Since that time, studying abroad was encouraged, and promising civil servants and military officers were sent to Europe for this purpose (Lakey. 1988).

Subsequently, young Thai men were sent to the United Kingdom to be trained in the skills and professions needed in all fields of public life in the hope that, on their return, they would be able to take over the programs started by foreigners and carry on economic development programs (Barry. 1967). The number of students going abroad has been increasing ever since. After World War II, this movement of students was directed mainly towards the United States (Barry. 1967: 2 ; citing Hall. 1961: 578). At present, there are at least 11,606 Thai students studying in the United States (Phupoksakul. 2003).

Statistics of students studying in the United States under the supervision of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) of Thailand as of September 30, 2003 show that there are 1,904 Thai government scholars studying in the United States (Online. 2003). Consequently, approximately 9,702 Thai self-funded scholars are studying in the United States or around 84% of the total number.

Thai graduates from universities in English speaking countries have played important roles in the Thai government and the private sector. Even though a serious statistical study has not been made to conclude that overseas education leads to greater professional accomplishment than local education, a study of Thai students in the United States, Barry (1967) points out that education abroad is considered a good investment and carries the promise of higher wages and better positions, especially in the private sector, on the student's return home.

The Education and Training Abroad Information Division, Office of the Civil Service Commission (OCSC) estimated the expenses for an academic year of study in the United States at 17,365 US\$ or 781,425 baht, the United Kingdom at 17,090£ or 1,097,178 baht and Australia at 30,230 Aus\$ or 768,749 baht (information as of July 12, 2002). This demonstrates that the cost of studying in the United States is cheaper than studying in the U.K. and nearly equal to Australia (The Office of the Civil Service Commission. 2002: Online).

According to the *Education in the USA 2003-2004 Handbook* (Professional Inter-education. 2004), U.S. education enjoys more popularity for its educational system than any other English-speaking country. This is supported by the record of the Commercial Service Thailand Office in 2003, which reported that there were 11,606 Thai students

studying in more than 670 schools and colleges in the United States, which was an increase of 3.7% from the academic year 2002. Thailand ranked 10th among the top 15 sending countries to the United States. Interestingly, over sixty percent of Thai students studied at the graduate level. This number included both students who were government scholars and self-funded scholars (Phupoksakul, 2003). The number of Thai students in the United States demonstrates the popularity and importance of higher education in the United States as seen from the Thai perspective.

Nowadays, Thai society is competitive. People compete against each other for grades, jobs and other career opportunities. McClelland et al. (1953) discussed the need for achievement, or an achievement motivation that creates the significance of study abroad (Bentham, 2002; citing McClelland et al. 1953). Achievement refers to the act of achieving or performing; an obtaining by exertion; successful performance; accomplishment of an individual's object (Hyperdictionary, 2004: Online). Bentham (2002) stated that motivation to achieve could result from either a need for competency or mastery (intrinsic orientation), or a desire to earn external rewards such as good grades, salary, position and praise (extrinsic orientation).

The participation in study abroad will contribute to professional and employment prospects. This expectation is considered one of the most important motives for students, who will be an important resource for the business world (Carlson; Oppen; & Teichler, 1990: 204). In this sense, *expectation* refers to the prospects of the future; grounds upon which something excellent is expected to happen; prospect of anything good to come (Hyperdictionary, 2004: Online). The expectations are particularly marked among students

of business. Graduate students expect that studying abroad will be useful for them in their future professions (Carlson; Oppen; & Teichler. 1990: 201).

Even though education at the graduate level in Thailand has been improving in recent years to serve the escalating academic demands of Thai students, it is evident that there remains a large number of Thai students who prefer studying abroad, especially, in the United States. Therefore, it is conceivable that Thai students studying abroad expect their future career paths to be rather higher than those of students studying in Thailand.

Further, Posey (2003) pointed out that the most often cited gains or benefits related to study abroad participation are in the areas of maturity, language proficiency, increased knowledge of a specific culture, and global-mindedness.

Study abroad programs commonly aim to advance respondents' academic qualifications, improve their foreign language proficiency and encourage the students' development. In many cases, this is connected with the expectation that qualifications and competences acquired in the study abroad will later prove useful in the graduates' careers (Carlson. 1986).

Graduate study requires a great deal of time and money. Therefore, graduate study is considered an investment. Before the investor comes to a decision on any study projects, it is important to thoroughly evaluate the return on investment. Studying abroad is a costly endeavor and should be a valuable investment (Barry. 1967). Studying in the United States or other Western country has a higher cost than studying in Thailand. Especially after the economic recession and the depreciation of the baht in 1997, Thai students must plan and evaluate the outcomes of their degrees. In this sense, studying

abroad after the year 1997 means greater expense (investment) for a graduate degree which the students expect to bring them greater returns on their investments.

The primary focus of this study is on Thai self-funded students doing graduate level study in the United States after 1997. A comparison of these students' expectations prior to leaving Thailand to pursue their Master's degrees in the United States and their actual achievements subsequent to their return to work in Thailand were investigated. The investigative tool is a questionnaire. The respondents of this study were selected by the *judgment sampling method*. The respondents were thirty Thais who obtained Master's Degrees in the United States between 1997 and 2003. The survey respondents were residents in the Bangkok metropolitan area.

Research Questions

This research sought to answer the following questions:

1. What are the expectations of Thai self-funded graduate students toward graduate study in the United States before going to the United States?
2. What are the achievements of Thai self-funded graduate students after they obtain a Master's Degree in the United States and return to work in Thailand?
3. What is the profile of the Thai self-funded graduate students whose expectations most closely matched their achievements?

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide a number of clear and useful insights into Thai self-funded students who seek to obtain their Master's degrees in the United States.

To be more precise, the results of this study will benefit prospective Thai students who would like to study abroad in terms of setting up viable and practical goals. Further, the results will be useful for other agencies including governmental organizations, parents or students' family members that might consider a Master's Degree from the United States as an important qualification. The results of this study will also be useful for further research on study abroad, particularly in the United States. This may focus on other academic levels such as international high schools, the undergraduate level and the doctoral level.

Scope of the Study

1. The respondents of the study included 30 Thai self-funded graduate students, who recently received their Master's Degrees in the United States and returned to Thailand.

2. The respondents of the study studied in the United States in the academic years between 1997 and 2003, i.e. after the economic downturn of 1997 in Thailand.

Definition of Terms

Terms employed in this research paper shall have the following meanings:

Graduate student refers to Thai men or women who started and completed their Master's Degree programs in the United States during the academic years of 1997 and 2003, and at the time of this study have jobs in Thailand.

Graduate study refers to the study that follows the completion of undergraduate education at the 4-year Bachelor's degree level. Graduate study leads to the Master's or Doctoral degrees or first professional degrees such as law (J.D.), medicine (M.D.), and dentistry (D.D.S.). A Master's Degree generally requires one or two years of full time study, but three-year Master's Degree programs exist. This study focuses only on the Master's Degree level.

Expectation refers to the professional or employment goals that Thai self-funded graduate students believed would follow their Master's Degrees in the United States in terms of salary, job opportunities, career advancement, type or size of firms or organizations to work for, position and level of authority, promotion and skills such as English competency, communication skills and self-confidence.

Achievement refers to the real professional or employment positions that the Thai self-funded graduate students obtained after returning to work in Thailand. The achievements in this study are in terms of salary, job opportunities, career advancement, type or size of firms or organizations to work for, position, promotion, social acceptance and level of authority.

Government scholars refer to Thai graduate students receiving educational scholarship from the government of Thailand or Thai governmental organizations or agencies. These scholarships must be repaid by the students with varying numbers of years of service to the Thai government.

Self-funded scholars refer to Thai graduate students whose education is paid for by themselves, their families or by scholarships, loans and/or grants from sources other than Thai governmental organizations or agencies.

Upper class, upper middle class, middle class, and lower class refer to the economic statuses of the families as perceived by the respondents themselves. The respondents' perceptions of family economic status are sufficiently accurate to characterize this demographic factor for the purpose of this study.

Types and sizes of companies are also left to the perceptions of the respondents.

Precise definitions of company types and size are not central to this study, only whether or not the respondents achieved their own expectations. However, the following are offered by way of example. **A large international company** might be a firm such as General Motors or Sony. **A large Thai company** might be a firm such as CP or Siam Cement. **A medium-sized international company** might be a firm such as Standard Chartered Bank or Betagro. **A middle-sized Thai company** might be a firm such as Loxley or Minor Group. **A small-sized international company or a small-sized Thai company** might be firms that are not immediately recognized by most observers.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter explores the importance of graduate education, goals of study abroad, the benefits of study in the United States, general information for studying in the United States, learning theory as applied to study abroad focusing on motivation, expectation and achievement, and finally previous research concerning expectation and achievement.

1. Importance of Graduate Education

Education is considered a key instrument that can assist individuals and institutions in shaping their destinies (Kearney; & Ronning. 1998).

As Thailand moves forward into the globalization age with a competitive environment that is changing dynamically, higher education is playing an important role in the society (Shawyun. 1999).

The goals and objectives of higher education in Thailand were stated in 1974 by the Committee for Establishing the Framework for Educational Reform, and refined in 1978, and are as follows:

1. The full development of intellectual abilities which facilitate the advancement of technology and the progress of mankind.
2. The production of professional manpower capable of expanding social development.

3. The dissemination of knowledge for the benefit of the community by serving as an academic resource center.

4. The preservation of the cultural and artistic heritage, and

5. The development of persons in terms of morality and ethics so that they will contribute a worthwhile life to society (Vibulpraphan. 2002; citing Office of the National Education Commission. 1978).

The Ministry of Education in Thailand addressed the importance of graduate education and noted that this study level aims to promote learners' specialized knowledge and skills, to strive for academic progress and excellence, especially in studies, research and development of knowledge and technology in science, humanities and social sciences, and to facilitate the adoption of modern technology and local Thai wisdom for economic and social development (Online: 2004).

The Master's Degree is designed to provide additional education or training in the student's specialized branch of knowledge, well beyond the level of a Bachelor's Degree. Master's Degrees are offered in many different fields, and there are two main types of programs: academic (often awarded in the traditional arts, sciences, and humanities disciplines, such as Master of Arts: M.A., and Master of Sciences: M.S.) and professional (often designated by specific descriptive titles, such as Master of Business Administration : M.B.A., and Master of Education: M.Ed.) (The U.S.Department of State: Bureau of Education & Cultural Affairs. 2003: 13).

In brief, the importance of higher education, above the Bachelor's Degree level, is an increasingly necessary qualification in Thai working society today.

2. Goals of Study Abroad

According to Posey (2003), there are goals and intended outcomes of study abroad. The hopes that are tied to study abroad include academic and language gains, employment opportunities, and psychosocial growth and development in students.

Loh et. al. (1995) cited by Shawyun (1999) highlighted some of the values of study abroad such as monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits, career opportunities, career stability, acceptance in the social community, respect in the social community, and self-fulfillment.

In this research, all values mentioned in the two previously cited studies were combined into six categories in the questionnaire in order to compare respondent expectations prior to graduate study in the United States and respondent achievements after returning to Thailand. The six factors consisted of monetary values (salary) and monetary benefits; career opportunities and position; career stability, promotion and advancement; acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community; self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity); and academic gains and language competence.

Pimpa (2001) found that social competition strongly influenced all Thai students' decisions to study abroad, and their choices of academic courses. His research revealed that many Thai postgraduate students, particularly those with business backgrounds, referred to competition in the workplace which compelled them to do an overseas MBA or Master's of Commerce or Business. Master's Degrees abroad play a very important role when people talk about better job opportunities.

As far as student expectations with regard to study abroad are concerned, choosing a field of specialization turns out to be important. When students who are strongly wedded to the idea of study abroad finally do carry it out, their foreign language abilities improve substantially, their views on higher education in the host country is more positive after the sojourn, and they believe that the study abroad experience will be useful to their careers (Carlson; Oppen; & Teichler. 1990: 202).

Since Thailand began to seriously enter the international educational market, the country has undergone a number of changes. According to Thai International Education Consultants Association (2004), reported the obvious effects of globalization, and the fact that the Internet, in English, now links the entire world in real time making study abroad an absolute necessity and prerequisite for professional success and financial security.

Over the past decade, the growth in the number of Thai students studying abroad has been increasing. International education has played an essential role in Thailand in recent years. Thai International Education Consultants Association (2004), reported that many Thai students chose to go abroad to continue their education every year. This is due to economic expansion, the demand for a higher quality workforce, and the widely held perception that overseas qualifications are better and more prestigious. Above all, fluency in English – the international language – is vital for success in almost any career. Although Thailand suffered an economic setback in 1997, the number of Thai students going aboard will continue to grow as the labor market becomes more competitive, demanding higher skills, better qualifications and more competent employees who are proficient in English. All the signs now indicate that the economy is back on track and this

means that the number of young Thais studying abroad can be expected to rise exponentially (Thai International Education Consultants Association. 2004).

Although the above goals are only a small sampling of goals and intended outcomes of study abroad, one can clearly see the ambitious hopes that are tied to study abroad participation including academic and language gains, employment opportunities, and development in students (Posey. 2003).

3. Benefits of study in the United States

There are a number of features that make U.S. education so beneficial and popular. The U.S. Department of State: Educational Information and Resource Branch (2003) states that the major reasons to study in the United States consist of quality, choice and value. The United States educational institutions are known worldwide for their quality programs, faculties and resources. Also, the United States education system offers an unrivalled choice of institutions, academic and social environments, entry requirements, programs of study, and subjects in which a student can specialize. Additionally, as an investment for the future, studying in the United States offers excellent value for money. A wide range of tuition fees and living costs, plus some financial help from colleges and educational organizations, has made study in the United States affordable for thousands of students.

The U.S. Department of State: Bureau of Education & Cultural Affairs (2003) reports that there are several reasons that are advantageous for graduate students to study in the United States. Although travel of any kind is both exciting and informative, studying outside one's home country offers unique possibilities. It allows students to

completely immerse themselves in a new environment, receive exposure to new learning techniques and perspectives, and associate with people from various cultures. This can lead the students a new understanding of international political, social, and economic issues. In addition, studying abroad develops personal self-confidence, cross-cultural awareness, and open-mindedness to new ideas and values. Employers worldwide consider these important assets.

In brief, there are a number of benefits that make U.S. education popular. These include the quality of the education system, the broad choice of academic and social environments, and excellent value in terms of one's investment for the future.

4. General Information for Studying in the United States

Graduate Education in the United States

The Institute of International Education (IIE) reported (2003) that there were 586,323 international students worldwide who came to the United States to study at more than 3,000 accredited colleges and universities throughout the country in 2002-2003. Forty-two percent of these students came from East Asia and the Pacific. The number of foreign students increased by 6.4% compared to the academic period of 2000-2001. With approximately 11,606 Thai students in the U.S. in 2003, Thailand ranked 10th among the top 15 sending countries. Enrolling in over 675 different universities in the U.S., Thai students make up a major contingent of the foreign student population in U.S. colleges and universities. Higher education is one of the leading exports of the United States and brings in nearly \$12 billion to the U.S. economy.

In a recent study, the USA and the UK were the first choice study destinations. The USA was the first choice destination for 49 percent of the survey respondents and the UK for 32 percent of international students (British Council. 2003).

A Master's Degree program in the US usually requires the completion of between 30 and 60 credits and could reasonably be completed in one or two academic years of full time study. The length of time taken to complete the degree varies considerably between programs: from 12 to 24 months for a Master's Degree (Bureau of Educational & Cultural Affairs, U.S. Department of State. 2003).

In summary, the United States is the first choice study destination for the largest number of international students and the number of students who choose to study in the United States has been increasing. Study in the U.S. is also popular among Thai students.

5. Learning Theory as Applied to Study Abroad

In this section, needs, drives and incentives, major components of motivation, are studied. Needs, drives and incentives create expectations. These expectations lead students to perform in order to achieve their goals. It is important to study a strategy to fulfill expectations. The satisfaction of expectation is called achievement.

Motivation

Motivation is one of the major theories being used to study human behavior. Cohen (1990) defines motivation as something that drives people to do what they do. Motivation is a basic psychological process. Many people equate the causes of behavior

with motivation. Along with perception, personality, attitudes, and learning, motivation is presented as a very important process in understanding behavior.

Motivation has various definitions. One or more of the following words are included in the definitions: desires, wants, wishes, aims, goals, needs, drives, motives and incentives. Technically, the term *motivation* can be traced to the Latin word *movere*, which means *to move*. This meaning is evident in the following comprehensive definition: motivation is a process that starts with a physiological or psychological deficiency or need that activates a behavior or drive that is aimed at a goal or incentive (Luthan. 1998).

As with many motivations, individuals will differ on the extent to which they possess a certain need or motivation. Therefore some individuals can be said to have a high achievement motivation and to be driven to succeed, to outperform others and to take on increasingly demanding challenges. Others who might have less of a need to achieve might be content just to get by (Bentham. 2002).

Expectation and Achievement

A social theory that competes to explain what determines expectation and achievement is the *bottom-up theory*. The bottom-up theory states that individuals have needs (expectations) and they will be satisfied if their needs (expectations) are achieved (Diener. 1999).

Maslow's Hierarchical Model of Human Needs can be used to identify the factors affecting individuals' expectations and achievements. The model states that individuals experience a hierarchy of needs, from lower to higher level psychological needs (Bentham. 2002).

Maslow's model can be used by individuals to develop a sense of achievement in their lives if they utilized a bottom-up perspective. Safety is an example of a lower level need; it helps explain the effects of job security and pay on life achievement. Moving up the hierarchy, individuals also have social needs; for affection, belonging and acceptance. The highest need in Maslow's hierarchical model is self-actualization. Self-actualization and self-esteem are related to the sense of inner reward that some individuals experience in working life. In addition, self-actualization is believed to be one of the principal factors motivating people to form their effective profile (Diener. 1999).

Needs set up drives aimed at incentives; this is what the basic process of motivation is all about. In a system sense, motivation consists of these three interacting and interdependent elements:

1. Needs. Needs are created whenever there is a physiological or psychological imbalance. For example, a need exists when cells in the body are deprived of food and water or when the personality is deprived of other people who serve as friends or companions. Although psychological needs may be based on a deficiency, sometimes they are not. For example, an individual with a strong need to get ahead may have a history of consistent success.

2. Drives. With a few exceptions, drives, or motives (the two terms are often used interchangeably), are set up to alleviate needs. A physiological drive can be simply defined as a deficiency with direction. Physiological and psychological drives are action-oriented and provide an energizing thrust toward reaching an incentive. They are at the very heart of the motivational process. The examples of the needs for food and water are

translated into the hunger and thirst drives, and the need for friends becomes a drive for affiliation.

3. Incentives. At the end of the motivation cycle is the incentive, defined as anything that will alleviate a need and reduce a drive. Thus, attaining an incentive will tend to restore physiological or psychological balance and will reduce or cut off the drive. Eating food, drinking water, and obtaining friends will tend to restore the balance and reduce the corresponding drives. Food, water, and friends are the incentives in these examples (Luthan. 1998:162).

It is important to realize that there is a deficiency, or need; this would trigger a drive activity or a tendency to behave in such a manner or as to reach the goal stimulus which in turn would reduce the need. This theory would make sense when talking about physiological needs such as why we eat. As well, it would make sense in applying psychological needs such as the need for affiliation or achievement. LeFrancois (1997) notes that, whereas physiological needs can be satisfied, psychological needs are never completely satisfied (Bentham. 2002; citing LeFrancois. 1997).

Expectations are the beliefs that a person holds and are the direct result of all the thinking that a person has or has not engaged in. Beliefs are latent forces buried deep in the confines of one's mind. Beliefs, in turn, create expectations about results and future outcomes. Expectations are active forces at work in one's mind and their expression determines one's behavior. Expectation is different from achievement as achievement is the expectation that is fulfilled and satisfied (Doyle. 2003).

As Thai society has become more competitive, students compete against each other for grades, jobs, positions and partners. Harter (1981) explains that motivation to achieve could result from either a need for competency or mastery (intrinsic orientation), or a desire to earn external rewards such as good bonuses, prestige, promotions and advancement (extrinsic orientation).

Although some theories have been developed specifically for application to the study abroad experience, many authors have suggested that there might be some validity to the qualitative claims of positive gains from study abroad participation.

6. Previous Research

Research from various sources related to this study has been collected and is presented below.

A Study by Barry (1967) dealt with students from Thailand furthering their education in the United States. Barry pointed out that Thailand was a country that toiled to maintain a deeply cherished freedom, independence, and a sense of national identity; a developing country trying to cope with the problems of a rapidly expanding world. It is, in a way, an island whose habitants visit other shores to seek some essential elements that will make it possible for their own natural resources to bloom into an economy sufficient to sustain a decent life for all (Barry. 1967).

Posey (2003) investigated educational and employment outcome differences between study abroad participants and non-participants. The study found common characteristics among gender, race, and high school academic achievement for study abroad participants. Several significant associations were found particularly for

educational outcomes. For example, 93.2% of study abroad participants received some type of degree compared to only 64% of the non-study abroad group. The study abroad group also had a high mean college GPA of 3.19 compared to the 2.74 for the non-study abroad group.

Studies of graduates have found that undergraduate grades and admission test scores are related to success in graduate school but have no relation to later career success (Centra; & Clark. 1975; citing Campbell; Crooks; & Rock. 1979). Personal characteristics, on the other hand, did affect career progress for graduates (Centra; & Clark. 1975; citing Harrell. 1969).

A major finding in a study by Carlson; Opper; & Teichler (1986) found that study abroad programs commonly aim to advance participants' academic qualifications, improve their foreign language proficiency and encourage the students' personal development by challenging them with unfamiliar cultural experiences. The expectation that study abroad will contribute positively toward achieving professional goals was pointed out in this research.

All people are different and these differences lead to different needs. Since needs drive people's behavior, understanding individual needs is one of the key success factors for helping to motivate people to willingly perform the necessary tasks in order to achieve their goals. Human needs can be grouped into five categories: need for achievement, need for power, need for affiliation, need for security and need for status (Luthan. 1992; citing Yukl. 1987).

Ploysuwan (2001) pointed out that students have the highest need for affiliation, followed by the needs for security, achievement, status and power respectively. Students with ages ranging from 25 to 30 years have the highest needs for achievement. Further, students who have GPAs for their Bachelor's Degrees equal to or higher than 3.25, have higher needs for achievement than other groups.

These studies and other literature cited in this chapter underline the importance of graduate education, the goals of study abroad, the benefits of study in the United States. Learning theory as applied to study abroad helps to establish a better understanding of expectations and achievements of students. These principles and theories form the foundations of this present research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the subjects, or respondents, of the study, as well as the procedures to collect and analyze the data are described. A quantitative approach and analysis was used in the study. The primary data came via a survey using a questionnaire.

Subjects of the study

Thirty Thais participated in this study. These 30 respondents were friends, colleagues or associates of the researcher as well as other individuals known to those friends or colleagues. They were chosen based on the following criteria: 1) they completed a Bachelor's Degree in Thailand, 2) they completed a Master's Degree in the United States, 3) they were self-funded scholars in the United States, 4) they completed their Master's Degrees during the academic years 1997-2003 after the economic downturn, and 5) they returned to Thailand and are employed in the Bangkok metropolitan area at the time of this study.

The sampling method used in this study is the *judgment sampling method* as defined by Cooper and Schindler (2003), i.e. as a sample that conforms to certain criteria.

Procedures of the study

Survey Research

A survey of 30 respondents was conducted using a questionnaire. Data collected were reviewed and analyzed quantitatively to define and compare the expectations and achievements of Thai self-funded graduate students who obtained Master's Degrees in the United States. Finally, the profile of the Thai self-funded graduate students whose achievements on return to Thailand most closely matched their expectations prior to departure for study in the United States was determined.

Research Tool

The basic research tool is a questionnaire divided into five parts:

1. Personal information
2. Educational background in Thailand
3. Master's Degree program in the United States
4. Employment expectations of the respondents before leaving to study in the United States.
5. Current jobs and employment achievements after the respondents returned to Thailand. (See Appendix A.)

Data Collection

The survey was conducted between December 2004 and February 2005. The questionnaires were sent to 30 Thais who conformed to the criteria of the study.

Data Analysis

The thirty questionnaires were collected from the respondents in order to analyze their personal information, educational background in Thailand, Master's Degree program performance in the United States, current jobs and responsibilities, and expectations and achievements before and after their Master's degree programs in the United States. The questionnaire was designed to compare the expectations of Thai students before leaving to study in a Master's degree program in the United States with their achievements after they graduated and came back to start their working lives in Thailand.

Posey (2003) described the outcomes of study abroad including academic and language gains, employment opportunities, and psychosocial growth and development in students.

Loh et. al. (1995) cited by Shawyun (1999) highlighted the values of study abroad such as monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits, career opportunities, career stability, acceptance in the social community, respect in the social community, and self-fulfillment.

The two previously cited studies were selected and combined into six values in the questionnaire in order to compare respondent expectations prior to graduate study in the United States and respondent achievements after returning to Thailand. The six values consisted of monetary values (salary) and monetary benefits; career opportunities and position; career stability, promotion and advancement; acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community; self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity); and academic gains and language competence.

Each value was analyzed and compared to other values to find the relationships between those values. The researcher studied the correlation between the personal information and achievements in the Master's degree, the education background in Thailand and achievements in the Master's degree, the Master's degree program and achievements in careers, and finally, expectations were compared to achievements.

Basic statistic principles i.e. percentages and ratios were applied to this study. The findings from the data analysis are presented in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings obtained from the questionnaire. The findings of the study are presented in tables calculated in percentages.

The findings are divided into five parts as in the questionnaire. The first part presents personal information. The second part presents the educational backgrounds of the respondents in Thailand. The third part presents their performance in their Master's Degree programs in the United States. The fourth part presents the employment expectations of the respondents before leaving to study in the United States. The last part presents the employment achievements after the respondents returned to Thailand. The fourth and the fifth parts are joined in this chapter so as to compare the expectations and the achievements of the respondents.

Summaries and comments on the data gathered are presented after each table below.

I. Personal Information

This part presents the demographic information on the thirty respondents: age, gender, family economy status, and place of origin.

TABLE 1 AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	Number of students	Percentage
25 or under	3	10.00
26-30	7	23.33
31-35	17	56.67
36 and over	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 1 shows that 56.67% of the respondents were in the age group 31-35 years old, and 23.33% were in the age group 26-30. The remaining 20% were divided equally between the age groups 25 or under and 36 and over.

TABLE 2 GENDER OF THE RESPONDENTS

Gender	Number of students	Percentage
Male	15	50.00
Female	15	50.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 2 demonstrates that 50% of the respondents were male and 50% were female.

TABLE 3 FAMILY ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Family Economic Status	Number of students	Percentage
Upper Class	3	10.00
Upper Middle Class	9	30.00
Middle Class	18	60.00
Lower Class	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Sixty percent of the respondents perceived themselves to be in the middle class, 30% in the upper middle class, and the remaining 10% in the upper class. None classified themselves as being from the lower class.

TABLE 4 PLACE OF ORIGIN OF THE RESPONDENTS FROM THE QUESTION, "WHERE DID YOU GROW UP?"

Place of Origin	Number of students	Percentage
Metropolitan Bangkok Area	27	90.00
Large City	3	10.00
Provincial Town	-	-
Small Rural Village	-	-
Total	30	100.00

From Table 4, it can be seen that 90%, or the large majority of the respondents, were from the metropolitan Bangkok area. The remainder were from large cities.

2. Bachelor's Degree Program in Thailand

This part of the questionnaire defines the Bachelor's Degree programs of the respondents in Thailand before leaving to the United States for their Master's Degrees. It also identifies the TOEFL test scores of the respondents before admission to universities in the United States.

TABLE 5 NAME OF UNIVERSITY OF THE BACHELOR'S DEGREE, FACULTY AND MAJOR COURSE, AND TYPE OF UNIVERSITY
(GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY)

No.	Name of University	Faculty	Major Course	Government	Private
1	Chiangmai University	Business Administration	Management	1	
2	Chulalongkorn University	Architecture	Architecture	1	
3	Chulalongkorn University	Engineering	Electrical	1	
4	Chulalongkorn University	Science	Photographic Science & Printing Technology	1	
5	Chulalongkorn University	Science	Photographic Science & Printing Technology	1	
6	Chulalongkorn University	Political Science	Public Administration	1	
7	Kasetsart University	Agro Industry	Food Science	1	
8	Kasetsart University	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
9	Kasetsart University	Engineering	Electrical	1	
10	King Mongkut Institute of Technology	Engineering	Electrical	1	
11	Ramkhamhaeng University	Science	Computer	1	
12	Ramkhamhaeng University	Science	Computer	1	
13	Srinakharinwirot University	Humanities	English	1	
14	Thammasart University	Political Science	Public Administration	1	
15	Thammasart University	Political Science	Public Administration	1	

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)

16	Assumption University	Business Administration	Finance and Banking		1
17	Assumption University	Business Administration	General Management		1
18	Assumption University	Business Administration	General Management		1
19	Assumption University	Business Administration	General Management		1
20	Assumption University	Business Administration	International Business Management		1
21	Assumption University	Business Administration	Marketing		1
22	Assumption University	Science & Technology	Science in Information Technology		1
23	Bangkok University	Accounting	Accounting		1
24	Bangkok University	Business Administration	Marketing		1
25	Bangkok University	Business Administration	Marketing		1
26	Bangkok University	Communication Arts	Advertising		1
27	Huachiew Chalermprakiet University	Business Administration	Finance		1
28	Rangsit University	Business Administration	Finance		1
29	University of Thai Chamber of Commerce	Business Administration	Industrial Management		1
30	University of Thai Chamber of Commerce	Business Administration	Industrial Management		1
Total				15	15
Percentage				50.00	50.00

From Table 5, it can be seen that 50% of the respondents studied in a government university and 50% studied in a private university prior to their departure to the United States.

The largest group of respondents (7 or 23.33%) graduated from Assumption University. The second largest group (5 or 16.67%) graduated from Chulalongkorn University.

Most respondents studied in a Faculty of Business Administration (14 or 46.67%), followed by a Faculty of Science (5 or 16.67%). The most popular major course of study of the respondents was Marketing (4 or 13.33%), followed by General Management (3 or 10%)

TABLE 6 GPA IN BACHELOR'S DEGREE PROGRAM

GPA in Bachelor's Degree	Number of students	Percentage
Less than or equal to 2.50	4	13.33
2.51 – 3.00	14	46.67
3.01 – 3.50	8	26.67
3.51 or more	4	13.33
Total	30	100.00

Table 6 shows that of 30 respondents, 46.67% had a GPA of 2.51 - 3.00 or 6.67% had a GPA of between 3.01 - 3.50, 13.33% had a GPA of less than or equal to 2.50 and the remaining 13.33% had a GPA of 3.51 or more.

TABLE 7 TOEFL TEST SCORES BEFORE LEAVING TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

TOEFL test scores	Number of students	Percentage
Less than or equal to 500 (173 for new scores)	2	6.67
501 – 550 (174 - 213 for new scores)	9	30.00
551 – 600 (214 - 250 for new scores)	16	53.33
601 – 677 (251 - 300 for new scores)	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 7 demonstrates that, of the 30 respondents, 53.33% had TOEFL scores between 551 – 600 (214 – 250 for new scores), 30% had TOEFL scores between 501 – 550 (174 – 213 for new scores), 10% had TOEFL scores between 601 – 677 (251 – 300 for new scores), and the remaining respondents (6.67%) had TOEFL scores less than or equal to 500 (173 for new scores).

3. Master's Degree Programs in the United States

This part of the questionnaire defines the Master's Degree programs of the respondents in the United States as well as the respondents' performance in the programs in terms of completing the program in the published curriculum period and GPA.

TABLE 8 NAME OF UNIVERSITY OF THE MASTER'S DEGREE, FACULTY AND MAJOR COURSE, TYPE OF UNIVERSITY (GOVERNMENT OR PRIVATE UNIVERSITY)

No.	Name of University of the Master's Degree	Faculty	Major Course	Type of University	
				State	Private
1	California State University (Hayward)	Business Administration	Information Management	1	
2	California State University (Hayward)	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
3	California State University (San Bernardino)	Science	Computer	1	
4	Central Michigan University	Business Administration	International Business Administration	1	
5	Cleveland State University	Science & Technology	Computer Information Science	1	
6	Georgia State University	Business Administration	Business Administration	1	
7	Grand Valley State University	Business Administration	Management	1	
8	Portland State University	Business Administration	International Management	1	
9	Portland State University	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
10	Southern Illinois University	Business Administration	Management	1	
11	Southwest Missouri State University	Management	International Business Administration	1	
12	State University of New York at Cortland	Business Administration	International Marketing	1	
13	University of California (Berkeley)	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
14	University of California (Berkeley)	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
15	University of Central Oklahoma	Business Administration	Management Science	1	

TABLE 8 (CONTINUED)

16	University of Central Oklahoma	Business Administration	Management	1	
17	University of Colorado at Denver	Business Administration	Marketing	1	
18	University of New Orleans	Urban and Public Affairs	Public Administration	1	
19	University of Pittsburgh	Industrial Engineering	Engineering Management	1	
20	Binghamton University, School of Management	Management	Management Information System		1
21	Clark University	Management	Finance		1
22	Clark University	Management	Business Management		1
23	Cornell University	City and Regional Planning	City Tourism Planning		1
24	DePaul University	Finance	Financial Analysis		1
25	George Washington University	School of Engineering	Management Information System		1
26	Long Island University (C.W. Post Campus)	Business Administration	International Business		1
27	Long Island University (C.W. Post Campus)	Business Administration	International Business		1
28	Thunderbird University	International Management	International Management		1
29	Thunderbird University	International Management	International Management		1
30	Saint Louise University, John Cook School	Business Administration	Marketing		1
Total				19	11
Percentage				63.33%	36.67%

Table 8 shows that 63.33% of the respondents studied in state universities and 36.67% in private universities.

Table 8 also shows that 24 respondents, or 80%, studied in a variety of major courses in the field of Business Administration. Two respondents, or 6.67%, studied in the field of Engineering. Another two respondents, or 6.67%, studied in the field of Science and Technology respectively.

TABLE 9 GPA IN MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM

GPA in Master's Degree Program	Number of students	Percentage
3.01 – 3.50	12	40.00
3.51 or more	18	60.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 9 demonstrates that 40% of the respondents received a GPA between 3.01 – 3.50 and 60% achieved a GPA 3.51 or more.

TABLE 10 THE LENGTH OF PUBLISHED CURRICULUM DURATION FOR MASTER'S DEGREE

Published Curriculum Duration for Master's Degree	Number of students	Percentage
1 year	1	3.33
1.5 years	9	30.00
2 years	20	66.67
Other (More than 2 years)	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 10 shows that 66.67% of the published curricula durations for a Master's Degree were two years, 30% of the published curricula required 1.5 years of study for a Master's Degree, and 3.33% required only one year of study.

TABLE 11 THE ABILITY FOR GRADUATION WITHIN THE PUBLISH CURRICULUM DURATION

Question: Did you complete your Master's Degree in the published period of time?	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	27	90.00
No	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

From Table 11, it can be seen that 90% of the respondents completed their Master's Degrees within the published curriculum duration period, while 10% did not.

TABLE 12 COMMENCEMENT OF STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

Question: Did you begin your Master's Degree program after July 1, 1997?	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	30	100.00
No	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 12 confirms that all 30 respondents began their Master's Degree programs after July 1, 1997.

TABLE 13 SOURCES OF FUNDS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Sources of Funds	Number of students	Percentage
Self-funded	30	100.00
Scholarships	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 13 confirms that all 30 respondents were self-funded students.

Tables 12 and 13 confirm that the respondents conformed to two of the criteria for inclusion in this study.

Parts 1, 2 and 3 of the questionnaire define the profile of the respondents, their Bachelor's Degree programs in Thailand, and their Master's Degree programs in the United States. The findings from these three parts are used in Chapter 5 to answer the third research question of this study, "What is the profile of the Thai self-funded graduate students whose expectations most closely matched their achievements?"

Together, parts 4 and 5 are designed to provide an insight into, and to compare the expectations and achievements of the study respondents. As a result, parts 4 and 5 are presented in a different order than originally outlined in the questionnaire, in order to facilitate the analysis. In this analysis, the initial expectations are presented along with the actual perceived achievements, and compared in a table format, followed by detailed explanations.

4. Employment expectations before receiving a Master's Degree in the United States and 5. Current job and employment achievements after receiving a Master's Degree in the United States

TABLE 14 EXPECTED SALARIES OF THAI SELF-FUNDED STUDENTS BEFORE LEAVING TO STUDY IN THE UNITED STATES

Expected Monthly Salary	Number of students	Percentage
Below 30,000	10	33.33
30,000 – 40,000 Baht	15	50.00
40,001 – 50,000 Baht	3	10.00
50,001 – 60,000 Baht	2	6.67
60,001 – 70,000 Baht	-	-
70,001 – 80,000 Baht	-	-
80,001 – 90,000 Baht	-	-
90,001 – 100,000 Baht	-	-
More than 100,001 Baht	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 14 above outlines the expectations of the Thai participants in this study, related to their monthly salary, upon returning to Thailand following the completion of a Master's Degree in the United States. The results demonstrate that overall, two-thirds of the respondents expected to earn a salary above 30,000 baht per month. Breaking this figure down, 50% expected to earn a monthly salary between 30,000 – 40,000 baht upon their return, 10% expected to earn a monthly salary between 40,001 – 50,000 baht and 6.67% expected to earn a monthly salary between 50,001 – 60,000 baht. None of

the respondents expected their monthly salaries to be higher than 60,001 baht. One-third of the respondents expected to earn below 30,000 baht per month.

TABLE 15 LEVEL OF INCOME PER MONTH FOR THE CURRENT POSITION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Current Monthly Salary	Number of students	Percentage
Below 30,000 Baht	4	13.33
30,000 – 40,000 Baht	9	30.00
40,001 – 50,000 Baht	6	20.00
50,001 – 60,000 Baht	5	16.67
60,001 – 70,000 Baht	3	10.00
70,001 – 80,000 Baht	3	10.00
80,001 – 90,000 Baht	-	-
90,001 – 100,000 Baht	-	-
More than 100,001 Baht	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 15 above outlines the current salary range of respondents following their return from completing their Master's Degrees in the United States. In contrast to prior expectations (66.67%), overall 86.67% achieved a monthly salary of over 30,000 baht. Only 13.33% presently earn a salary below 30,000 baht compared to previous expectations of 33.33%. 20% earn a monthly salary above 60,001 baht per month, which is above all prior expectations.

Referring to specific salary band results, 30% of the respondents earn a monthly salary within the range 30,000 – 40,000 baht, 20% earn a salary of between 40,001 –

50,000 baht per month and 16.67% earn a salary within the range of 50,001 – 60,000 baht per month. Finally, 10% earn a monthly salary in the range of 60,001 – 70,000 baht and 10% within the range of 70,001 – 80,000 baht per month.

Table 15 clearly illustrates that the level of salary achieved is higher than originally expected by the respondents prior to completing their Master's Degrees. A detailed comparison is shown in Table 16 below.

TABLE 16 A COMPARISON OF EXPECTED SALARY LEVELS AND CURRENT SALARY LEVELS OF THE INDIVIDUAL RESPONDENTS

Current Monthly Salary	Achievements compared to expectations		
	Below Expectations	As Expected	Above Expectations
Below 30,000 Baht	1	3	-
30,000 - 40,000 Baht	1	4	4
40,001 - 50,000 Baht	-	2	4
50,001 - 60,000 Baht	-	2	3
60,001 - 70,000 Baht	-	-	3
70,001 - 80,000 Baht	-	-	3
80,001 - 90,000 Baht	-	-	-
90,001 - 100,000 Baht	-	-	-
More than 100,000 Baht	-	-	-
Total	2	11	17
Percentage	6.67%	36.67%	56.67%

Table 16 provides a comparison between expected and actual monthly salary levels of the respondents. On an aggregate basis, 56.67% achieved a current monthly salary higher than their expected salary. Further, 36.67% have a salary within the range

that they expected before leaving to study in the United States. Only two respondents, or 6.67%, achieved a monthly salary lower than their expectations.

TABLE 17 EXPECTED PROFESSIONAL SECTORS OF RESPONDENTS BEFORE OBTAINING A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE UNITED STATES

Expected Professional Sector	Number of students	Percentage
Architecture	1	3.33
Business Consultant	3	10.00
Business Owner	3	10.00
Construction Firm	-	-
Education	-	-
Engineering	2	6.67
Export/Import	-	-
Fashion/Design	-	-
Finance/Banking/Insurance	4	13.33
Government Officer	1	3.33
Information Technology	4	13.33
Manufacturing	-	-
Medical/Science	-	-
Merchandising/Marketing	6	20.00
Professional Management	3	10.00
Real Estate	-	-
Service Industry	2	6.67
Shipping/Logistics	-	-
Telecommunication	1	3.33
Other	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 17 above outlines the expectations of Thai students, related to their professional sector of employment, upon returning to Thailand following completion of a Master's Degree in the United States. The merchandising/marketing sector posted the highest result with 20% of the respondents expecting to work in this field upon their return, while 13.33% expected to work in the finance/banking/insurance sector and 13.33% expected to work in the information technology sector. Ten percent expected to work as business consultants, 10% as business owners, and 10% as professional managers.

TABLE 18 CURRENT PROFESSIONAL SECTOR

Current Professional Sector	Number of students	Percentage
Architecture	-	-
Business Consultant	-	-
Business Owner	1	3.33
Construction Firm	-	-
Education	-	-
Engineering	1	3.33
Export/Import	-	-
Fashion/Design	-	-
Finance/Banking/Insurance	3	10.00
Government Officer	-	-
Information Technology	3	10.00
Manufacturing	3	10.00
Medical/Science	-	-
Merchandising/Marketing	11	36.67
Professional Management	6	20.00
Real Estate	-	-
Service Industry	-	-
Shipping/Logistics	-	-
Telecommunication	2	6.67
Other	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 18 outlines the professional sectors in which the respondents are currently employed. Broadly in line with expectations, it can be seen that the majority of the respondents, 36.67%, are working in the merchandising/marketing sector, while 20% of

them initially expected to do so. 20% are working in the professional management sector, which is double the initial expectations. Ten percent are employed in each of the finance/banking/insurance, information technology and manufacturing sectors respectively compared with expectations of 13.33% in each sector. These results match expectations quite closely. Professional sectors that respondents expected to enter, but did not, include architecture, business consulting, government and the service industries.

TABLE 19 A COMPARISON OF EXPECTED EMPLOYMENT AND CURRENT
EMPLOYMENT IN VARIOUS PROFESSIONAL SECTORS

Professional Sector	Achievements compared to expectations	
	As Expected	Different from Expectation
Architecture	-	-
Business Consultant	-	-
Business Owner	1	-
Construction Firm	-	-
Education	-	-
Engineering	1	-
Export/Import	-	-
Fashion/Design	-	-
Finance/Banking/Insurance	1	2
Government Office	-	-
Information Technology	2	1
Manufacturing	-	3
Medical/Science	-	-
Merchandising/Marketing	6	5
Professional Management	3	3
Real Estate	-	-
Service Industry	-	-
Shipping/Logistics	-	-
Telecommunication	1	1
Other	-	-
Total	15	15
Percentage	50.00%	50.00%

Table 19 compares the expected and actual employment of the respondents in the various professional sectors. On an aggregate basis, 50% are employed within the professional sectors that they expected to work in prior to leaving to study in the United States, and 50% are working in a variety of professional sectors which are different from their expectations before leaving to study in the United States, i.e. 50% did not enter the professional sector they expected, but found other career opportunities.

TABLE 20 EXPECTED TYPE AND SIZE OF COMPANY BEFORE THE
RESPONDENTS OBTAINED MASTER'S DEGREES IN THE UNITED STATES

Expected Type and Size of Company	Number of students	Percentage
Large International Company	15	50.00
Large Thai Company	3	10.00
Medium-sized International Company	6	20.00
Medium-sized Thai Company	2	6.67
Small-sized International Company	-	-
Small-sized Thai Company	-	-
Set-up New Business	3	10.00
Thai Government Organization	1	3.33
Total	30	100.00

Table 20 above presents the type and size of company the respondents expected to work for upon returning to Thailand following their studies in the United States.

Table 20 demonstrates that 70% expected to work in international companies: 50% in large international companies and 20% in medium-sized international companies. Ten percent expected to work in large Thai companies, and 10% expected to set up their own businesses. Almost seven percent expected to work in medium-sized Thai companies while the remainder of the respondents, 3.33%, expected to work in a Thai government organization.

The preference of the respondents with regard to the type and size of company they preferred to work for before studying in the United States can be arranged hierarchically from most preferred to least preferred in the following order: large international company, medium-sized international company, large Thai company, set-up new business, medium-sized Thai company, and Thai government organization respectively. This ranking will be used in the comparison between the expectations and achievements of the respondents in order to analyze whether their expectations are higher or lower than their achievements.

TABLE 21 TYPES AND SIZES OF COMPANIES PRESENTLY EMPLOYING THE RESPONDENTS

Types and Sizes of Present Employers	Number of students	Percentage
Large International Company	11	36.67
Large Thai Company	5	16.67
Medium-sized International Company	10	33.33
Medium-sized Thai Company	3	10.00
Small-sized International Company	-	-
Small-sized Thai Company	-	-
Set-up New Business	1	3.33
Thai Government Organization	-	-
Other	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 21 presents types and sizes of companies presently employing the respondents. This table shows that 36.67% are working in large international companies, slightly less than expected, 33.33% are working in medium-sized international companies and 16.67% in large Thai companies, the final two figures being higher than original expectations. Ten percent of the respondents are working in medium-sized Thai companies followed by 3.33% of the respondents who have set-up new businesses.

TABLE 22 A COMPARISON OF EXPECTED TYPES AND SIZES OF COMPANY AND
CURRENT TYPES AND SIZES OF COMPANY EMPLOYING THE RESPONDENTS

Types and sizes of company	Achievements compared to expectations		
	Below Expectation	As Expected	Above Expectation
Large International Company	-	6	5
Large Thai Company	1	-	4
Medium-sized International Company	2	4	3
Medium-sized Thai Company	1	1	1
Small-sized International Company	-	-	-
Small-sized Thai Company	-	-	-
Set-up new business	1	1	-
Thai Government Organization	-	-	-
Other	-	-	-
Total	5	12	13
Percentage	16.67%	40.00%	43.33%

Table 22 illustrates the comparison between the expected and actual type and size of company employing the study respondents. In total, 43.33% of respondents have been working in a higher-ranked type and size of company than their expectations before leaving to study in the United States, and 40.00% are working in the same size and type of company as they expected. The remainder of the respondents, or 16.67%, are working in a lower-ranked type and size of company than expected.

**TABLE 23 EXPECTED POSITION LEVELS IN THE ORGANIZATIONS BEFORE
OBTAINING A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE UNITED STATES**

Expected Position Level in the Organization	Number of students	Percentage
Operational Level	4	13.33
Administrative Level	4	13.33
Supervisory Level	9	30.00
Managerial Level	13	43.33
Executive Level	-	-
Total	30	100.00

Table 23 details the study results relating to the expected position level in an organization of the respondents prior to being awarded a Master's Degree in the United States. It can be seen that 43.33% expected to work at a managerial level, whereas 30% expected to work at a supervisory level and 13.33% of the respondents expected to work in operational or administrative level positions respectively.

The definition of each position level is as follows:

Operational level means a large layer in the organization containing employees who have to handle or face clients or vendors directly under the direct supervision of others. These roles may include sales people, customer service staff and front counter personnel.

Administrative level means the level in the organization in which the staff have to perform administrative tasks under the supervision of a manager or supervisor. This means the administration departments responsible for back office tasks in support of other departments.

These two levels, operational level and administrative level, might not have a subordinate level and are generally in lower levels in an organization.

Supervisory level means the level to which the staff is promoted to from an administrative or operational level, generally to become a supervisor or a leader in a group. The responsibilities of this function are to supervise subordinates or staff at a lower level. The supervisory level is in turn directed by a manager or director.

Managerial level means the level of management higher than the supervisory level. The person at this level must plan and control operations, projects, budgets or plans that are assigned by senior officers in the firm. The major responsibilities of this level are to direct the lower levels to perform in line with the company strategy.

Executive level is the level at the top of the organization chart. The persons at this level generally have the final decision on projects and the direction of the organization or business unit. The major responsibilities of executives are to set strategy and make and execute decisions for the company.

TABLE 24 CURRENT POSITIONS (JOB TITLES) OF THE 30 RESPONDENTS

No.	Job Title	Level in the Organization
1	Corporate Planning Officer	Operational
2	Database Specialist	Operational
3	Marketing Officer	Operational
4	Technical Support Engineer	Administrative
5	Account Manager	Supervisory
6	Assistant Manager	Supervisory
7	Branch Manager	Supervisory
8	Client Service Manager	Supervisory
9	Client Support Organization Associate	Supervisory
10	Key Account Manager	Supervisory
11	Project Manager	Supervisory
12	Senior Marketing Officer	Supervisory
13	Senior Supervisor - Treasury & Finance	Supervisory
14	Sport Marketing Manager	Supervisory
15	Supervisor - Customer Service	Supervisory
16	Trade Marketing Supervisor	Supervisory
17	Assistant Managing Director	Managerial
18	Business Development Manager	Managerial
19	Business Development Manager	Managerial
20	Business Planning & Analysis Manager	Managerial
21	General Manager	Managerial
22	Key Account Manager	Managerial
23	Management Trainee	Managerial
24	Management Trainee	Managerial
25	Managing Director	Managerial
26	Marketing Manager	Managerial
27	Senior Key Account Manager	Managerial
28	Senior Research Associate	Managerial
29	Senior Vice President	Managerial
30	System Administration Manager	Managerial

Table 24 above identifies the variety of position titles held by the respondents.

These position titles are classified into organizational levels as defined by the respondents.

TABLE 25 LEVEL OF CURRENT POSITIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Level of Current Position in the Organization	Number of students	Percentage
Operational Level	3	10.00
Administrative Level	1	3.33
Supervisory Level	12	40.00
Managerial Level	14	46.67
Executive Level	-	-
Total	30	100.00

The tabulated results illustrate that the managerial level accounts for the largest segment (46.67%) of current jobs, with 40% at the supervisory level, 10% at the operational level and 3.33% at the Administrative level.

The results from Tables 23 and 25 are compared in Table 26.

TABLE 26 A COMPARISON OF EXPECTED POSITION LEVELS AND CURRENT POSITION LEVELS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Current position level	Achievements compared to expectations		
	Below Expectation	As Expected	Above Expectation
Operational Level	1	2	-
Administration Level	-	1	-
Supervisory Level	1	4	7
Managerial Level	-	5	9
Executive Level	-	-	-
Total	2	12	16
Percentage	6.67%	40.00%	53.33%

Table 26 demonstrates that over 93% of respondents are working in an equal or higher position level than they expected before leaving to study in the United States, 53.33% above expectations and 40.00% at a position level as expected. The remainder of the respondents, or 6.67%, are working in a lower than expected position level.

TABLE 27 THE LENGTH OF TIME AFTER THE RESPONDENTS RETURNED TO THAILAND TO GET THE FIRST JOB

Length of Time	Number of students	Percentage
Within 3 months	24	80.00
4 – 6 months	6	20.00
7 – 9 months	-	-
10 – 12 months	-	-
More than a year	-	-
Total	30	100.00

From Table 27 it can be seen that 80% of the respondents found their first job within 3 months of returning to Thailand, with the remainder of the respondents, or 20%, gaining their first job within 4 – 6 months.

TABLE 28 THE RELATEDNESS OF BACHELOR'S DEGREES TO THE CURRENT WORK OF THE RESPONDENTS

Question: Is your current work related to your Bachelor's Degree?	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	16	53.33
No	14	46.67
Total	30	100.00

Table 28 refers to the degree of relevance of the respondents' Bachelor's Degrees to their present jobs. Just over 50% of the respondents agreed that the knowledge acquired from their Bachelor's Degrees relates to their current work, whereas 46.67% believe that the knowledge gained from their Bachelor's Degrees does not relate to their current jobs.

TABLE 29 THE RELATEDNESS OF MASTER'S DEGREE TO THE CURRENT WORK OF THE RESPONDENTS

Question: Is your current work related to your Master's Degree?	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	21	70.00
No	9	30.00
Total	30	100.00

In contrast to the Bachelor's Degree result, Table 29 shows the degree of relevance of the respondents' Master's Degrees to their present jobs. This demonstrates that 70% of the respondents agree that the knowledge gained from their Master's Degrees relates to their current work.

TABLE 30 THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE USED BY THE RESPONDENTS IN THEIR WORK GAINED FROM BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Level of Knowledge gained from Bachelor's Degree used in work	Number of students	Percentage
Very much	6	20.00
Much	5	16.67
A moderate amount	16	53.33
Little	3	10.00
Very little	-	-
Total	30	100.00

It can be seen from Table 30 that when asked to consider the level of knowledge from their Bachelor's Degrees used by the respondents in their current jobs, 53.33% believed they used a *moderate* amount of knowledge gained from their Bachelor's Degrees. This was followed by 20% citing *very much* knowledge earned from their Bachelor's Degrees used in their work, 16.67% responded *much*, and 10% stated that they used only a *little* knowledge earned from their Bachelor's Degrees.

TABLE 31 THE LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE USED BY THE RESPONDENTS IN THEIR WORK GAINED FROM THEIR MASTER'S DEGREE

Level of Knowledge gained from Master's Degree used in work	Number of students	Percentage
Very much	8	26.67
Much	13	43.33
A moderate amount	7	23.33
Little	2	6.67
Very little	-	-
Total	30	100.00

In contrast to the previous results, it can be seen from Table 31 that a total of 70% of the respondents use either *much* or *very much* knowledge from their Master's Degrees in their current work, 43.33% use *much* knowledge and 26.67% use *very much*. 23.33% of the respondents responded that they use a moderate amount of knowledge earned from their Master's Degrees in their work, while the remaining, 6.67%, use a *little* knowledge earned from their Master's Degrees in their work.

Comparing the results of Tables 30 and 31, the level of knowledge gained from Bachelor's Degrees and from Master's Degree used by the respondents in their work, the results show that most of the respondents use knowledge gained from their Master's Degrees in a higher percentage than knowledge gained from their Bachelor's Degrees.

In Chapter 2, Review of the related literature, the values of study abroad as posited by Posey (2003) and Loh et. al. (1995) cited by Shawyun (1999) were presented. The findings from these two studies were combined into six categories and included in the research questionnaire. The six factors consisted of: 1) monetary values (salary) and monetary benefits; 2) career opportunities and position; 3) career stability, promotion and advancement; 4) acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community; 5) self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity); and 6) academic gains and language competence.

The respondents were asked to rank the 6 values listed from the lowest in importance to each respondent (1) to highest in importance (6).

Below, the importance assigned to each value by all respondents has been calculated into a mean score to facilitate analysis.

TABLE 32 EXPECTATIONS BEFORE STUDYING IN THE UNITED STATES

Values	Level of Achievements						Respondent Sum	Raw Score	Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	lowest	lower	low	high	higher	highest			
Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits	-	4	16	8	1	1	30	99	3.30
Career opportunities and position	-	4	14	6	4	2	30	106	3.53
Career stability, promotion and advancement	1	4	12	8	4	1	30	103	3.43
Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community	1	4	8	10	5	2	30	110	3.66
Self-fulfilment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)	1	4	10	8	5	2	30	108	3.60
Academic gains and language competence	-	3	6	12	6	3	30	120	4.00

TABLE 33 ACHIEVEMENTS AFTER RETURNING TO WORK IN THAILAND

Values	Level of Achievements						Respondent Sum	Raw Score	Mean Score
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
	lowest	lower	low	high	higher	highest			
Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits	-	2	11	14	2	1	30	109	3.63
Career opportunities and position	-	2	6	15	5	2	30	119	3.96
Career stability, promotion and advancement	-	2	10	13	5	-	30	111	3.70
Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community	-	1	10	12	5	2	30	117	3.90
Self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)	-	3	11	13	3	-	30	106	3.53
Academic gains and language competence	-	1	3	14	8	4	30	131	4.36

Tables 32 and 33 illustrate the results from the study, comparing both expected outcomes (Table 32) and actual outcomes (Table 33).

In table 32, the respondents ranked their expectations before leaving to study in the United States. The respondents expected to achieve academic gains and language competence as the highest ranked value with a mean score of 4.00. The second ranked item was acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community at a mean score of 3.66. The third ranked value was self-fulfillment (Self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity), achieving a 3.60 mean score. The fourth rank was career opportunities and position at 3.53. The fifth rank was career stability, promotion and advancement with a 3.43 mean score, and finally, the sixth ranked item was monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits--with a mean score of 3.30. These are listed in order below:

1. Academic gains and language competence
2. Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community
3. Self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)
4. Career opportunities and position
5. Career stability, promotion and advancement
6. Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits

Table 33 is structured identically to Table 32 but with the respondents ranking the achievements after their return to Thailand. The respondents believed they first and foremost achieved language competence, gaining first rank at a mean score of 4.36. The second ranked achievement was career opportunities and position with a 3.96 mean score. The third rank was acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community with

a 3.90 mean score. The fourth rank was career stability, promotion and advancement at 3.70. The fifth rank was monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits with a 3.63 mean score and finally, the sixth rank was self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity) with a mean score of 3.53.

This list is presented below and can be compared to the list of expectations above:

1. Academic gains and language competence
2. Career opportunities and position
3. Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community
4. Career stability, promotion and advancement
5. Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits
6. Self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)

TABLE 34 THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE RESPONDENTS TO THAI STUDENTS FOR A MASTER'S DEGREE IN THE UNITED STATES

Question: Based on your investment in terms of time and money to receive your Master's Degree in the United States, and your present situation in Thailand, would you recommend other Thai students get Master's Degrees in the United States?	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	27	90.00
No	3	10.00
Total	30	100.00

Table 34 shows that 90% of the respondents recommend that other Thai students study for a Master's Degree in the United States as they did. Only 10% did not recommend other Thai students to study for a Master's Degree in the United States.

This Chapter has presented the results from the study of expected and actual outcomes from obtaining a Master's Degree in the United States, for the group of participating Thai self-funded students. Conclusions and recommendations arising from the results in this chapter are discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, conclusions are drawn from the summary of results and analysis contained in Chapter 4. The data are interpreted to answer the research questions presented in Chapter 1. Finally, a discussion of limitations and obstacles encountered in this study as well as recommendations for future research are presented.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are drawn, set out and described in relation to the three research questions of the study.

Research Questions 1: What are the expectations of Thai self-funded graduate students toward graduate study in the United States before going to the United States?

The findings in this research show that, two-thirds of the respondents expected to have a monthly salary of 30,000 baht or more per month. Fifty percent expected 30,000 – 40,000 baht per month, 10% expected 40,001 – 50,000 baht per month and 6.67% expected 50,001 – 60,000 baht per month. (See Table 14.)

In terms of professional sectors, The merchandising/marketing sector posted the highest expectation with 20% of the respondents expecting to work in this sector upon their return, followed by the finance/banking/insurance sector and the information

technology sector, each sector registering 13.33% of the respondents' expectations. (See Table 17.)

In terms of type and size of company, 70% of the respondents expected to work in international companies: 50%, or half of the respondents, in large international companies and 20% in medium-sized international companies. (See Table 20.)

Over seventy percent of the respondents expected to work at senior levels of companies: 43.33% at the managerial level, followed by 30% at the supervisory level. (See Table 23.)

This study ranks the expectations of the Thai self-funded graduate students prior to leaving to study in the United States as presented in Chapter 4. These expectations were combined into 6 values based on the works of Posey (2003) and Loh et. al. (1995) cited by Shawyun (1999). The expectations of the respondents in this study are ranked in descending order of importance below. (See Table 32.)

1. Academic gains and language competence (4.00 mean score)
2. Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community (3.66 mean score)
3. Self-fulfillment i.e. self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity (3.60 mean score)
4. Career opportunities and position (3.53 mean score)
5. Career stability, promotion and advancement (3.43 mean score)
6. Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits (3.30 mean score).

Research Question 2: What are the achievements of Thai self-funded graduate students after they obtain a Master's Degree in the United States and return to work in Thailand?

Analysis of the results shows that the expectations before leaving to study in the United States and achievements after obtaining a Master's Degree and returning to work in Thailand were notably changed.

In terms of achievements of the respondents, the findings in this research showed that, 86.67% of the respondents currently receive a monthly salary of over 30,000 baht. In contrast, only 13.33% earn a monthly salary below 30,000 baht. Twenty percent earn a monthly salary above 60,001 baht which is above all prior expectations. (See Table 15.) Further, over 93% of respondents have achieved a salary either at or above their originally expected salary level: 36.67% at the expected level and 56.67% higher than expected. (See Table 16.)

In terms of professional sectors of employment, 36.67% of the respondents are working in the merchandising/marketing sector, followed by 20% in the professional management sector. (See Table 18.) It can be concluded that half of the respondents have found employment in the professional sectors they expected, while the remaining 50% found other professional opportunities. (See Table 19.)

Seventy percent of the participants expected to work in large or medium-sized international companies and they largely achieved their expectations. (See Table 20.) The results about type and size of company presently employing the respondents show that 70% are working in large or medium-sized international companies: 36.67% in large

international companies, slightly less than expected, and 33.33% in medium-sized international companies, slightly more than expected. (See Table 21.)

Almost 87% of the respondents are currently working in senior level positions: managerial level positions account for 46.67% of the respondents and supervisory level positions are held by 40% of the respondents. (See Table 25.) This finding is somewhat above expectations. More supervisory and managerial level positions are held than expected and less administrative and operational level positions are held than expected. (See Table 26.)

As with the respondents' expectations, the study has determined the achievements of Thai self-funded graduate students after returning from studying in the United States. Similarly, the achievements are ranked in descending order below.

1. Academic gains and language competence (4.36 mean score)
2. Career opportunities and position (3.96 mean score)
3. Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community (3.90 mean score)
4. Career stability, promotion and advancement (3.70 mean score)
5. Monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits (3.63 mean score),
6. Self-fulfillment i.e. self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity (3.53 mean score).

Research Question 3: What is the profile of the Thai self-funded graduate students whose expectations most closely matched their achievements?

The findings in Chapter 4 demonstrate that most Thai self-funded graduate students achieved what they expected or more than they expected.

The result from parts 1, 2 and 3 show that the profile of the Thai self-funded graduate students whose expectations most closely matched their achievements can be broadly drawn as follows:

1. Individuals in the age group presently 31-35 years of age (23-27 years of age at the time of graduate study in the United States)
2. Male or female
3. Middle class or middle upper class
4. Grew up in the Bangkok metropolitan area
5. Obtained a Bachelor's Degree in either a Thai government university or a private university in Thailand
6. Majored in any field of study
7. Obtained a GPA from a Thai university equaling or exceeding the requirements of a university in the United States for admission or between 2.51 - 3.00.
8. Received a TOEFL test score between 551 and 600 (or 214 and 250 for the new computer based score)
9. Obtained a Master's Degree from a state university in the United States
10. Obtained a GPA in a U.S. Master's Degree program of 3.51 or more
11. Received a Master's Degree in Business Administration (M.B.A)
12. Graduated within 2 years or by the published curriculum duration for the Master's Degree sought.

This profile is drawn from the largest response group for each question.

Discussion

Overall, the findings from the study demonstrate that most of the Thai self-funded graduate students earning Master's Degrees in the United States met or surpassed their expectations.

From a salary perspective, most of the respondents met or surpassed their expectations.

Half of the respondents have found employment within the professions they expected, while the remaining number found professional opportunities in a variety of other professional sectors. In discussion with the respondents, none reported dissatisfaction with the professional sectors in which they are working. It may be reasoned that Master's Degrees from the United States enabled the respondents to enter professional fields they had not considered prior to studying in the United States but which are as rewarding as the sectors they had previously expected to enter.

With respect to the expected and current types and sizes of companies employing the respondents, most of the respondents are working for firms at or above their expectation levels. It can be concluded that a Master's Degree in the United States has enabled Thai self-funded graduate students to work in the type and size of company they expected or better upon their return to Thailand.

In terms of position level, the findings show that obtaining a Master's Degree in the United States has been beneficial. More than 90% of the respondents are presently working at, or above, the position level they expected before studying in the United States.

Of considerable importance are the findings of this study with regard to the changes in the ranking of the importance of the six values examined before the respondents studied in the United States and after they returned to Thailand. (See Tables 32 and 33.)

The findings show that before Thai self-funded students went to study in the United States, they ranked the six values in order of importance to themselves. First, they expected to progress fundamentally in the areas of academic gains and language competence. In Thai society, a Master's Degree or other advanced degree is considered an important qualification for both the workforce and for advanced social standing. This qualification is useful in one's professional life in terms of problem resolution, planning, decision making, negotiation, marketing, management, communication and other functions in an organization. Language competence, or English in this instance, is considered an important qualification in today's climate of international business. Businesses are connected worldwide and English is the international language, therefore professionals in the workforce are expected to use English effectively. Studying abroad, particularly in the United States, fulfills this qualification.

The second ranked value apart from academic gains and language competence, was acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community. This was considered by the respondents to be the next most important achievement criteria before going to the United States. In Thai society, acceptance, respect and prestige are generally desired. These values are considered to be the path to a better job and a better position in the community. Studying for a Master's Degree abroad was expected by the respondents in

this study to provide a boost to their acceptance and social standing, and initially was ranked second in terms of expectations.

Self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity) was ranked at the third level of expectation among the Thai self-funded students. Self-fulfillment leads to a more comfortable position in Thai society.

Career opportunities and position was placed in the fourth rank of expectations by the Thai self-funded graduate students. After the first three values noted above, the respondents believed that they had to fulfill themselves with values related to work. They would be more confident in their work if they had essential qualifications, i.e. academic gains and language competence, societal status, and self-fulfillment. Based on these values, the Thai self-funded graduate students expected to get a good job.

The fifth value posited by the Thai self-funded graduate students was career stability, promotion and advancement. Normally, people expect to have a good position before they think about possible growth and promotion. The respondents believed that their career paths in the future were important and this would be based on a good position in a good company.

The last value that the Thai self-funded graduate students ranked before leaving to study in the United States was monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits. The respondents in this research ranked monetary value as the least important value. This may be because the respondents believed that if they had a good profile and qualifications, monetary benefits would come to them naturally.

These values helped the students to have a clearer perspective and direction toward working and living in society.

Despite these findings showing that, the respondents valued academic gains and language competence; acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community; and self-fulfillment most before going to the United States, the results show that following their return to Thailand after obtaining a Master's Degree in the United States, the respondents largely lowered their *social benefit values* and raised their *career and monetary benefit values*. The social benefit values include 2 values: acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community, and self-fulfillment (self-confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity). Thus, career and monetary benefit values include the other three values: monetary value (salary) and monetary benefits, career opportunities and position, and career stability, promotion and advancement.

Academic gains and language competence were in the top rank both for the expectations and achievements of the respondents. This value was not categorized into either social benefit values or career and monetary benefit values.

Interestingly, the findings from the study show that the Thai self-funded graduate students were more concerned about social benefit values before going to the United States. This may be because Thais prefer to express polite responses when first questioned, and do not like to express material or personal desires.

The findings show that from a mean score perspective of actual achievement versus expectations, the social benefits values of acceptance and self-fulfillment both decreased in ranking in favor of more material career and/or monetary values after the return of the students to Thailand.

Apart of a comparison of the expectations before leaving to study in the United States and the achievements of Thai self-funded students after their return to Thailand, the results also demonstrate that the respondents found their first job in a relatively short time after they returned to Thailand (within 3 months). This demonstrates an achievement of the Thai self-funded students earning a Master's Degree in the United States.

According to the Thai Guide to International Education 2004 (Thai International Education Consultants Association. 2004), the present labor market in Thailand has become more competitive, demanding higher skills, better qualifications and requires more competent employees who are proficient in English. Thai students who graduated in the United States fulfill this expectation of most employers. This indicates that Thai students who have graduated in the United States are desirable to recruiters as most companies need qualified employees to move their businesses forward.

The results regarding the relatedness of Bachelor's Degree and Master's Degree knowledge acquired to the current work of the respondents demonstrates that most of the respondents believe their current work relates more to their Master's Degrees rather than to their Bachelor's Degrees. This is also supported by the finding that most of the respondents believe they currently use knowledge gained in their Bachelor's Degrees to a moderate amount, while they use knowledge gained in their Master's Degrees at a *much* level. (See Tables 30 and 31.)

A Master's Degree in the United States helps these students become aware of the international climate more than studying in Thailand. Experience living abroad helps the students to handle people from different cultures in a more appropriate way, something that Thai students living and studying in Thailand generally do not do so well.

This can be supported by the study of Posey (2003) which points out that the most often cited gains or benefits related to study abroad are in the areas of maturity, language proficiency, increased knowledge of a specific culture, and global-mindedness. In addition, studying abroad develops personal self-confidence, cross-cultural awareness, and open-mindedness to new ideas and values. Employers worldwide consider these important assets (The College Board: International Student Handbook 17th ed. 2004: 7).

In terms of the graduate study as an investment, Barry (1967) points out that studying abroad is a costly endeavor and should be a valuable investment. The recommendations of the Thai self-funded students when asked if other Thai students should study in the United States, was affirmative. Fully 27 of the 30 respondents recommended that other Thai students should get Master's Degrees in the United States.

Carlson (1986) states that study abroad is connected with the expectation that qualifications and competences acquired in the study abroad will later prove useful in the graduates' careers. The findings of this study demonstrate that obtaining a Master's Degree in the United States helped the students to achieve their professional expectations, and even surpass them.

The findings of this study also provide a number of clear and useful insights into the profile of the Thai self-funded students who seek to obtain their Master's Degrees in the United States. The insights consist of useful information as shown below:

The results from this study revealed that one's GPA in a Bachelor's Degree program in Thailand is not directly related to professional achievements but one's GPA in a Master's Degree programs is considered more important. This may be because the respondents used the knowledge gained in their Master's Degrees when applying for a

job. A higher GPA means better job opportunities as the recruiters in most organizations consider one's GPA an important qualification.

TOEFL test scores are also not significant to one's professional achievement but they are important for the respondents as they must have high TOEFL test exceeding the requirements of the universities in which they wish to study.

A Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA), is appreciated by Thai business society because the knowledge gained from an MBA enables the employees to work effectively in organizations. This is in line with the words of Pimpa (2001) who found in his study that social competition strongly influenced all Thai students' decisions to study abroad, and their choice of academic courses. His study revealed that many Thai postgraduate students noted competition in the workplace as a factor which compelled them to do an overseas MBA or Master's of Commerce or Business. Master's Degrees abroad play very important roles when people talk about better job opportunities.

In terms of the length of the published curriculum duration, a Master's Degree most often requires 2 years of study to complete. In this study, 90% of the respondents achieved their goal by graduating in the published curriculum period. This implies that most Thai students are likely to complete a Master's Degree in the United on the schedule pre-established by the university.

These insights will help future Thai graduate students prepare for the reality after their return from study in the United States. Importantly, the information on expectations and achievements of Thai self-funded graduate students will help other potential Thai self-funded students set up viable and practical goals in order to formulate realistic expectations before making a decision to study in the United States.

The results of this study will also be useful for other agencies, including governmental organizations, parents or students' family members that might consider a Master's Degree from the United States as an important qualification.

Limitations and Recommendation

1. This study was limited to the study of expectations and achievements of Thai self-funded students earning Master's Degrees in the United States. It would be worthwhile to conduct a comparative study of expectations and achievements of Thai self-funded students who obtain a Master's Degree in Thailand or in other countries such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.
2. The expectations and achievements of Thai non-self-funded students (Thai government scholars and recipients of other scholarships), studying in the United States and other western countries should also be studied further.
3. There should be further comparative research on other academic levels such as international high schools, the undergraduate level and the doctoral level.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is part of a Master's Degree Research Project at Srinakarinwirot University on the topic, *"A Study of Expectations and Achievements of Thai Self-funded Students Earning Master's Degrees in the United States From 1997 to the Present"*. Your kind cooperation in answering the following questions will be highly appreciated. Please be assured that your responses will be kept strictly confidential.

Part 1: Personal Information

Age

- ☐ 25 or under
- ☐ 26-30
- ☐ 31-35
- ☐ 36 and over

Gender

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female

Family Economic Status

- ☐ Upper Class
- ☐ Upper Middle Class
- ☐ Middle Class
- ☐ Lower Class

Where did you grow up?

- ☐ Metropolitan Bangkok Area
- ☐ Large City
- ☐ Provincial Town
- ☐ Small Rural Village

Part 2: Bachelor's Degree Program in Thailand

Name of University of the Bachelor's Degree

.....

- ☐ Private University
- ☐ Government University

Faculty of Bachelor's Degree

Major Course of Study In Bachelor's Degree

GPA in Bachelor's Degree

- ☐ Less than or equal to 2.5
- ☐ 2.51 – 3.00
- ☐ 3.01 – 3.50
- ☐ 3.51 or more

TOEFL test score before leaving to study in the United States

- ☐ Less than or equal to 500 (173 for new scores)
- ☐ 501 – 550 (174 - 213 for new scores)
- ☐ 551 – 600 (214 - 250 for new scores)
- ☐ 601 – 677 (251 - 300 for new scores)

Part 3: Master's Degree Program in the United States

Name of University of the Master's Degree

- ☐ Private University
- ☐ Government or State University

Faculty of Master's Degree

Major Course of study in Master's Degree.....

GPA in your Master's Degree Program

- ☐ 3.01 – 3.50
- ☐ 3.51 or more

How long is the published curriculum duration for your Master's Degree?

- ☐ 1 year
- ☐ 1.5 years
- ☐ 2 years
- ☐ 3 years
- ☐ other

Did you complete your Master's Degree in the published period of time?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

Did you begin your Master's Degree program after July 1, 1997?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

Were you a self-funded student?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

Part 4: Employment expectations before receiving a Master's Degree in the United States

Before leaving Thailand to study in the United States, how much salary did you expect to earn per month after completing your Master's Degree?

- ☐ Below 30,000 Baht
- ☐ 30,000 – 40,000 Baht
- ☐ 40,001 – 50,000 Baht
- ☐ 50,001 – 60,000 Baht
- ☐ 60,001 – 70,000 Baht
- ☐ 70,001 – 80,000 Baht
- ☐ 80,001 – 90,000 Baht
- ☐ 90,001 – 100,000 Baht
- ☐ More than 100,001 Baht

What professional sector did you expect to work in before you obtained your Master's Degree in the United States?

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Architecture | ☐ Business Consultant |
| ☐ Business Owner | ☐ Construction firm |
| ☐ Education | ☐ Engineering |
| ☐ Export/Import | ☐ Fashion/Design |
| ☐ Finance/Banking/Insurance | ☐ Government Officer |
| ☐ Information Technology | ☐ Manufacturing |
| ☐ Medical/Science | ☐ Merchandising/Marketing |
| ☐ Professional Management | ☐ Real Estate |
| ☐ Service Industry | ☐ Shipping/Logistics |
| ☐ Telecommunication | ☐ Other..... |

What type and size of company did you expect to work for before you obtained your Master's Degree in the United States?

- ☐ Large International Company
- ☐ Large Thai Company
- ☐ Medium-sized International Company
- ☐ Medium-sized Thai Company
- ☐ Small-sized International Company
- ☐ Small-sized Thai Company
- ☐ Set-up your own business
- ☐ Thai Government Organization
- ☐ Set-up your own business
- ☐ Other.....

What position or level in the organization did you expect before you obtained your Master's Degree in the United States?

- () Operational Level
- () Administrative Level
- () Supervisory Level
- () Managerial Level
- () Executive Level

Below, please indicate the value of the factors that best describe your expectations in each category:

Expectations Before Studying in the United States

Please rank your expectations below by their level of importance:

1 for the lowest expectation and 6 for the highest expectation

Monetary values (salary) and monetary benefits

1 2 3 4 5 6

Career opportunities and position

1 2 3 4 5 6

Career stability, promotion and advancement

1 2 3 4 5 6

Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community

1 2 3 4 5 6

Self-fulfillment (Self-Confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)

1 2 3 4 5 6

Academic Gains and Language Competence

1 2 3 4 5 6

Part 5: Current Job and employment achievements after receiving a Master's Degree in the United States.

Current Job Title.....

Current level of income per month

- ☐ Below 30,000 Baht
- ☐ 30,000 – 40,000 Baht
- ☐ 40,001 – 50,000 Baht
- ☐ 50,001 – 60,000 Baht
- ☐ 60,001 – 70,000 Baht
- ☐ 70,001 – 80,000 Baht
- ☐ 80,001 – 90,000 Baht
- ☐ 90,001 – 100,000 Baht
- ☐ More than 100,001 Baht

Professional Sector

- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ Architecture | ☐ Business Consultant |
| ☐ Business Owner | ☐ Construction firm |
| ☐ Education | ☐ Engineering |
| ☐ Export/Import | ☐ Fashion/Design |
| ☐ Finance/Banking/Insurance | ☐ Government Officer |
| ☐ Information Technology | ☐ Manufacturing |
| ☐ Medical/Science | ☐ Merchandising/Marketing |
| ☐ Professional Management | ☐ Real Estate |
| ☐ Service Industry | ☐ Shipping/Logistics |
| ☐ Telecommunication | ☐ Other..... |

Size and Type of Business or Organization

- ☐ Large International Company
- ☐ Large Thai Company
- ☐ Medium-sized International Company
- ☐ Medium-sized Thai Company
- ☐ Small-sized International Company
- ☐ Small-sized Thai Company
- ☐ Set-up your own business
- ☐ Thai Government Organization
- ☐ Set-up your own business
- ☐ Other.....

Level of Current Position

- ☐ Operational Level
- ☐ Administrative Level
- ☐ Supervisory Level
- ☐ Managerial Level
- ☐ Executive Level

Below, please indicate the value of the factors that best describe your achievements in each category:

Achievements After Returning to Work in Thailand

Please rank your *achievements* below by their level of importance:

1 for the lowest achievement and 6 for the highest achievement

Monetary values (salary) and monetary benefits	1	2	3	4	5	6
Career opportunities and position	1	2	3	4	5	6
Career stability, promotion and advancement	1	2	3	4	5	6
Acceptance, respect and prestige in the social community	1	2	3	4	5	6
Self-fulfillment (Self-Confidence, self-esteem, attitude and maturity)	1	2	3	4	5	6
Academic Gains and Language Competence	1	2	3	4	5	6

From the time you returned to Thailand and began searching for a job, how long did it require you to get your first job?

- ☐ Within 3 months
- ☐ 4 – 6 months
- ☐ 7 – 9 months
- ☐ 10 – 12 months
- ☐ More than a year

Is your current work related to your Bachelor's Degree?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

How much do you use the knowledge you gained from your Bachelor's Degree in your work?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Much
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ Little
- ☐ Very little

Is your current work related to your Master's Degree?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

How much do you use the knowledge you gained from your Master's degree in your work?

- ☐ Very much
- ☐ Much
- ☐ A moderate amount
- ☐ Little
- ☐ Very little

Based on your investment in terms of time and money to receive your Master's Degree in the United States, and your present situation in Thailand, would you recommend other Thai students get Master's Degrees in the United States?

- ☐ Yes.
- ☐ No.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

VITAE

VITAE

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Educational Background:

2005	Master of Arts (Business English for International Communication)
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	Payap University, Chiangmai

A STUDY OF EXPECTATIONS AND ACHIEVEMENTS
OF THAI SELF-FUNDED STUDENTS EARNING MASTER'S DEGREES
IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1997 TO 2003

AN ABSTRACT
BY
MR. PAT CHAIMAHAWON

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Master of Arts Degree in Business English for International Communication
at Srinakharinwirot University
May 2005

F-9 N.E. 2548

Pat Chaimahawon. (2005). *A Study of Expectations and Achievements of Thai Self-funded Graduate Students Earning Master's Degrees in the United States From 1997 to 2003*. Master's Project, M.A. (Business English for International Communication). Bangkok: Graduate School, Srinakarinwirot University. Project Advisor: Mr. Leroy A. Quick.

The objectives of this study were to identify the professional expectations of Thai self-funded graduate students earning Master's Degrees in the United States following the economic downturn of 1997 and to compare their expectations with achievements upon their return to Thailand. A secondary objective was to define the profile of the students whose expectations most closely matched their achievements.

A questionnaire was developed and 30 respondents were surveyed between December 2004 and February 2005. The questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively.

The results of the study revealed that the majority of the respondents achieved, or exceeded their professional expectations upon their return to Thailand in terms of monthly salary, professional sector of employment, type and size of employing organization and level of responsibility of the job obtained.

A detailed profile of the respondents whose expectations most closely matched, or exceeded their achievements was drawn. This profile includes demographic data as well as academic background and performance in Thailand and the United States.

การศึกษาความคาดหวังและความสำเร็จของนักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ทุนตนเอง
ในการศึกษาต่อระดับปริญญาโท ณ ประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา
ระหว่างปี พ.ศ.2540 ถึง 2546

บทคัดย่อ
ของ
นายภัทร ไชยมหาวัน

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา
ตามหลักสูตรปริญญาศิลปศาสตรมหาบัณฑิต สาขาวิชาภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ
พฤษภาคม 2548

ภัทร์ ไชยมหาวัน. (2548), การศึกษาความคาดหวังและความสำเร็จของนักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ทุนตนเอง
ในการศึกษาต่อระดับปริญญาโท ณ ประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา ระหว่างปี พ.ศ.2540 ถึง 2546.

สารนิพนธ์ ศศ.ม.(ภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจเพื่อการสื่อสารนานาชาติ). กรุงเทพฯ : บัณฑิตวิทยาลัย
มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ. อาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาสารนิพนธ์: อาจารย์ สิริอย เอ. ควิก.

การศึกษาค้นคว้าครั้งนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาความคาดหวังในด้านอาชีพและการทำงานของ
นักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ทุนตนเอง ก่อนเดินทางไปศึกษาต่อในระดับปริญญาโท ณ ประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา
ระหว่างปี พ.ศ.2540 ถึง 2546 นั่นคือภายหลังจากภาวะวิกฤตเศรษฐกิจในปี 2540 และความสำเร็จ
ภายหลังจากสำเร็จการศึกษาและเดินทางกลับประเทศไทย นอกจากนี้ยังได้ศึกษาถึงคุณลักษณะของ
นักศึกษา ได้แก่ ข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลและผลการศึกษา ซึ่งส่งผลให้ความสำเร็จทางด้านอาชีพตรงกับ
ความคาดหวังก่อนการศึกษามากที่สุด

ผู้วิจัยใช้แบบสอบถามเพื่อเก็บข้อมูลจากกลุ่มตัวอย่าง 30 ราย โดยการเก็บข้อมูลจัดทำขึ้น
ระหว่างเดือนธันวาคม พ.ศ.2547 ถึงเดือนกุมภาพันธ์ พ.ศ.2548 ข้อมูลจากการสำรวจโดยใช้
แบบสอบถามได้รับการวิเคราะห์ในเชิงปริมาณตามวัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาค้นคว้า

ผลของการวิจัยพบว่าผู้ตอบแบบสอบถามซึ่งเป็นกลุ่มตัวอย่างส่วนใหญ่ประสบความสำเร็จ
อย่างน้อยเท่ากับหรือสูงกว่าความคาดหวังในด้านอาชีพและการทำงานภายหลังจากเริ่มทำงานใน
องค์กรในประเทศไทย ทั้งในด้านค่าตอบแทนที่เป็นตัวเงิน กลุ่มธุรกิจที่ต้องการร่วมงาน ประเภทและ
ขนาดขององค์กร และระดับของตำแหน่งในองค์กร

นอกจากนี้ ได้มีการนำเสนอกลุ่มตัวอย่างส่วนใหญ่ซึ่งเป็นตัวแทนของผู้ตอบแบบสอบถาม
ทั้งหมดมาสรุปให้เห็นว่าคุณสมบัติของนักศึกษาไทยที่ใช้ทุนตนเองในการเดินทางไปศึกษาต่อในระดับ
ปริญญาโท ณ ประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา ซึ่งความคาดหวังและความสำเร็จในด้านอาชีพและการทำงาน
ใกล้เคียงกันมากที่สุดประกอบด้วยอะไรบ้าง ทั้งที่เป็นข้อมูลส่วนบุคคลและข้อมูลเกี่ยวกับผลการศึกษา
ทั้งในประเทศไทย และในประเทศสหรัฐอเมริกา