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Employment perceptions and willingness to study abroad:

Case study of Thai agricultural students

Master's thesis

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I hereby declare that I have written this Diploma thesis titled “Employment perceptions and willingness to study abroad: Case study of Thai agricultural students” myself and independently, only with the expert guidance of my thesis supervisor Ing. Petra Chaloupková, Ph.D..

I further declare that all data and information I have used in this thesis are stated in the references.

Prague – Suchdol, April 2020

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David Zeman

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Abstract

The student mobility has been on a raise worldwide over the last decades. Even though it has proven to be mostly beneficial for both participants and countries involved, Thai outbound mobility in higher education still remains one of the lowest in the South East Asia region. This thesis aims to investigate factors that affect the decisions of students to study the agricultural field, their plans for the future employability and their attitudes towards studies abroad. A questionnaire survey among agricultural students at four Thai universities: Chiang Mai University, Kasetsart University, Khon Kaen University and Prince of Songkla University was conducted in order to specify their attitudes and believes. The data were collected from 461 respondents via a questionnaire survey. The results show that family plays an important role in many cases in the decision-making process of choosing a field of study and also reveal lower motivation of students from Chiang Mai University and Kasetsart University to work in the agricultural sector in the future.

Overwhelming majority (74.3%) also shows willingness to study abroad, however the main challenges remain a lack of finances and a lack of foreign language skills. Regarding the location of their stay, our findings indicate that Asian countries lead by Japan proved to be the most favorable followed by English speaking countries.

Key words: Agricultural studies, Employability, Student mobility,
Higher education, Thailand

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List of Abbreviations

AEC	ASEAN Economic Community
AEI	Australian Education International
AIMS	ASEAN International Mobility for Students
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CMU	Chiang Mai University
EHEA	European Higher Education Area
EM	Erasmus Mundus
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
ICEF	International Consultants for Education and Fairs
KKU	Khon Kaen University
KU	Kasetsart University
NAFSA	Association of International Educators
NSO	National Statistical Office Thailand
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISAI	Participatory and Integrative Support for Agriculture Initiative
PSU	Prince of Songkla University
SLF	Student Loan Fund
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USA	United States of America
WB	World Bank

1. Introduction

The international mobility in higher education has been on the rise for last several decades and it has been becoming important part of educational systems all over the world. The most significant growth has been happening since the 1980s. This growth has been influencing not only mobility of students, but also mobility of academic staff, creation of new international focused programmes and institutions, which all together led to the rising numbers of educated professionals with international experience (UNESCO 2005).

Today, international cooperation among higher educational institutions (HEIs) allows students to travel and study almost anywhere all in the world. Study programmes abroad vary into many different kinds. Students can attend short-term study programmes abroad which last several days or weeks, as well as they have opportunities to study abroad for longer time: for one or two semesters or they can even choose to complete the whole degree or certificate at a HEI abroad (Grigorescu 2015).

It is believed, that studying abroad has many kinds of positive influence on students participating these programmes. Students gain opportunity to practice their foreign language skills which leads to their improvement (Serrano et al. 2011). They also gain ability to understand different perspectives and cultures and become more self-reliant, independent and culturally aware (European Union 2012). Nevertheless, there are still questions about these conclusions due to insufficient data, different kinds of study methods used in research, theoretical incongruences and defects in methodology (e.g. small sample size, insufficient control groups) (Grigorescu 2015).

Several studies suggest, that student mobility helps improve personal and interpersonal growth in direct correlation to increased motivation, new interests, global perspectives, cross-cultural competence, and skills (Carlson & Widaman 1988; Carsello & Creaser 1976; McCabe 1994; Kitsantas & Meyer 2002; Kitsantas 2004). According to other researches

(Deardorff 2004; Hadis 2005; Sobania & Braskamp 2009) experience from studies abroad helps participants to gain global knowledge and positively affects their views on many international issues like attitudes towards diverse population or different cultures (Grigorescu 2015).

Except personal growth and raising knowledge of individuals studying abroad, student mobility can be very beneficial for both home and host countries. The mobility can further deepen cooperation, it can also help with the exchange of knowledge and new ideas. In addition, discoveries can be possibly made via international cooperation, which can be especially helpful in the agricultural sector.

2. Literature review

2.1. Young generation's approach to agriculture

Over the last decades, there has been significant changes in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is the single biggest employer of the developing world and the agri-food sector will certainly grow in the foreseeable future to fulfil the world's growing demand, which gives this sector an enormous potential for the future.

As countries are getting more developed, their agricultural systems and technologies are evolving as well. In most of the cases it means development like higher mechanization, which on one hand, is decreasing number of workers needed in the sector, but it also demands more educated workers. In other words, the importance of higher agricultural studies has been increasing due to increasing demand for agricultural professionals. According to White (2012) "Agrarian studies helps us to better understand the possible future trajectories of the agri-food sector and in particular the underlying and continuing debate on large- vs. small-scale agricultural futures; and bringing these two perspectives together should help us to understand the intergenerational tensions that we see almost everywhere in rural communities, particularly young people's problems in getting access to farmland and other agriculture-related opportunities in societies where gerontocracy, agrarian inequality and corporate penetration of the agri-food sector, in varying degrees, are the order of the day." (White 2012).

Despite the importance of agriculture, interest among young people in this sector and agricultural studies is decreasing worldwide. Üngör (2013) argues that "Productivity growth in agriculture, combined with the subsistence level of consumption in agriculture, is able to explain most of the secular declines in the agricultural employment share in several countries around the world and has an explanatory power of more than 90% for the de-

agriculturalization experiences observed in some countries, such as Colombia, Costa Rica, South Korea and Sweden during 1963–2005.” (Üngör 2013).

Nevertheless, agriculture is often seen as less profitable manually demanding work and even for those willing to work in this sector, the start can be problematic because of the issues like land grabbing and others. Therefore, many students tend to choose business, administrative or other similar studies, leaving villages and moving into cities and towns (White 2012). This phenomenon of depopulation of rural areas can be problematic not only in agriculture, but also in many other sectors. One of the main ones is for example unequally distributed labor force: in the agricultural sector is lack of workers and in other sectors is often too many of them which results in an increase of unemployment, waste of potential of students and human resources and many other obstacles (FAO 2017).

According to White (2012) there are several main reasons why agriculture sector became unpopular among young people:

- the desiring of rural youth, and downgrading of farming and rural life
- the chronic government neglect of small-scale agriculture and rural infrastructure
- the problems that young rural people have, even if they want to become farmers, in getting access to land while still young

The agriculture is a crucial part of economy of every country. It plays even bigger importance for the less developed ones. The sector is facing many obstacles and will potentially face even more of them in the future. To successfully overcome them, new generation of agricultural professionals is needed. For this reason, I believe, that the issue of lack of educated agriculture labour force should be addressed as soon as possible.

2.1.1. Economic situation and agriculture in Thailand

The Kingdom of Thailand, according to the World Bank, is an upper-middle income country (World Bank 2019). Since the 1980's it has had noticeable success in its development. GDP is growing, unemployment rate is one of the lowest in the region (0.7% in 2015), poverty reduction and growth sustaining strategies are well managed, but certain constraints like political instability and economic crisis (the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-1998 and then, in 2008-2009, the Global Economic Crisis) have decelerated further development. In addition to these issues, Thailand also had to face several natural disasters in the recent past, which strongly influenced the stability of the economy yet again, especially in the agricultural sector (World Bank 2019). However, recovery mechanisms reflected the benefits of reform measures tied to assistance by the International Monetary Fund, increasing direct investment from Japan, the United States, Singapore, and other nations, and surging exports (The Library of Congress 2007).

The whole South East Asia region has been going through the process of economic reform in recent decades, which has influenced basically all sectors of economy, including the agriculture. Thailand's GDP had an increasing trend in recent decades and the percentage of agriculture, forestry, and fishing on GDP were strongly decreasing till 1990s, which points out the industrialization and modernization of the country. Since then, there has been only small fluctuations.

Nevertheless, the agriculture still has a vital role for Thailand's economy since Thailand is a major agricultural exporter and the sector still employs vast amount of Thai population: even though the percentage of people working in the agriculture has reduced drastically in recent years, 34% of males and 29% of females were still employed in agriculture in 2018 (World Bank 2019). The labour force in Thailand is also strongly impacted by migration from neighboring countries. Klyuev (2015) mentioned about 1.5 million registered migrant

workers and considerable fraction of undocumented migrants who are currently employed in the agricultural sector.

According to the Overseas Development Institute (2011) the decrease in the agricultural labour force was caused partially by mechanization, which has been increasing since the 1980s, with many people being attracted by the possibility of higher incomes in the industrial and services sectors. However, farm wages have increased since then. Thanks to higher labour productivity, the farm wages have been growing quicker than those in the manufacturing and services sectors in recent years.

Thailand is the prime example of successful agricultural development in an industrializing country. The structure of its agricultural regions varies, creating different demands in the labor market. The southern parts of the country are partly focused on agro-industry, while the northern parts are more focused on rice production (Overseas Development Institute 2011).

Unfortunately, Thai agriculture is also facing many issues as other countries around the World today. Like in many countries around the World, Thailand does not have enough skilled professionals in the agricultural sector. Agriculture is often seen as an unattractive sector, even many rural Thais do not want their children working as farmers due to the perception that this implies hard work with insufficient profits. Only a handful of students chose to study agriculture, especially in the tertiary level, which means not only a lack of educated agriculture workforce, but also a lack of researchers with needed qualification and specialization at many universities, especially in provincial areas. Although the number of agricultural students has been lately increasing, part of them does not work in the sector after the studies and according to some employers, there is a mismatch in the agricultural workforce. Many students who decide to stay and work in the agricultural sector does not meet employer's expectations (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Other major issue is poverty. Since majority of poor people in Thailand lives in rural areas, this issue is directly connected with agriculture (Warr 2004). Although Thai government is

dedicated to eliminate the poverty and the country has registered a decrease of percentage of people living under the poverty line, the number is still quite high: according to the Asian Development Bank the share of population living under the national poverty line was 8.6% in 2016. However, some other countries in the region have much higher numbers: Myanmar 32.1% in 2015, Laos 23.2% in 2012 and Cambodia 14% in 2014 (Asian Development Bank 2019).

Ageing population has also become a major issue for Thailand. The worst situation is in rural areas where the proportion of elderly people was up to 58.9% while in urban areas, the figure was 41.1% in 2016 (National Statistical Office 2017). Since majority of people living in rural areas are employed in agriculture, we can see significant changes in the age structure of this sector over the last several decades. The agricultural labor force of aged 60 years and over rose rapidly from 4.3% in 1986 to 18.8% in 2016 (Saiyut¹ et al. 2017). As well as in many other countries, we can also see the trend of young people leaving the agricultural sector and rural areas in general, which further deepens the problem.

Results of the study Changing age structure and input substitutability in the Thai agricultural sector indicated that: “The increasing rate of older labor cannot be replaced by the declining rate of young labor at the same level of output because the potential of the rising proportion of older labor to replace the proportion of young labor was poor.” (Saiyut² et al. 2017).

All of these aspects together can be very problematic for Thai agriculture and can negatively affect the quantity and quality of production and influence further development of the sector, possibly even the whole country.

Thai government addressed these issues by establishing policy options to encourage the young generation to be involved in the agricultural sector. Scholarships for agricultural studies are offered for universities and colleges, additional agricultural trainings are offered and low interest loans for agricultural investments are supported (Saiyut¹ et al. 2017). Another way how Thailand deals with the shortage of labor force in the agriculture sector

is higher involvement of agricultural machinery, which is also supported by Thai government (Saiyut² et al. 2017). On the other hand, the Thai government usually does not use policy interventions in agricultural commodity markets (Warr 2014).

2.2. Educational migration and agricultural studies

Since educational migration and globalization in general has been increasing over the last decades, it has been also becoming an increasingly important topic. International education has become a growing business as a result of globalization and liberalization process has caused free flow of cross-border education. These changes brought many new possibilities and international cooperation in education, represented by student and staff migration and knowledge exchange, has become essential to education development worldwide (Rhein 2017).

The study migration can be beneficial for all parties present: students gain new experience and knowledge. In addition, they can serve as an intermediary between sending and receiving countries, which deepens the cooperation.

Studies abroad can be rewarding experience for any student regardless his/her field of studies, including the agricultural majors. Agriculture itself can benefit from it as well, since the knowledge-transfer can possibly bring new ideas into the sector. The process can be also helpful for the whole country since the migrating students help with the knowledge transfer among different regions.

Innovation and new technologies have always been very important for the agricultural sector and international students can be helpful in the process of bringing new knowledge from abroad into the sector. There is also possibility of stimulation of higher labor market participation and economic growth (Hawthorne 2010).

Nevertheless, if not properly managed, the study migration can have negative side effects as a reduction of the quality of educational services or a large economic loss in a cases, when students, which previously completed training in their home country decide to stay abroad instead of returning home (Semiv & Semiv 2010).

2.2.1. Motivation to study abroad

There are many aspects, which motivate individual's decision to study abroad. These motivations can be influenced by nationality, culture, financial status and many others. However, the cause of study migration can also be the lack of opportunities in home country (Waechter & Maiworm 2006). In general, the main reasons can be summarized into 3 categories - economic, political and social (Bokareva 2014).

The motivation to student migration is often described by the 'push-pull' theory. The push and pull perspective states that there are two types of motivation for studies abroad:

- The 'push' factors are negative factors in home country such as bad political situation or insufficient educational possibilities.
- The 'pull' factors represent attractive factors in host country, which can be financial support, research opportunities and others (Mazzarol & Soutar 2002; Li 2013).

The 'push-pull' theory can be clearly seen in the cases of students from 'developing countries' like Thailand. They are 'pulled' into 'developed countries' by better quality of education, higher income, political freedom and more opportunities in general. While situation in their home country, such as lack of professional opportunities and lower wages, serve as the 'push' factors (Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

For many students, scholarships and family are the two main influencing factors (Mihi-Ramirez & Kumpikaite 2014). Social relationships, especially family, can be very influential during the planning of studies abroad and during the decision-making process about the migration after graduation. For example, student, whose family owns a business or a farm, will be much more motivated to come back to his/her homeland. For some individuals, religion is also strong motivating factor (Lin & Kingminghae 2017). Other influencers can be politics, weather, language, culture and others (Mihi-Ramirez & Kumpikaite 2014).

We can find many different trends in different regions around the World:

In the USA, Northern and Western Europe is the main motivation raising cultural and global awareness and improvement of second language (Van Der Meid 2003). Companies in these countries often prefer education from homeland universities. For this reason, motivation to go abroad for better future employment is not as common as in other regions (Wiers-Jenssen & Try 2005, Wiers-Jenssen 2011).

In Southern and Eastern Europe, as well as in Asia is student migration viewed mostly positively by HEIs and by companies. Because of this positive approach, better qualification and employability is usually the main motivation for many students studying abroad. Nevertheless, meeting new cultures and becoming more globally aware is often motivation as well (Rivza & Teichler 2007; Teichler & Janson 2007; Van Mol 2014; Xiang & Shen 2009).

When we divide the World into 'developed' and 'developing' countries. We can see that the main factors of motivation are different in both categories. Students from 'developed countries' tend to study abroad primarily for the cultural experience, to travel the world and to learn another language (Mazzarol & Soutar 2001; Van Der Meid 2003; Hung 2010) while students from 'developing countries' - to emigrate or to bring knowledge back to their homelands (Lanzendorf & Kelm, 2002; Maiworm & Teichler 2002; Dreher & Poutvaara 2011; Frieze et al. 2006; Zweig et al. 2004). However, there are also similarities, for example, social motives as one of the main motivational factors appear in both categories (Bokareva 2014).

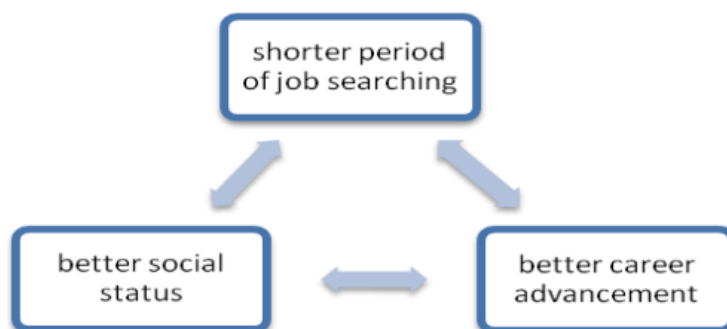
Although there are certain patterns in attitudes towards the study migration and motivation of students who want to be part of this process, each student is an individual case which has unique set of preferences and beliefs.

2.2.2. Motivation to become professional in the field

As number of college and university graduates grows every year, students try to find a way how to get a better qualification which would lead to employment and better position. For some students this can be the main aspect during the decision-making process whether or not to go to study abroad. It is believed it will add them a value as professionals (Zweig et al. 2004) and give them an advantage and better opportunities in a job searching after returning to their homeland (Kelo et al. 2006; Lanzendorf 2006).

These motivations were described in the in the ASK Asia case study as: higher chance of employability, career advancement and higher social status (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Picture 1: The greatest advantages of the EM alumni



Source: Chaloupková et al. 2015

Nevertheless, students sometimes decide to stay in the foreign country which creates an issue for their homeland, since the sending countries invest capital into the students in many forms like education, trainings, scholarships and other. If a student decides to stay abroad, his/her country loses highly skilled trained professional who is a valued human capital. However, while the home country loses a human capital, the host country gains it. Therefore it is no surprise, that many countries offer scholarships to foreign students for

the reason of boosting their own economies (Tarry 2008). This phenomenon, also known as the 'brain drain' can be a major issue for 'developing countries' whose students often tend to choose to study in the 'developed' host country and in many cases do not come back after finishing their studies (Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

Several studies have been made regarding this topic and many of them suggest that studying abroad increases a likelihood of working abroad (Parey & Waldinger 2011; Di Pietro 2012) or international careers (Ziguras & Law 2006; Wiers-Jenssen 2008; Hawthorne 2010; Findlay et al. 2012; Bozionelos et al. 2015; Bijwaard & Wang 2016; Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

On the other hand, agricultural students tend to have deeper relationship with their homeland and many of their families own a land which makes them more likely to come back after the studies abroad.

Regarding the individuals, studies abroad are in general believed to have a positive influence on participant's skills and their employability after studies, giving them a competitive advantage. The positive aspects are for example improvement of foreign language and intercultural skills, raise of independence, better teamwork ethic, etc. (European Commission 2016). All of these gained skills supposedly make the participants more experienced, therefore giving them a better employment chance.

Apart from gained skills, student migrants also gain a 'symbolic capital' invoking a 'signaling effect' which distinguishes them from the non-mobile graduates. Foreign education signals specific skills (e.g. intercultural and language skills) and personal characteristics to employers (Munk 2009).

However, it remains an open question whether employers really take international experiences of graduates into account when making recruitment decisions. Employers' approach can be variable throughout different fields and countries around the World, therefore, it is not possible to present a unified conclusion (Crossman & Clarke 2010; Li 2013).

2.2.3. Motivation to become a global citizen

Although this type of motivation is usually affiliated with the 'developed World' like European countries, where EU fully supports and promotes student mobility via Erasmus programmes. Fast development and increasing process of globalisation has caused, that the motivational factor of global citizenship and discovering new cultures is becoming a stronger driving force even in countries like Thailand.

Globalization has influenced almost all fields and most of the aspects of human life. Among others, it has had a significant impact on both agriculture and higher education, where it led to standardization of higher education systems, which positively influenced the international mobility due to internationally recognized diplomas, credit systems and other aspects (Hunter 2004). The process of internationalization of higher education has accelerated even more in recent decades due to a rising demand of employers for professionals capable of working in the international labor market and in an international environment (Starcic 2012). The HEIs started to prepare their students for newly created international challenges and tasks in order to allow their students to become 'global citizens' (Grudzinski-Hall 2007).

Global citizenship represents the ideal outcome of global education. It can be defined as "willingness of individuals to apply their knowledge of interrelated issues, trends, and systems and multi-perspective analytical skills to local, global, international, and intercultural problem solving" (Florida International University 2010). It is represented by open-mindedness, responsibility, decisiveness, respect to diversity and peacefulness, which should lead to better international cooperation and sustainable development of the World (Bereznicki et al. 2011).

According to several research studies, studying abroad has a positive influence on participants' feelings in a way of global citizenship. For many applicants it is becoming more

internationally aware one of the reasons why study abroad (Hunter et al. 2006; Mullen 2006; Hobbs & Chernotsky 2007; Braskamp 2008; Gibson et al. 2008; Kutner 2010; Danaher 2011). Studying abroad in order to become globally aware is beneficial especially for students who lack international exposure (McKeown 2009) which can be the case of many students in Asia who, even though have often limited international experience, are open and curious about other cultures. Hence, they should be also more motivated and open to the studies abroad.

Case of Thailand however, rather differentiates from the European cases and has many special specifications. A core concept in higher education is promotion of Thai values and traditions (also known as Thainess). Yet many of the values, which underlie Thainess, are not in-line with global citizenship (Rhein 2017). The population is very patriotic and traditional. Thai culture respects higher power distance, greng-jai (social deference to status), collectivism, femininity, uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede 2011) and social connectivity is often seen as the most important variable when choosing a graduate school in Thailand (Phethongkham 1999). Within this desire to cultivate the right relationships there is a delicate balancing act involving the comprehension and assimilation of international values and the retention of Thainess. One must be careful not to become too international and lose one's sense of Thainess (Rhein 2017).

2.3. Case study of Thailand

2.3.1. Student mobility in South East Asia

All countries of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) priorities development of their educational systems as they recognize it as a driving force of future development for the whole country. Internalization of education and student and staff mobility are also important parts of this process (UNESCO 2013). Process, which is especially important for countries like Thailand, which, even though has had relatively strong rate of economic growth over the past two decades (ASEAN 2013), is still relatively small open economy that is highly export dependent. Therefore, it is more exposed to the global economic system than other OECD countries (Witte 2000).

History of student mobility in Southeast Asia is relatively long. The first regional initiative of international cooperation in higher education sector in Southeast Asia was a creation of non-governmental organization called Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning in 1956. Since then, the cooperation and international mobility have become one of the main goals all around the World. The evidence of that is visible throughout all levels of cooperation: from the internal cooperation among universities within one country to cooperation among countries worldwide.

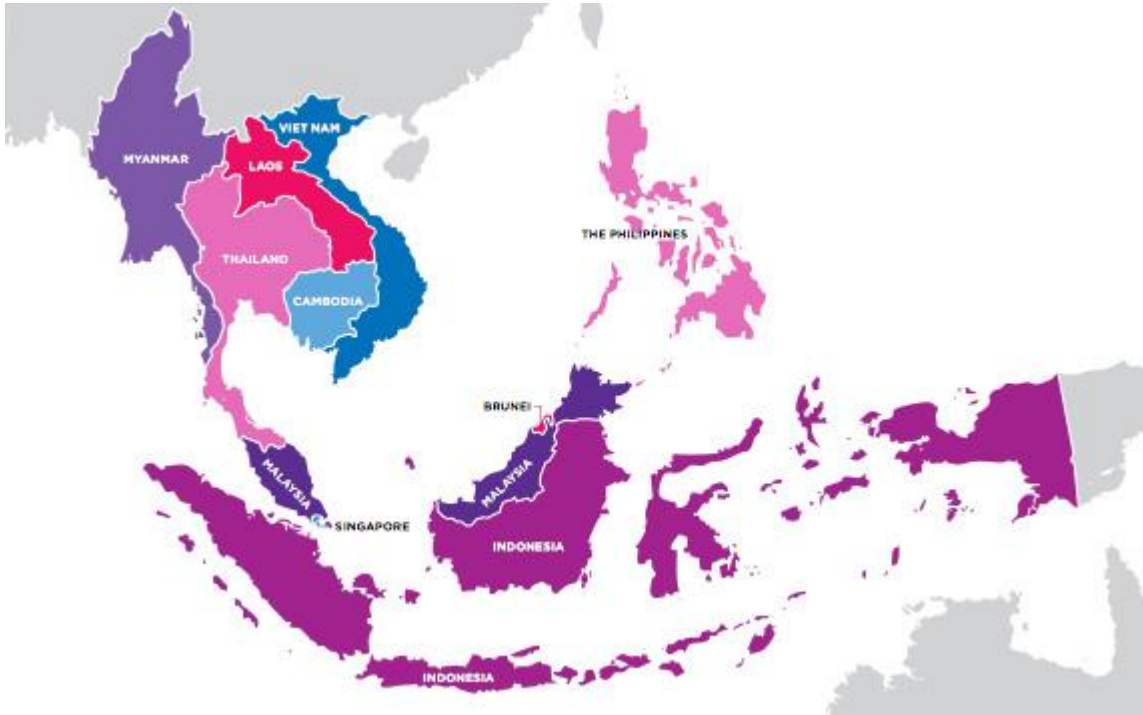
The countries of Southeast and Northeast Asia are coming together to advance this common vision of higher education (de Prado Yepes 2007). Asian countries are also becoming more connected with Europe and the rest of the World via many international agreements and projects like the Asia Link Programme and Erasmus Mundus (Robertson 2006). Even the internal cooperation and the knowledge transfer among Thai higher educational institutions has deepened in order to 'retain and upgrade' lecturers and curriculum developments (Chalamwong 2002).

The established role of higher education in providing and producing human capital needed for development has been highlighted with the demands of the knowledge-based economy, where government policy re-orientations focus on the expanding role of the higher education sector for socioeconomic advancement of countries. Beyond this, the role of HE in development shifts from its long-established broader capacity as a creator of knowledge and human capital, to institutions tasked to provide and edify its function in the democratization of education and knowledge through increased access (thereby promoting (social) mobility) (Pe Symaco & Meng Yew Tee 2018).

To make the higher education sector even more efficient and effective, HEIs around the World started to cooperate within their regions and worldwide. As a result, world university rankings were created to serve as international quality indicators, many new international agreements were signed, new programmes were created and the whole higher educational sector in general has become more standardized in recent decades. Meaning that the agencies involved in the provision of education must improve quality to compete in the international arena, but at the same time, international cooperation in education is essential to educational development in all countries (UNESCO 2013).

In Europe, higher education cooperation is represented by creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) in 2010. Similar initiative to harmonize the HE systems also appeared in South East Asia after creation of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) in 2015 (Pe Symaco & Meng Yew Tee 2018). The ASEAN Economic Community's task is greater cooperation that will see the free movement of goods, services, investment and skilled labour among the ASEAN member countries: Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

Figure 1: ASEAN member states



Source: ICEF Monitor 2014

In order to improve student mobility and cooperation in higher education sector within the member states, a plan was established in 2009 to create so-called “Common Space of Higher Education” with four main priorities: student mobility, credit transfers, quality assurance and research clusters. However, as expected with such ambitious project like this one, it is not an easy process and several issues has appeared, main ones being gaps in the quality of education, problematic credit transfer scheme and low gross rates of tertiary enrollment in some member countries (ICEF Monitor 2014).

Alongside this major project, student mobility programmes like ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) programme and the Passage to ASEAN programme begun to appear, indicating more and more frequent collaboration between ASEAN universities and further effort to promote greater student mobility within the region (ICEF Monitor 2014).

All of these motions positively influenced accessibility of international mobility and cooperation in Southeast Asia. However, it also created new challenges for the HEIs who are now facing tougher competition than ever before (Jareonsubphayanont 2015).

2.3.2. Thailand's challenges affecting the education system

Thailand is currently facing several major issues: political instability, slow economic growth, rapidly aging population and conflict between the Buddhist Thai majority and the Muslim Malay minority. All of these issues have either direct or indirect impact on Thailand's education and many other sectors.

Political instability

Due to frequent military coups in recent years, there has been a political repression, which curtails academic freedom and negatively affects education system as well. Important educational reforms are being delayed. Thai academics must often work under the constant threat of surveillance, political reprisal and arrest. Examples of the repression, like jailing of student activists critical of the monarchy or Thailand's new pro-military constitution can be found all over the country: In the summer of 2017, the military government arrested five academics attending an academic conference in Chiang Mai on charges of violation of the junta's ban on political gatherings of more than five people (Michael 2018).

Slow economic growth

Although Thailand is considered as one of the Asian tigers, Thailand's economy in general, has not been reaching its full potential in recent years, which of course negatively affects all sectors, especially the ones with government funding like education. Economic growth rates decreased from 7.2% of GDP in 2012 to 0.9% in 2014. The economy stabilized since then, nevertheless, Thai economic growth remains below the average in the ASEAN

community. Thailand's economy is projected to grow by 4.3% in 2019, whereas the economies of Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Cambodia, are expected to grow by 5.3%, 6.7%, 6.8% and 7.0% (Asian Development Bank 2019). The main factors causing the slow economic growth are presumably high level of corruption and political instability, which decreases the interest of foreign investors (Michael 2018). Nonetheless, in such a complex issue like economy, there are always many other influencing factors except the ones mentioned above.

Rapidly aging population

For much of the 20th century Thai higher education was focused on the quantitative aspect of educational provisioning (Rhein 2016). However, there has been certain changes in Thai population in recent years. Although the total numbers of Thai population constantly increase, the yearly population growth rate has been decreasing, fertility rates have been declining and the population is aging rapidly (Rhein 2017). Even though this decline is commonly seen as nations become more developed, it presents many new challenges for Thailand and its economy. United Nations stated that Thailand is one of the world's most quickly aging societies. The share of Thai people above the age of 65 has increased from 5% in 1995 to 11% in 2016 and is projected to reach more than a quarter of the population (about 17 million people) by 2040 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019).

In regard to the educational sector this means that while the enrolment ratio of students in Thai higher education is on the rise, the total number of annual enrollments has fallen due to changes in the population rates of school aged children, which makes Thailand's rapidly aging population another major issue for Thai education system, especially for the higher education (Rhein 2017). The student part of Thai population getting lower together with an increasing foreign competition in higher education, causes some HEIs to have insufficient number of students. In some cases, HEIs can even face the threat of closure of the whole institution. Especially private sector of education is vulnerable to this. It all led to creation of a supply-demand gap: 105,000 Thai students sat university entrance exams in 2015 in a system that can admit more than 156,000 new students per year (ICEF Monitor

2016). As a result of these decreasing numbers university admissions have become less competitive in recent years and many HEIs are considering downsizing their departments and programmes (Michael 2018). According to the Bangkok post, these issues could even lead to the closure of as many as three quarters of higher education institutions over the upcoming decade (Fredrickson 2017).

Thailand's answer to this issue is to stimulate immigration and upskill its labor force. Thailand has relatively low-skilled labor force compared to other countries in the ASEAN community, and faces a severe shortage of skilled labor (ASEAN 2013). Far-reaching improvements in education are vital for overcoming this challenge and Thailand has invested heavily in modernizing its education system in recent years (Michael 2018).

These attempts are however often unsuccessful due to other the mentioned issues, like political instability: frequently changing government officials cause that many reforms are not properly executed. Promoted changes are also often somewhat superficial and primarily focused on promoting political stability rather than increasing quality of education. UNESCO and OECD found that Thailand's "recent investments in education ... are not resulting in the expected outcomes. The country's results in international tests, such as the OECD PISA study, are below those of many peer countries (OECD 2018; UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019).

2.3.3. Thai education system

The education is a major influencer in many sectors. The quality of education system in its entirety is perceived as one of the factors influencing poverty. Unequal or inadequate education may create an income gap between city dwellers and villagers (Nations Encyclopedia 2015). It is also an important aspect for development of the whole country; therefore, it is vital to ensure its quality.

Thailand's 1997 Constitution provides that all Thai people have equal right to receive at least 12 years of basic education, of quality and free of charge, which ensures availability of education for the wide Thai population. In addition, system of scholarships and other supportive programs help get a higher education to talented students from lower classes who would struggle to pay tuition fees by themselves (ASEAN 2013). Nevertheless, due to imperfections in the capital market, not all high-school graduates can participate in higher education, especially those from low-income families (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Currently, there are three governmental agencies which are responsible for Thai educational system (AngloINFO 2015):

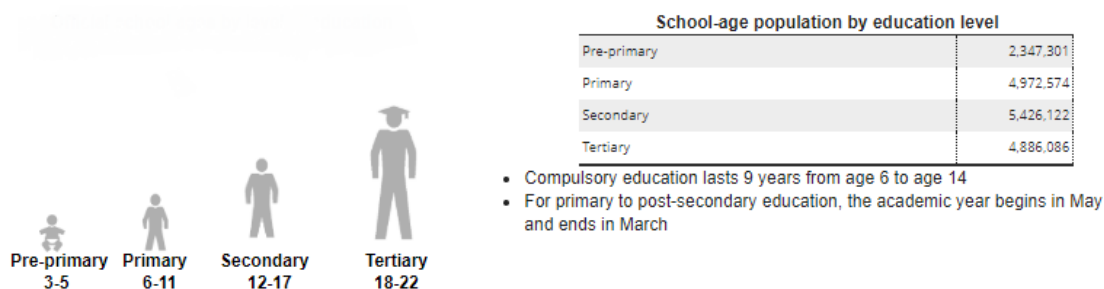
- The National Education Commission – responsible for educational policies, planning and research
- The Ministry of Education – responsible for pre-school education, primary education, secondary education, teacher education, vocational and technical education, curriculum development; under this Ministry there are a small number of Commissions, which take care of specific types of educational institutions
- The Ministry of University Affairs – responsible for managing state universities

In general, free basic education, student-friendly loan programmes, generous tuition subsidies as well as increased capacity have paved the way to the expansion of higher education. However, tertiary-level participation still varies quite substantially between the rich and the poor and across geographical locations (Pe Symaco & Meng Yew Tee 2018).

According to ASEAN state of education report: "The net enrolment rate in primary school (89.7% in 2010) is below UNESCO's regional average, but the net enrolment rate in secondary school is very close to the regional average. The student-to-teacher ratios for primary (19.9:1 in 2010) and secondary (19.9:1 in 2011) education are satisfactory in comparison with rates for most other ASEAN Member States. The gross enrolment rate in

tertiary education (47.7% in 2011) is quite high, compared with rates for other ASEAN Member States.” (ASEAN 2013).

Figure 2: Official school ages by level of education



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019

Another part of Thai educational system are Community Learning Centres, which are important especially for lifelong learning programmes. There are over 7,000 Community Learning Centres in Thailand. They have become essential means of empowering individuals and promoting community development through lifelong education for all. In addition, a total of 906 public libraries are currently used as lifelong learning centers and provide books, Internet, reading, and various learning promotion activities (ASEAN 2013).

Thai education in general is facing several major challenges today:

- **Finance**

Thai educational system is mainly financed by the national budget, with 29.5% of annual government expenditure in 2011 allocated to the education system, which is much more than other ASEAN members (ASEAN 2013). Thai government has been very supportive of the education sector. For much of the past decade, the proportion of its budget spent on the education system has been above 20% with the main aim on basic education, covering pre-primary, primary and secondary education. Such high amount makes it in fact the largest component of the

government's budget (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010). Although such support shows commitment of Thai government to educational sector, it can also have a negative impact. High dependence on the government can for example negatively affect flexibility to respond to the changes on the demand side, which is represented by student's needs. This fact can be seen especially in higher education where approximately 80% of public expenditure goes to higher educational institutions, while only 20% is used for student loans (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

The main costs here are tuition fees for private schools, but there is also substantial expenditure on fees charged by universities, and on private tutors. However, the trend of private funding has been decreasing and the education system is becoming increasingly dependent upon public sources and funds, making it costlier for national budget. For that reason, Thai Ministry of education prefers in higher involvement of private sector in the future (ASEAN 2013).

- **Governance and Management**

Since 2006, Thailand has been working on decentralization of their educational system. Unfortunately, this transition has been proven both challenging and time-consuming and majority of the sector remains fairly centralized. So far, the majority of schools under local administration supervision are preprimary and primary level institutions (ASEAN 2013).

- **Quality**

In 20th century, Thai education system has gone through successful transformation into a mass institution fulfilling the quantitative demand of Thai population. Now however, it is facing another challenge in the matter of its quality (Rhein 2017).

Quality of education can naturally vary among the fields of study, regions, schools and teachers. Differences in quality can be found especially between urban and rural areas. Nevertheless, the issue of quality is one of the biggest challenges of Thai educational system in general (ASEAN 2013).

Thai primary and secondary students perform very poorly in English language, mathematics and science. The 2009 PISA results, for example, showed that most Thai students were below the OECD average in the areas of reading, mathematical and scientific literacy (ASEAN 2013).

Many children still do not attend school at all. It is estimated that in Thailand, 300,000 to several million children are left out from attending school entirely (Jitcharoenkul 2016).

Ministry of education set up six main reform goals in order to rise the quality of Thai education: curriculum reform; teaching-learning reform; testing, assessment and evaluation of learners; university admissions system; teacher evaluation, accreditation and promotion; and assessment of educational institutions (ASEAN 2013).

Concerning the higher education, with increasing international cooperation and competition in recent years, the quality of education is more important than ever. However, Thai higher education has not met the international standards and continues to be outpaced by its regional neighbors. According to the 2014 - 15 World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, Thai educational standards continue to decline. The report indicates that Thai universities ranked 8th out of 10 ASEAN nations (Schwab 2015). The needs of the labor market are not being met as higher education programmes prefer to focus on more popular student friendly courses and the learning model is still rather teacher centered (Rhein 2017).

The private companies and universities also complained about the quality of education in Thailand; candidates often did not have adequate knowledge related to their specific field, lacked experience and technical know-how; their language and communication skills were weak and lacked soft skills, which made them generally not able to work independently (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

A quality assurance system was implemented to address the structural issues. However, this degree of documentation merely demands more effort from the

already overworked and underpaid faculty and the level of quality still presents a major problem (Lao 2015).

In addition, the progress of quality increase is also slowed down by cultural habits: In Thai culture, students and faculties are often discouraged from disagreeing with authority or revealing abuses of power or position, which negatively affects the level of quality and the development of education sector (Wongsamuth 2016).

- **Equity**

The gender equity is not a major issue in Thailand since gender parity exists throughout much of the school system. Nonetheless, there are certain gender discrepancies. Boys in primary and secondary education in Thailand are significantly more likely to repeat grades than girls. They are also less likely to make the transition from primary to secondary school. In higher education, we can also find a majority of female students (UNESCO & UNICEF 2012).

Even though the male X female equity is not a big issue in Thailand, there are huge differences between the rich and the poor and between urban and rural areas. The issue of children from poor families being less likely to remain in schools to complete upper secondary education, and to proceed to higher education remains a major challenge even with established student loan system. Children least likely to complete upper secondary education include children living in remote rural areas, children from immigrant families, children from ethnic communities in the Northeast, North and far South and the low-income families in general (UNESCO & UNICEF 2012). They all remain under-represented in higher education. To ensure the equity of higher education, Thai government is often forced to intervene the sector through the subsidization of public educational institutions and student loans (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

2.3.4. Thai Higher education

The inception of the first university in Thailand happened over 100 years ago and in 1960, there were still only five universities in Thailand, all of them situated in Bangkok (Metzger 2010). Since then however, the higher education sector has undergone great growth and development.

The number of higher education institutions in Thailand has grown strongly over the past decades from just a handful of universities in the 1970s to 146 officially recognized HEIs in 2015, 31 of these offer agricultural studies (UNESCO 2015). Before student numbers started to decrease due to the demographic decline of recent years, this growth was driven by the rapid massification of education in Thailand. The number of students in Thai higher education exploded from less than 130,000 students in the early 1970s to more than 2 million in 2011 (Michael 2018). Nonetheless, the popularity of agricultural studies remains low: only 2.4% of all tertiary students pursued studies in the field of agriculture and related life-sciences fields in 2011 (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

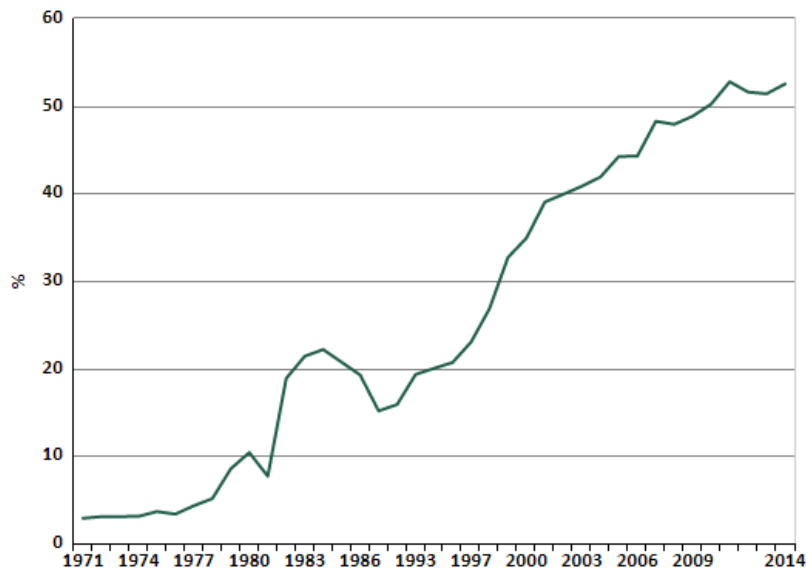
Unsurprisingly, growing demand for education brought a number of changes to the HEI landscape, such as mergers of smaller colleges into larger universities and the emergence of private HEIs, mostly since the 1980s. Private HEIs accounted for 48% of HEIs (75) in 2015, even though their share of enrollments stood at only 17% (Michael 2018).

The level of Thai education has been increasing as well as numbers of educational facilities throughout the whole educational sector in recent decades, offering new approaches and specializations, often influenced by internalization of education (ASEAN 2013). These motions of creating a broader spectrum of education is a positive change for Thai education, however, it is not certain if there will be sufficient demand for so many educational institutions in upcoming years.

The biggest reformation of Thai higher education begun in 1990s and continues to this day. The main aims of these reforms are accessibility, accountability and decentralization (Rhein 2017). Special attention is paid to free access to education, improved quality for the youth in rural areas and fostering public universities, allowing them to control their own affairs (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

There was an extraordinary growth of students in higher education during the past decades and a major increase of enrollment to higher education which started in 1990s and lasted till 2007. After that, the increase slowed down, but mostly kept its increasing trend (World Bank 2019).

Figure 3: Thailand gross enrolment ratio in tertiary education 1971-2014



Source: World Bank 2019

The data clearly show that Thai higher education has gone through a transition from an elitist to a mass institution in recent decades and continues to be further reformed and improved in order to increase quality and equity of the system. One of the latest examples

of this continuing process is an introduction of new admission process in 2018, which seeks to improve student's chances of admission and to make the admissions process more socially fair (Michael 2018).

Because of the transition, Thailand has now relatively high rate of participation in higher education in comparison with other Southeast Asian countries. Majority of students enrolling to higher education are of course new high-school graduates. However, the increase of enrolment can be also seen with the adults. Most of these students enroll to Rajabhat Universities or special programmes (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

The transition rate of students from upper secondary school to higher education is particularly high – at 74% in 2009, and the gross enrolment rate in tertiary education was 47.7% in 2011 (ASEAN 2013). Nevertheless, the vast majority of Thai students study at the undergraduate level. In 2015, 2.14 million students were enrolled in the bachelor's level or below, while only 180,418 students pursued graduate studies above bachelor's level (Michael 2018).

The increasing phenomenon can be explained by both rising demand for higher education, stimulated by the availability of free basic education, generous student loan system for tertiary students and an expansion of capacity across the university system making higher education more accessible than ever before (ASEAN 2013).

The student loan system plays a major role in giving access to higher education to the lower class. The system itself was established by Thai government in 1996 and its popularity has been increasing since then. Although grants in a form of scholarships are also available in Thailand, their sizes are small comparing with those of loans (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Generally speaking, the main objective of Student Loan Fund (SLF) is to increase higher education opportunity for students from low-income families. Other additional objectives are to promote equal income distribution in a long run and to develop a demand-side financing system by increasing the capacity of households in contributing more resources

to education. The SLF loans cover tuition fees, education-related expenses and other living expenses. Only high-school or tertiary-level students whose household income is under 150,000 baht (4110 EUR) per year are eligible to apply for the loan. During the first 10 years of its operation, the SLF lent money to more than 2.6 million students, with the loan value totaling nearly 200 billion baht (5.88 billion EUR) (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Such a rapid increase of students, which we have seen in recent years, can be financially problematic for the Thai government. Since the expenditure on educational system was already high, the growth of budget on education has not kept pace with the growth in number of students enrolled, meaning that public expenditure on education per student has experienced a long-term downward trend which can have negative impact on the quality of higher education (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Another issue connected with the changes in Thai higher education in recent decades is that a large proportion of university graduates are not sufficiently competent in their fields; while there is a surplus of graduates in the field of social sciences, there is a lack of qualified graduates in the technological and professional fields (Weesakul et al. 2004; Rachapaetayakom 2005).

The World Bank East Asia and Pacific Report described three priority areas for improvement of the educational system (World Bank 2012):

- effectiveness and efficiency in financing
- better management of public institutions
- better stewardship of the higher education system: e.g. ensure stronger links between industry and universities

Institutions in the public sector are administratively classified into (1) universities with limited admission, (2) 'open universities' (those with unlimited admission), (3) autonomous universities (those that are able to manage their own budget, own and manage property, establish new faculties and departments, as well as introduce new academic programmes),

(4) Rajabhat Universities (former teacher's colleges), (5) Rajamangala Universities of Technology (former vocational colleges) and (6) public vocational colleges (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010). These types of HEIs receive a major portion of their funding from the government and only minority of their budget is accumulated in a form of fees and tuitions.

Thai Government is steadily providing public universities with more institutional autonomy and academic freedom in order to increase their responsiveness to educational demand and enhance their quality (Kirtikara 2004). This means that public universities are required to obtain sufficient budget to be sustainable in the long run. Most public universities provide special programmes for which they can charge high tuition fees and receive extra budget income. As a result of public subsidies, public universities can charge tuition fees that are about one-half of the size of the tuition fees charged by private-sector universities. Nevertheless, the enrolment share of private universities is reported to be declining, and public higher education providers account for 85% of all enrolments (ASEAN 2013). The domination of the public sector can be of course easily explained by it being more affordable option of education. Even though fees and tuitions can be found in public HEIs as well, they are in most cases much lower, usually about a half or even one fourth of those charged by private institutions. The tuitions on public HEIs are actually set even lower than the actual cost that results in heavy subsidization by the government. In addition, another factor which makes public HEIs more attractive is their longstanding history, which makes them appear more trustworthy and prestige in comparison with the private HEIs which were established later, mostly in recent decades (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

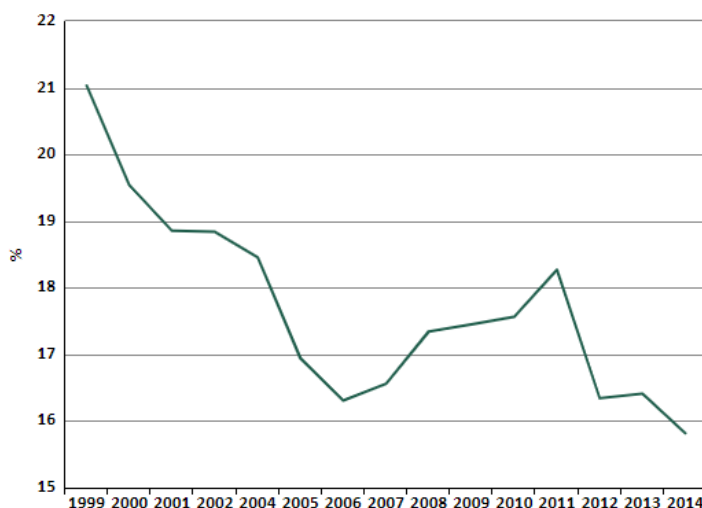
The private sector is part of Thai higher education since 1969, when Private College Act allowed six private higher education institutions to use the word "college" and slowly allowed these schools to shift from associates' degrees to bachelor's degrees (Boonprasert 2002). The sector got most importance in 1990s, when there was a rapid growth of private higher education programmes (Rhein 2017). Since then however, the popularity of private

HEIs has been mostly decreasing and the private sector plays only a minor role in higher education. The sector consists of private Thai universities, vocational colleges and international institutions. The international institutions have so far only a marginal role within the private sector due to legal restrictions on foreign ownership of educational institutions and other obstacles (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Nevertheless, there was a development of the situation: in 2017, foreign higher education institutions were given the green light to open branch campuses in Thailand – the move intended to modernize the education system and reduce skill gaps in Thailand. The HEIs however, still have many restrictions to avoid direct competition with Thai universities suffering from declining enrollments (Michael 2018).

There has also been a growing demand for high quality international education and foreign language training driven mainly by increasingly affluent middle class. This trend can be seen in many other South East Asia countries, but the demand in Thailand seems to be one of the highest: in 2017, Thailand had the second highest number of English-medium private international schools in ASEAN (Michael 2018).

Figure 4: Thailand private enrolment in tertiary education 1999-2014



Source: World Bank 2019

To cope with the enrollment expansion, the education financing system needs to be reformed. The current system of public subsidy to public educational institutes has proven to be inefficient and regressive. It also favors public educational institutes over private ones. The student loan system also showed a big potential, however, it is criticized for very poor collection mechanism, it fails to disburse loans on time and it faces many other issues (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010).

Although the increase of availability and enrollment in higher education has had positive influence on lives of Thai public, especially for the lower class, such major changes in the sector also brought issues which need to be dealt with and changes which need to be made in order to increase the quality of education.

2.3.4.1. Internationalization of higher education system and Thai student mobility

Thailand is one of the few countries in the region, which have never been fully colonized by European powers, therefore its educational system developed mostly indigenously and is in some ways unique. This fact could be considered a disadvantage in the field of international mobility since the ex-colonized countries have certain experience (even though in many cases mostly negative) and many former colonizers have never completely cut their ties with their ex-colonies. Countries with colony history could be therefore expected to have more international connections.

Thailand's unique history nor political instability and lack of strong governmental strategies to promote internationalization have not stopped the internalization process. The numbers of cooperative programmes between Thai and foreign HEIs are on the rise. We can see collaboration deepening within the South East Asia region as well as with the

rest of the World. Whole Thai educational system is being internationalized and newly created connections between Thailand and foreign countries like Erasmus Mundus help to rise the quality of the system and help to bring new knowledge into the country (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

The increase of student outbound as well as inbound mobility and the internationalization of higher education can be especially seen during the economic expansion of the 1990s and early 2000s. International HEIs in Thailand saw rapid increase of enrollment since the economic collapse of 1997. The international higher education in Thailand in general, grown dramatically and most of the leading universities and higher education institutions now have established international programmes (Rhein 2017): In 2015, Thai universities offered 1,044 international programs in English, according to the Australian government (The department of Education and Training² 2015).

Although the number of students in higher education is growing and student mobility all across Asia is rapidly growing as well: 4 out of every 10 tertiary students studying abroad are from Asia (Xiang & Shen 2009), and in global perspective, student mobility has kept pace with student enrolment (UNESCO Institute of Statistics³ 2019), Thailand has traditionally rather low outbound mobility ratio. Thai student mobility remains relatively flat over the past years: student mobility ranged from 1.2% in 1999 to 1.1% in 2006 and 1.3% in 2015 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019), whereas for example Vietnam's outbound rate increased from 1.0% in 1999 to 2.6% in 2015. While the outbound mobility rate is not necessarily a good predictor of total growth of outbound student numbers, Thailand's growth rate is also relatively small in absolute numbers. Between 2002 and 2016, the number of outbound degree students increased by only about 10%, from 25,767 students to 28,339 students (UNESCO Institute of Statistics³ 2019) and the outbound mobility ratio of Thai higher education has had rather decreasing trend in recent years (World Bank 2019). In China, by comparison, the number of outbound degree students simultaneously grew by 256%, while the number of outbound students in Vietnam exploded by 422% during the same time period (from 12,197 to 63,703 students) (UNESCO Institute of Statistics³ 2019).

Figure 5: Thailand outbound mobility in tertiary education 1998-2013



Source: World bank 2019

Low numbers of Thai students studying abroad can be caused by combination of many factors, especially the issue of insufficient funds seem to be one of the major influencers. Even though Thai higher education has gone through transition and now is accessible to wider public, there is still inequality of access to international higher education. It further continues the cycle of income disparity and widens the wealth gap (Rhein 2017). The cost of education continues to rise and English language education even within Thailand is beyond the reach of most of the Thais, which is very problematic since this is an immensely important skill in the 21st century. Students going abroad are mostly self-funded, which limits many potential participants. Many, who would be willing to study abroad simply do not have the needed funds (Michael 2018).

However, with the promotion of regional and even worldwide mobility, increasing international cooperation and creation of new international study programmes and scholarships, the student mobility is getting more and more accessible even for people from lower classes.

2.3.4.2. Motivation to go abroad; Push and pull factors of Thai student mobility

The dynamics of the student mobility and the internationalization of higher education have changed profoundly since the 1990s. Back then, the primary motivations to study abroad were related to academic, political, geostrategic, cultural and development aid issues. Countries took a favorable view of the mobility of students and academics as an opening to the world, in the hope of creating international networks of elites. Today, even though the original motivations remain valid, cross-border education is being increasingly driven by economic considerations (Rhein 2017).

Quality education

University qualifications have become so common in Thailand in recent years, that they are now often necessary for even basic clerical positions. Because of the rapid increase of enrolment there are much higher numbers of Thais with higher education diploma, which means that competition for rewarding positions is fierce. Since Thai higher education has several quality issues and the system is going through the transition, foreign education experience, knowledge of English and internationally recognized qualifications can give the participants a distinct advantage during a job search (ICEF Monitor 2015).

These assumptions are also applicable for agriculture studies, which shows the ASK Asia Thailand case study: 73% out of 15 respondents working in agriculture sector with study experience from Europe strongly agreed (or agreed) that their international study background can bring an advantage in searching of a job. In addition, 80% of them declared that it helped them gather important contacts for their professional lives (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

The same study also asked employers of the students and they showed positive attitudes towards international involvement in the agricultural sector and study experience of their employees as well. Out of 12 asked employers, 92% of them believe that international donors made a visible impact in the development of the Thai agricultural sector, especially in workforce capacity building and professional networking. One of the most frequently mentioned aspects was the opportunity for Thai people to go abroad, which enabled them to gain international experience, broaden their world view and improved their language ability, research capacity, and networking (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Languages

Because of Thailand's unique history and other influencing aspects, the level of English or potentially other foreign language skills are relatively low among the Thai population, the only exception is usually the well-educated upper class (Sivarnee 2013). Although English is taught at all levels of Thai primary and secondary education, it is not commonly used in day to day life and most students leave secondary school with a limited understanding of grammar and virtually no comprehension of English usage for academic purposes (Agsornjarung 2003). The inefficiency of English education in Thailand is even more visible in comparison with other countries: in the EF English Proficiency Index 2015, Thailand ranked 14th out of 16 Asian nations and 62nd out of 70 in the global rankings (Dumrongkiat 2016).

That said, it is important to mention that Thailand is a multilingual and multiethnic country. The only language with privilege is Standard Thai (hereafter Thai), the sole national and official language of the country defining Thai national identity. Standard Thai is used throughout the whole country in government, education, and other sectors. There are, however, many varieties of Thai language and many other languages are spoken in Thailand as well. The main varieties of the Thai language can be divided into four based on regional features, that is, "Khammuang" (Northern Thai), "Isan" or "Lao" (Northeastern Thai), "Klang"

or “Thaiklang” (Central Thai), and “Tay” or “Pakay” (Southern Thai) (Sisamouth & Lah 2015). Apart from these major varieties, over 70 minority languages are used in the country; for instance, Patani Malay and Thai Khmer have more than 1 million speakers. There are also varieties of Chinese spoken among the Chinese communities (Sisamouth & Lah 2015). Therefore, even though knowledge of “foreign” languages is not high, it is common for the Thai people to speak two, or even more languages.

English language came into Thailand in 1826 with British diplomats from the British East India Company for international trading between Thailand (at that time “Siam”) and Britain (Sisamouth & Lah 2015). Royal family realized its importance in preserving the independence of the country and preventing it from the European powers. They also acknowledged English as a tool useful in modernization of their country and English became the language of Thai elite. Wealthy Thais were either educated abroad or within the royal court system where courses were often taught in English (Rhein 2017).

Later on, Thai government also realized the potential of the English language and English became a part of Thai educational curriculum in 1913 (Kachru & Nelson 2011) making it the first foreign language subject in the Thai educational system. Since then, English has become the most popular foreign language in Thailand (Rappa & Wee 2006). Its popularity continues to grow even in recent years: according to study made by Sisamouth WK and Che Lah S. in 2015, 77% of asked students showed favorable attitudes towards the English language. The main reasons mentioned were usefulness of international communication, characteristics of the language and good experiences (Sisamouth & Lah 2015). Many institutions at all levels of education, both public and private, have noticed this motion and started offering education with greater focus on the language or entire programmes thought in English. Nevertheless, the international mobility offers many benefits and experience which simply cannot be substituted by education in Thailand.

Today, good English skills are often highly valued in Thailand and people with good knowledge of the language can possibly get better position in many fields, including the agricultural sector and government (Rappa & Wee 2006). Since the education of foreign

languages in Thailand still remains relatively limited, improvement of foreign language skill is often seen as one of the main benefits and motivators of going to study abroad. Many Thai students show interest in English and the outbound mobility might be the best way, how to gain experience and high-level language skills.

Broadening own horizons and international experience

In addition to the main pull factors there are of course many other benefits for the students. Some of the benefits are not just academic. The opportunity of living abroad and experiencing foreign culture can be also a major motivator for many students: In the study conducted by ASK Asia project, 21 Thai respondents, who studied in Europe via Erasmus Mundus programme, were asked about their main motivation to go study abroad and 29% of them answered they wanted to experience living and studying in Europe. It was in fact, the most frequent answer of all (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Also, the self-perceptions of their skills increased in a broad variety of fields: General self-evaluation of skills and competence improvement was rated 4.18 out of 5 points (5 meaning the maximum improvement). The skills and competences which were developed the most were the following: responsibility (rated on average 4.5), decision making (on average rated 4.4) and independence (on average rated 4.4). The least improved skills were computer skills (a rating of 3.7) (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Figure 6: Comparison of skills and competences development and demand of EM alumni



Source: Chaloupková et al. 2015

Living and studying in a foreign country in general, is an incredible and complex experience, which builds character and helps to broaden participant's horizons. Studying abroad can overall grant given individual a higher social status in a society (Stafford 2005). Cultural capital gained from studying abroad is an advantage that cannot be acquired staying in one's home country. International experience indicates certain qualities and can be attractive to employers (ICEF Monitor 2015).

Nevertheless, while in most of the cases, the international experience is viewed positively, local studies have also aspects which can be advantageous, like better understanding of the local culture and work practices and having more local networks (Chaloupková et al. 2015).

Political instability in Thailand

As mentioned earlier, the political instability is a major issue for Thai education as well as for the whole country. Academic rights are oppressed, education reforms are being delayed and the quality of education stagnates because of it. It is no surprise that these issues have boosted student outbound mobility as indicates the example from Australia: After military intervention into the Thailand's politics in 2014, data from the Australian government points out 9.5% increase in Thai enrolment in Australian institutions year-to-date July 2015 (compared to the same period for 2014) (The Department of Education and Training¹ 2015).

Social relationships

Another major influencer when deciding whether to go or not to go study abroad is family. Depending on individual cases, social relationships can have positive or negative effect. Understandably, most of the young people in their late teenage years and early 20s want to feel independent and make their own decisions. However, Thai society is still relatively traditional, family and social relationships have a major influence on the decision-making process regarding studying abroad and returning home after studies. In addition to social influence, family can have economical influence as well (ICEF Monitor 2015). Since many Thai students going abroad are self-funded, it can be expected that many of them will be financially supported by their families, which of course gains even bigger importance to it during the process. Especially middle-class families and families living in big cities often look for international education for their children. They are more likely to send them abroad since they are usually more in contact with foreign culture, there is higher competition in cities, and they are more likely to have funds to do it (Tarry 2008).

Staying in foreign country or coming back to Thailand after studies

The question of whether to stay abroad after studies or come back home is another crucial part of international mobility. It is a crucial question especially for the home country, since it can lose precious highly qualified human capital in the case of students not returning home.

This after-study decision-making process has many similar influencers like the one before mobility: economic and social factors being the major ones.

The economic factor is in most of the cases of Thailand in the favor of staying abroad, since the main reason for many Thai students is to get high quality education, they tend to choose 'developed countries' with good economic situation, which can also usually offer high quality standard of living, good job opportunities and other benefits tempting graduates to stay abroad.

The social factor often serves as a counterpart to the economic factor. In general, students who are more attached to their native culture are more likely to come back to Thailand (Lin & Kingminghae 2017). Family is once again major influencer, which can be the main reason for many students to come back to Thailand, especially if the family owns some kind of business, farm or land. Romantic relationships can be important social factor as well. These relationships can support both of the options, depending whether the spouse, girlfriend or boyfriend are Thai or foreign and can play a major role in the decision-making process (Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

Regarding the study fields, students majoring in fields like business or law are more likely to go study and also to stay abroad because of better job opportunities and other factors (Lin & Kingminghae 2017). This trend can be seen worldwide: almost one out of every four mobile students were enrolled in business and administration programmes in countries with available data (UNECOSO 2013). These types of studies are also very popular in Thailand: business administration studies are together with international business, English language and marketing the most popular studies in Thailand (UNECOSO 2013).

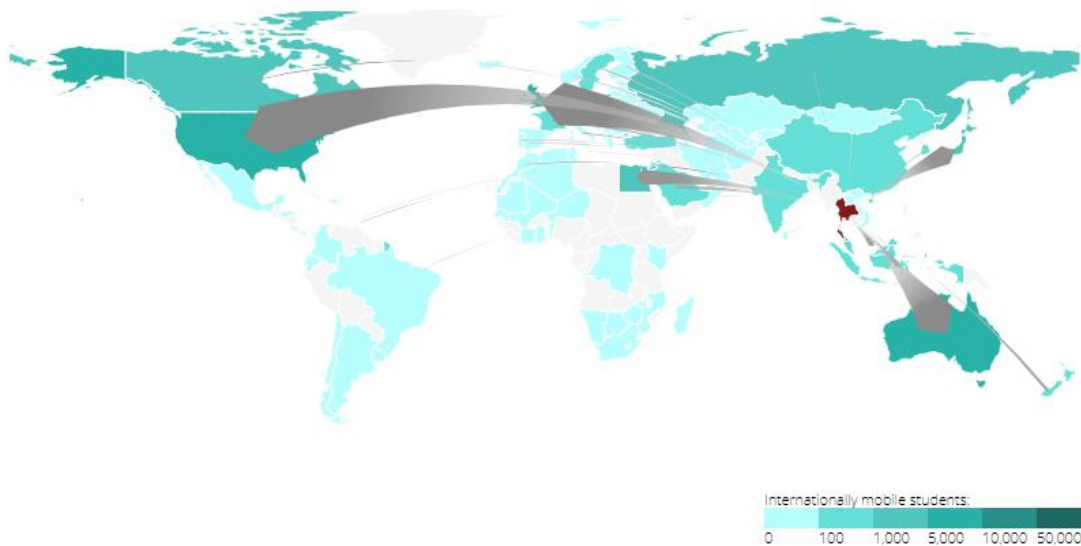
Since popularity of agricultural studies is not as high and the number of agriculture students is quite low, the numbers of them studying abroad are of course much lower as well. In general, agricultural students tend to be more connected with their native culture, which can strongly affect their decision-making process, both before mobility and after studies. Stronger connection with their native culture means that they are less likely to participate in student mobility programmes (UNESCO 2013). On the other hand, it also means they are more likely to come back after their study period in the host country is finished.

2.3.4.3. Thai outbound and inbound mobility

Outbound mobility

Since knowledge of English language is highly valued in Thailand, main study destinations of Thai students are English-speaking countries. The most preferred country is traditionally the USA, followed by the United Kingdom and Australia. In these destinations, Thai students tend to choose universities with best reputation such as Oxford, since they believe diploma from highly prestigious university will be most beneficial for their future career (Tarry 2008).

Figure 7: Map of the Flow of Thai Tertiary-Level Students



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics¹ 2019

However, there has been changes in the preference of destinations in recent years. Number of students going abroad to study to these traditionally popular countries are decreasing and many other countries are gaining on popularity. As per data of the International Institute of Education, the number of Thai students in the U.S. dropped by 3.1% between 2015/16 and 2016/17, after already declining by more than 40% since 2001/02, when Thailand was the 10th leading country of origin with 11,606 students (Institute of International Education 2019).

Table 1: Top 10 study destinations of Thai students in 2018 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics¹ 2019)

	Country	Nr of students
1	United States	6,914
2	United Kingdom	5,992
3	Australia	5,667
4	Japan	2,691
5	Egypt	2,091
6	Malaysia	890
7	Indonesia	804
8	France	462
9	New Zealand	451
10	Saudi Arabia	451

Institutions in Asian countries have emerged as new players in the international student market and the importance of Asian countries is on the rise. Japan ranked as the fourth most popular destination of Thai students in 2018. Thanks to the increased collaboration of ASEAN members in the higher education sector, there has been rise in intra-region mobility in South East Asia in recent years. Neighboring Asian countries are becoming more popular academic destinations (Lin & Kingminghae 2017), two South East Asian countries ranked in the top 10 destinations in 2018: Malaysia on sixth place and Indonesia on seventh. This trend is fueled mainly by improved capacity and quality in regional education hubs and by student preference for greater proximity to home and affordability of regional study destinations (ICEF Monitor 2014). In addition, the importance of China in the field of international higher education cannot be ignored as well. Its influence has grown in recent years and it is expected to grow even further in upcoming years (Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

In comparison with other countries in the region, we can find similar destination preferences. Majority of students in Viet Nam, Malaysia and China also choose to study in English speaking countries since the importance of English is recognized by most of the

World and plays a major role especially in higher education. Many universities in these countries are known worldwide as quality and prestigious HEIs, which is important for many students as well.

Although the destinations are similar in all countries in Table 2, there is a visible difference in the outbound mobility ratio, which is much lower than in the rest of the countries. This fact further confirms the phenomenon of low international mobility of Thai students.

Table 2: Top Five Destinations (Host Countries) for Outbound Mobile Students by Country of Origins in 2016 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics¹ 2019)

	Thailand	Viet Nam	Malaysia	China
1.	United States (6,914)	United States (22,172)	United Kingdom (17,360)	United States (309,837)
2.	United Kingdom (5,992)	Japan (19,152)	Australia (15,319)	Australia (112,329)
3.	Australia (5,667)	Australia (14,491)	United States (8,446)	United Kingdom (89,318)
4.	Japan (2,691)	France (4,400)	Egypt (4,556)	Japan (76,537)
5.	Egypt (2,091)	United Kingdom (3,979)	Japan (2,245)	Canada (60,936)
Total number of students abroad	29,884	82,160	64,187	869,387
Outbound mobility ratio (%)	1.3	3.6	5.1	2

Nonetheless, even though we can find certain similarities within the country and the region, the decision to study abroad and where depends on a broad spectrum of cultural, educational, economic and social factors and each individual can have different preferences (Vincent-Lancrin 2008).

Inbound mobility

The inbound mobility can be very helpful in the process of raising quality of Thai higher education since international staff and students can bring new knowledge and improvements directly into the country. Via inbound mobility participants, even Thais who are not willing or are not able to participate in the outbound international mobility have an option, if interested, to come in contact with other cultures and 'the foreign views and knowledge' making it more accessible for anyone in the country. It can have an impact on multiculturalism and possibly increase the global perspectives of local students (Jareonsubphayanont 2015).

In addition, the international staff and students in Thailand can in a way promote foreign languages and the educational mobility, which can help to attract more Thais to use the opportunity to study abroad.

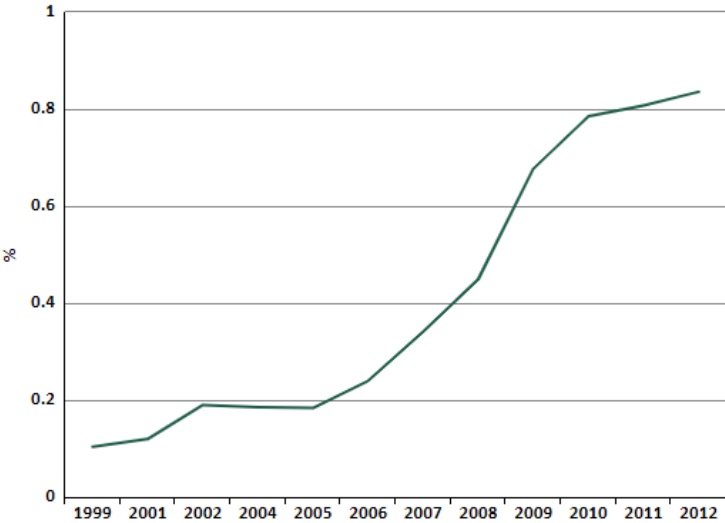
The inbound mobility can be also beneficial for Thai HEIs and Thailand itself can benefit from it as well. Cases from countries all around the World show that international students can make a considerable contribution to the economies of a city and a host country (NAFSA 2011; AEI 2012; Davis 2014). Regarding the benefits for HEIs, except the main positive aspects like knowledge transfer, improvement of quality and international collaboration. a trend has been recently observed: There is a tendency to move the university higher in national and international rankings by merely increasing the number of international students and staff enrolled or working at an institution, which is of course desirable for all HEIs (Jareonsubphayanont 2015).

Thai government acknowledges the importance of inbound mobility and tries to attract more international students. Unfortunately, due to many issues connected with Thai educational sector, those efforts are often ineffective (Jareonsubphayanont 2015). Nonetheless, it has not stopped the increasing popularity of Thailand as a study destination. More and more students choose to study in Thailand for the friendliness of the people, fundamental infrastructure, affordability, beauty of the environment, and safety (Malai & Juan 2011). However, the level of safety is disputable in recent years because of the political

instability, separatist movement in the south and increase of terrorism, namely the Bangkok Bombing in 2015 and bombings in Hua Hin, Surat Thani, Phuket and Trang in August 2016.

Thailand’s popularity as a study destination has been increasing and over the last decades became country of choosing for many international students. In fact, Thailand is the third most popular study destination in Southeast Asia after Malaysia and Singapore (Michael 2018). The number of international degree students in Thailand increased rapidly by fully 979% between 1999 and 2012, from 1,882 to 20,309 students and continues to grow furthermore (UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019). By the year 2018, the number of foreign students studying in Thailand further increased to 31,571 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics¹ 2019), which means an increase of another one third. These indications point out to continually increasing trend of Thailand’s popularity as study a destination and shows an increase in internalization of Thai higher education system.

Figure 8: Thailand inbound mobility in tertiary education 1999-2012



Source: World Bank 2019

Even though the inbound mobility increases in a long term, the political situation negatively influenced this sector of higher education as well: In 2014, the number of

inbound degree students dropped sharply by 39% to 12,274 (UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019), very likely due to political instability and street protests that preceded the 2014 military coup.

Table 3: Number of International Students Studying in Thailand classified by Region of Origin, 2010 (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2010)

Region	Number	Highest Country of Origin
Asia (40 countries)	16,667	China (8,993)
Europe (31 Countries)	1,084	Germany (215)
North America (8 Countries)	959	USA (818)
Africa (31 Countries)	243	Nigeria (49)
Australia (6 Countries)	71	Australia (55)
South America (8 Countries)	27	Brazil (9)

As it is evident from the Tables 3 and 4, the vast majority of international students comes from China, which exceeds all other countries by several thousands, followed by other Asian countries Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. The only non-Asian which placed in the top 10 countries with highest numbers of students in Thailand in 2013 were the USA. Even though the major players remain the same over the years, we can see mostly increasing numbers in most of the countries, which further confirms the trend of increasing Thailand's popularity as a study destination. For many students, especially the ones from the South East Asian region, Thailand represents the low-cost alternative to expensive destinations like the USA or Australia, which offers a sizeable number of international study programmes and scholarship opportunities.

Table 4: Top Five Countries of Origin of Foreign Students Studying in Education Institutions in Thailand (Academic Years 2005–2009) (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2010)

Number	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
1	China (1,615)	China (2,698)	China (4,028)	China (7,301)	China (8,993)
2	Myanmar (489)	Myanmar (631)	Viet Nam (751)	Lao PDR (1,301)	Lao PDR (1,254)
3	Lao PDR (436)	Viet Nam (599)	Myanmar (741)	Myanmar (999)	Myanmar (1,205)
4	Viet Nam (409)	USA (521)	Lao PDR (664)	Cambodia (984)	Viet Nam (1,141)
5	Japan (307)	Lao PDR (493)	USA (527)	Viet Nam (895)	Cambodia (1,009)
Total five countries	3.256	4.942	6.756	11.480	13.602
Total all countries	5.321	7.947	10.518	15.917	19.052

3. Objectives

There is a worldwide trend of young people leaving the agricultural sector which results in a lack of work force in this field. Especially, the problem of lacking highly qualified professionals with university degrees can lead to many further obstacles and challenges for the sector. International mobility and knowledge exchange could help to improve this situation. However, despite the worldwide increase of international student mobility and its positive influence, the involvement of Thai students still remains low and the topic is relatively unexplored.

For these reasons, the objectives of the thesis were set as follows:

1. Determine students' motivation for choosing agricultural studies and perception of their future employment.
2. Establish students' attitudes to study abroad, their views on experiences and barriers to going abroad.
3. Analyze the differences among students coming from different provinces with respect to the students' international mobility.
4. Identify the most preferred locations and length of study abroad by Thai agricultural students.

Based on the literature review, following hypotheses were set up:

H1: Students from the capital city are more willing to study abroad in comparison with the students from the provinces.

H2: Lack of finances is a main obstacle of Thai outbound mobility.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design and Data collection

The research design for this study consisted of a quantitative research method. The plan of the research was to collect data from students of four major agricultural universities located across the whole country of Thailand (Prince of Songkla, Kasetsart University, Chiang Mai University and Khon Kaen University).

First stage of the research started in August 2018 when a focus group filled out first version of the survey at Chiang Mai University. The focus group consisted of 20 respondents and, students from all four universities were represented. The results of this pilot testing showed one major problem: many respondents did not understand English well enough to properly answer the questions. Therefore, Thai translation was added into the survey. When the first stage was finished and the survey has been modified, collection of the data started.

Most of the data were collected between August and October 2018 with additional collection in March 2019. The data were collected online. Modified versions of the survey were created for each university; research question remained the same, but faculty and province names had to be individually adjusted. Online questionnaires were developed on a Google Forms platform, which were shared by e-mails or distributed through social networks. The surveys were done on voluntary basis and convenience and snowball procedures were used. Respondents were found with a support of the Erasmus+ project Capacity building called PISAI (Participatory and Integrative Support for Agriculture Initiative), whose members are all four Thai universities as well as the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague, the Czech Republic.

In order to have confidence level-95% and margin of error-5%, the required sample size for the population of Thai universities students is 385.

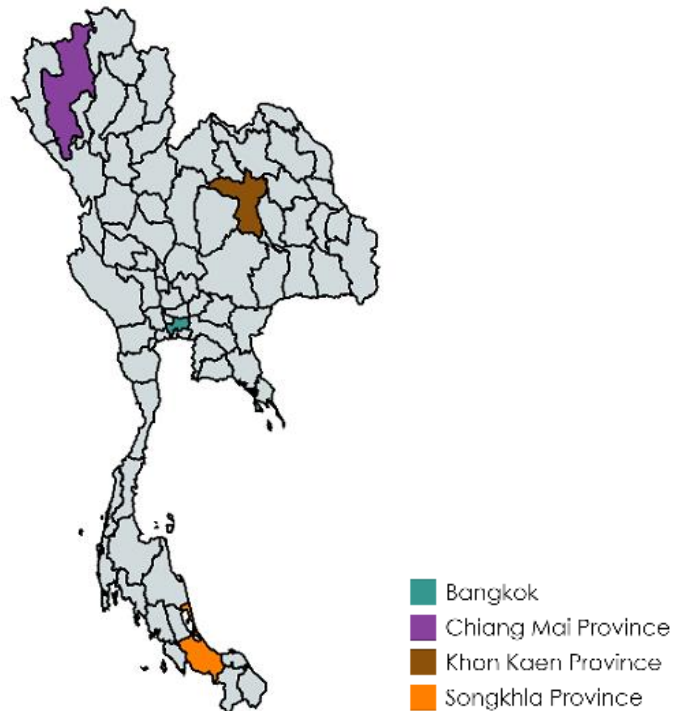
4.2. Study area

The study areas were locations of four targeted universities. Majority of respondents were from the regions in which the universities the located: Songkhla Province (Prince of Songkla University), Bangkok (Kasetsart University), Chiang Mai Province (Chiang Mai University) and Khon Kaen Province (Khon Kaen University). These universities were chosen for their agricultural focused studies and their diverse locations: each university represents different part of Thailand.

Table 5: Participant Universities

Name	Acronym	Location	Faculties	Nr of respondents
Chiang Mai University	CMU	Chiang Mai Province	20	103
Kasetsart University	KU	Bangkok	30	119
Khon Kaen University	KKU	Khon Kaen Province	18	111
Prince of Songkla University	PSU	Songkhla Province	30	128

Figure 9: Location of study areas in Thailand



4.3. Questionnaire design and data processing

The questionnaire was composed in total of 29 questions. The questions were divided into four main categories: educational background, household factors, employment perceptions, willingness to study abroad and sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents.

The questionnaire contained mixed and closed ended questions- mostly Likert scale, dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. Questions were selected based on the literature review (Xiang & Shen 2009; Chaloupková et al. 2015; Lin & Kingminghae 2017).

Sampling strategy was non-random, the snowball method. Respondents were students from the four selected Thai universities.

Data were processed and transferred into tables and figures using Microsoft Excel. In addition, P-values were calculated using this program using the Pearson chi square test method.

The exchange rate used in this study is 1 EUR = 34 THB (according to European Central Bank, date 12.2.2020, rounded up)

There are strengths and limitations to consider when interpreting the results of this study. This study is the first to investigate employment perceptions and willingness to study abroad of Thai agricultural students. Study's limitations are represented mainly by relatively small sample size collected via snowball method. The higher sample size could provide adequate power for detailed statistical analysis.

5. Results

5.1. Respondent's characteristics

The survey was completed by 461 respondents in total: 103 in CMU, 111 in KKU, 119 in KU and 128 in PSU. Females represented the majority at four universities and 67.2% of all respondents. Due to thesis topic, the respondents' age was relatively low: 65.9% respondents stated they are 18-22 years old, 29.5% stated their age is 23-25 and only 4.6% were older than 25. Regarding the location, most of the students lived in a close proximity of their university, while 37.3% lived more than 100 km away.

Over 80% of respondents stated they are currently Bachelor's students, which also corresponds with the age structure of the group. The rest of the respondents were Master's students (14.5%), doctoral students (1.3%) and graduates (3.5%). They all represented different agriculturally focused faculties across the four universities. The most represented faculties were Faculties of Agriculture at CMU and KKU, Faculty of Fisheries at KU and Faculty of Natural Resources at PSU.

Table 6: Sociodemographic characteristics of the respondents

	Total sample		CMU	KKU	KU	PSU
	N	%				
Number of respondents			103	111	119	128
Gender						
Male	151	32.8	50	30	40	31
Female	310	67.2	53	81	79	97
Age						
18-22	304	65.9	76	65	78	85
23-25	136	29.5	22	40	36	38
26>	21	4.6	5	6	5	5
Distance between university and hometown						
Same place	72	15.7	22	21	19	10
≤ 100 km	215	47.0	54	34	60	67
101 – 300 km	102	22.3	14	41	19	28
≥ 301 km	68	15	13	15	17	23
Current level of studies						
Bc.	372	80.7	82	79	100	111
Msc.	67	14.5	21	21	14	11
Ph.D.	6	1.3	0	4	1	1
Greaduate	16	3.5	0	7	4	5
Faculty						
Faculty of Agriculture			101	110	27	-
Faculty of Agro-Industry			1		3	1
Faculty of Education			-	1	-	-
Faculty of Environmental Management			-	-	-	1
Faculty of Fisheries			-	-	87	-
Faculty of Forestry			-	-	1	-
Faculty of Natural Resources			-	-	-	126
Faculty of Science			1	-	-	-

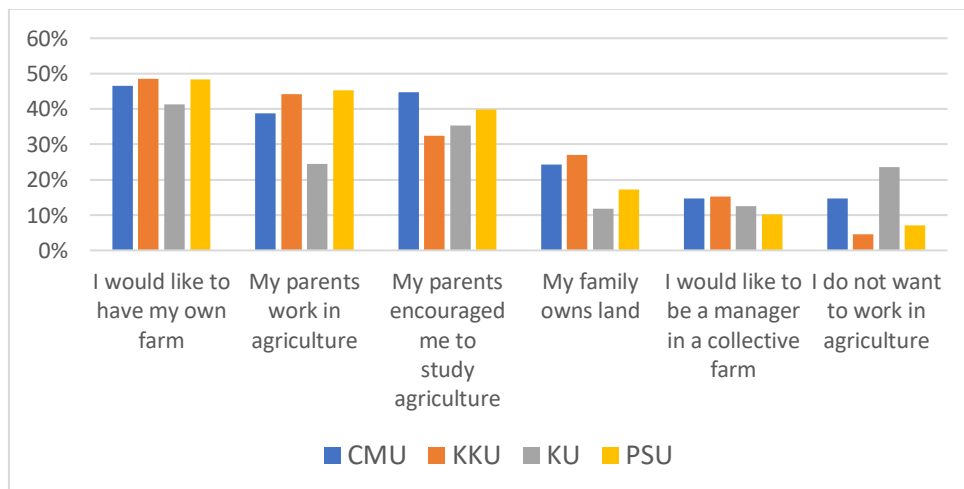
Motivation for choosing agricultural field

In order to better understand general motivational factors, the respondents were asked about their main reasons for choosing to study the agricultural field and their future plans regarding the given field.

The most common motivational factor proved to be an interest of owning a farm in the future (total 46.2%), followed by two strong motivational factors concerning respondents' parents: fact that the parents work in agriculture (total 38.2%) and encouragement of parents to study in the agricultural field (total 38.0%). Ownership of family land was also a motivational factor for 19.7% of respondents and the desire of being a collective farm manager motivated 13.0% of the respondents. Lastly, 12.4% stated they do not want to work in agriculture.

Motivational factors were similar at all four universities with exception of KU, where less parents worked in agriculture or owned land and more students did not desire to work in the agriculture in the future. This was an expected result since KU is located at the capital city of Bangkok.

Figure 10: Main motivations for choosing agricultural field



As seen in Table 7, for the responses to the main motivations for choosing agricultural field question, p-value was calculated for each statement and there are evident differences among selected universities.

Table 7: Statistical significance of main motivations for choosing agricultural field

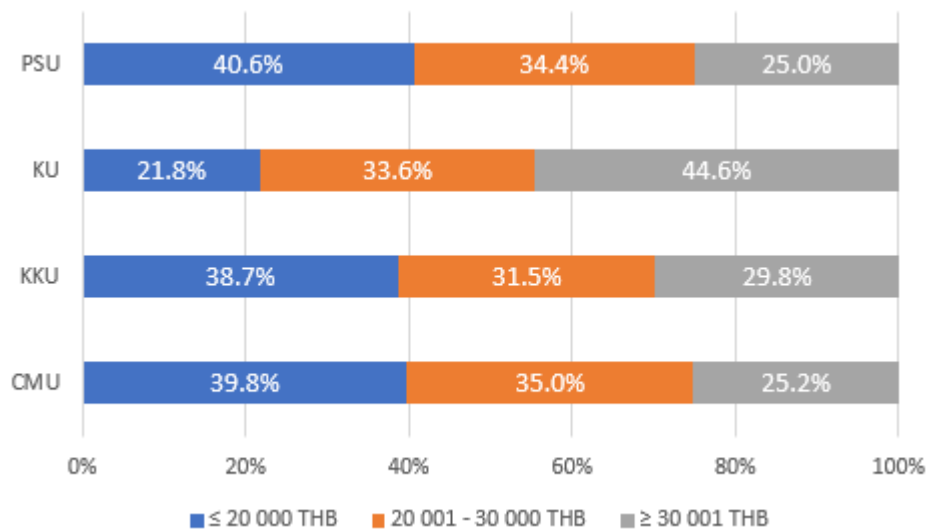
	Universities				P-value	
	CMU	KU	KKU	PSU		
I would like to have my own farm	48	49	54	62	9.30E-13	**
My parents work in agriculture	40	29	49	58	0.014761	*
My parents encouraged me to study agriculture	46	42	36	51	0.430127	
My family owns land	25	14	30	22	0.115413	
I would like to be a manager in a collective farm	15	15	17	13	0.91151	
I do not want to work in agriculture	15	28	5	9	9.36E-05	**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$

Household income

Since the family wealth often plays an important role in the study abroad decision-making process, the respondents were asked about the monthly family income. The results were again very similar among CMU, KKU and PSU, where around 40% declared the family income up to 20,000 THB (595 EUR), 31-35% stated income from 20,001 THB to 30,000 THB (892 EUR) and 25-29% of families had income over 30,000 THB. At KU, however, was higher percentage of families with high income over 30,000 THB (44.6%) and lower percentage of household with income under 20,000 THB (21.8%).

Figure 11: Average monthly income of respondent's household (%)



5.2. Employment perceptions

Establishment of own business

The decision whether to establish own business or to be an employee is a crucial aspect which can influence the decision making about the future. Therefore, the question about

the preferences towards employability or establishment of own business was added into the survey. This question showed that majority of all students prefer establishment of their own business. The highest percentage of respondents preferring employment had KU (42.9%), which is still a minority of the respondents.

Table 8: Students' future employment preferences

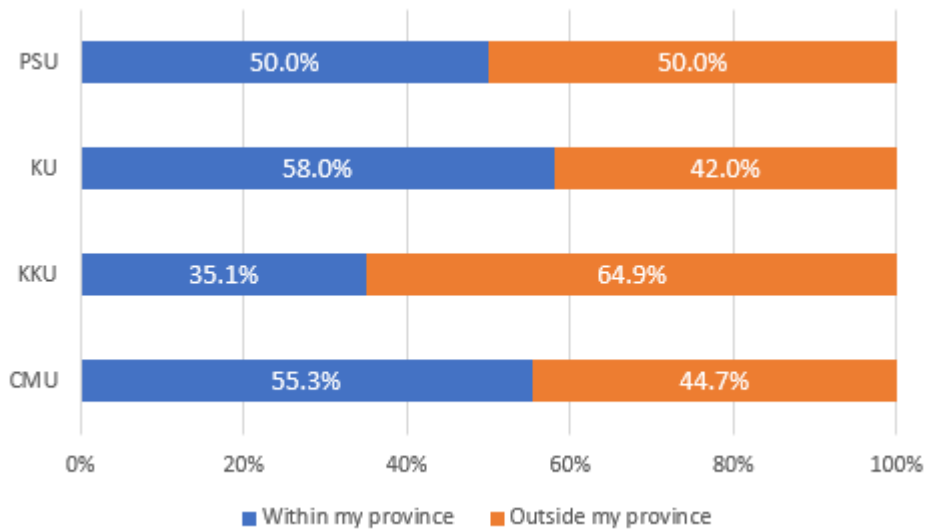
	Establish a business		Be an employee	
	N	%	N	%
CMU	67	65.0	36	35.0
KKU	82	73.9	29	26.1
KU	68	57.1	51	42.9
PSU	88	68.8	40	31.3
Total	305	66.2	156	33.8

Future work location

Even within Thailand, the situation can be very variable among different provinces. Since this survey focuses on four universities in four different regions, the question about their work location expectations was added into the survey to examine the migratory plans of given respondents.

The answers slightly varied among the different provinces, the most respondents who believe they will stay in their region are students of Kasetsart University (58%), which, considering that the university is located in Bangkok, is understandable. Contrarily, only 35.1% of KKU students expect to find a job in Khon Kaen province, which is much lower percentage in comparison to the three remaining universities.

Figure 12: Students' expectation about future job locality



Sector of the future business or employment

The majority of students favor the agricultural sector as their future career path, a great preference of agriculture is primarily at KKU. Nonetheless, career in wholesale & retail trade is also preferred by over one fourth of students. This career path is especially favorable at CMU and KU while services and manufacturing proved to be attractive only for a small number of students.

The answers were tested and it is evident that there are statistically significant differences among selected universities in the sectors such as Agriculture, Manufacturing and Services.

Table 9: Preferences of students regarding the sector of employment

%	Agriculture	Manufacturing	Wholesale & retail trade	Services
CMU	52.4	2.9	37.9	6.8
KKU	73.9	0.9	19.8	5.4
KU	42	4.2	37.8	16
PSU	61.7	2.3	21.1	14.9
Total	57.5	2.6	28.9	11
P-value	2.15E-47 **	5.60E-20 **	0.00085086 **	1.14E-08 **

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$

Willingness to move

Another crucial aspect associated with study migration is willingness to move to another location for work, hence, the respondents were questioned about the distance they would be willing to move.

The majority of students across the four universities showed willingness to move outside their province (total 61.8%), with the most willing being KKU students in Khon Kaen province (70%), interestingly followed by students from KU stationed in Bangkok (66.4%).

Total 3.2% of students showed willingness to move to the capital city of Bangkok (students of KU were excluded from this figure because of the university location) while only 0.7% of respondents would prefer to move and live abroad.

Table 10: Maximum distance where are the students willing to move

%	Within my province	Outside my province	To Bangkok	Abroad
CMU	40.8	54.4	3.8	1.0
KKU	24.3	70.3	4.5	0.9
KU	32.8	66.4	-	0.8
PSU	42.2	56.3	1.5	0.0
Total	35.1	61.8	3.2	0.7

5.3. Willingness to study abroad

The respondents at all four universities showed a strong favourability towards studies abroad (Table 11), total of 74.3% either strongly agreed or agreed when asked if they would be willing to study in a foreign country while only 1.6% strongly disagreed with this statement. As it is evident, the students from KU university are the most interested in studies abroad and the difference is significantly higher in comparison with PSU.

Table 11: Students' preference towards studies abroad

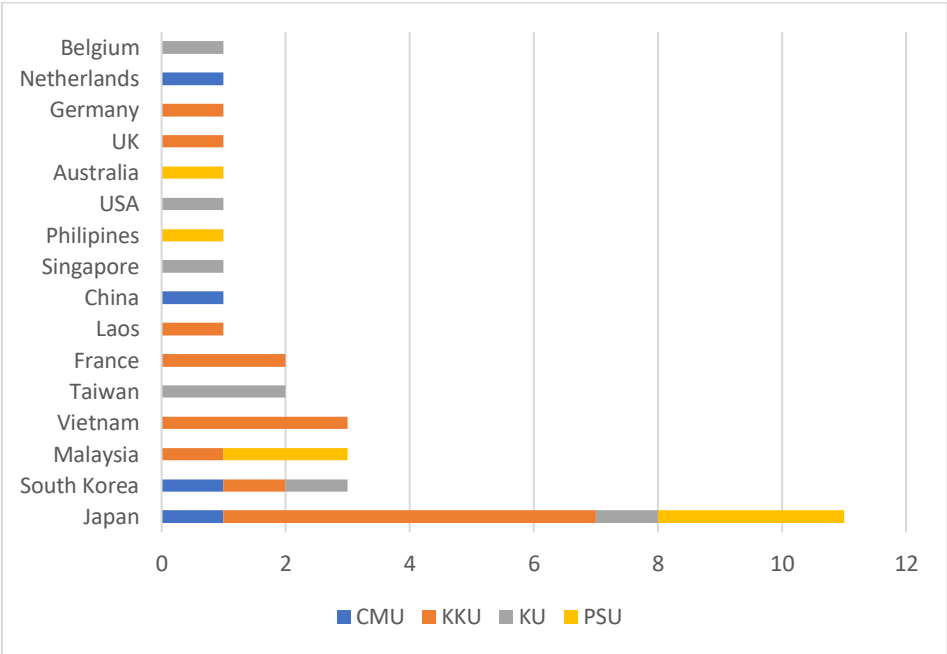
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
CMU	25	60	40	3
KKU	41	52	23	2
KU	25	54	23	1
PSU	25	60	25	1
P-value	0.107791	1.33E-23 **	0.251103	6.56E-22 **

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.001$

Previous experience with student mobility

The survey showed that only low percentage of respondents (total 6.7%) had already experience with international study exchange/migration. Those, who had experience mostly visited Asian countries, the most common being Japan. While non-Asian countries were visited as well, it was mentioned only by several respondents.

Figure 13: Respondents with student mobility experience according to their country destination



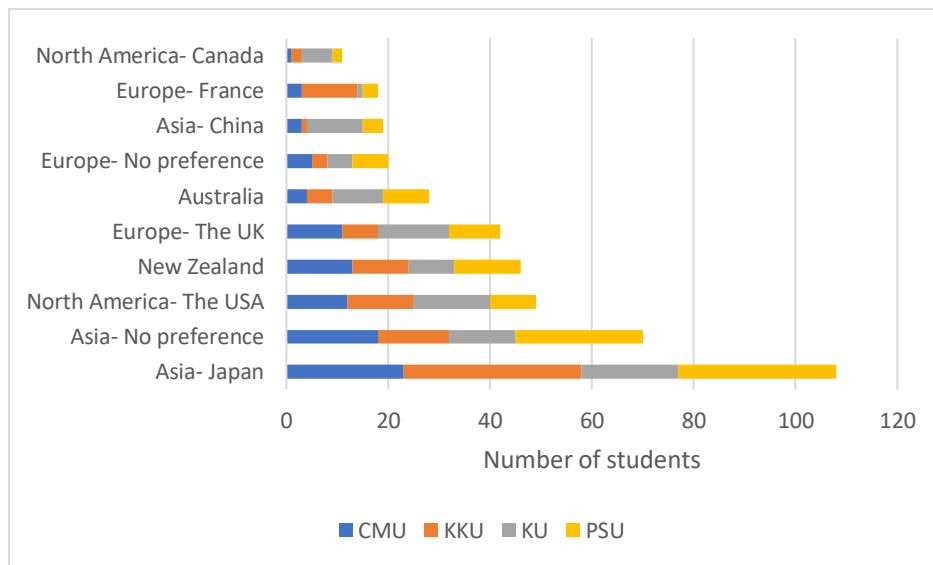
Respondent’s preferred destination

As well as in the previous case, the issue of preferred destination of possible studies abroad clearly showed that the most desirable destinations are Asian countries, with Japan being the most favourable, followed by the whole Asia without preference towards a

specific country. China, which placed eighth on the list, also proved to be another favourable country from Asia.

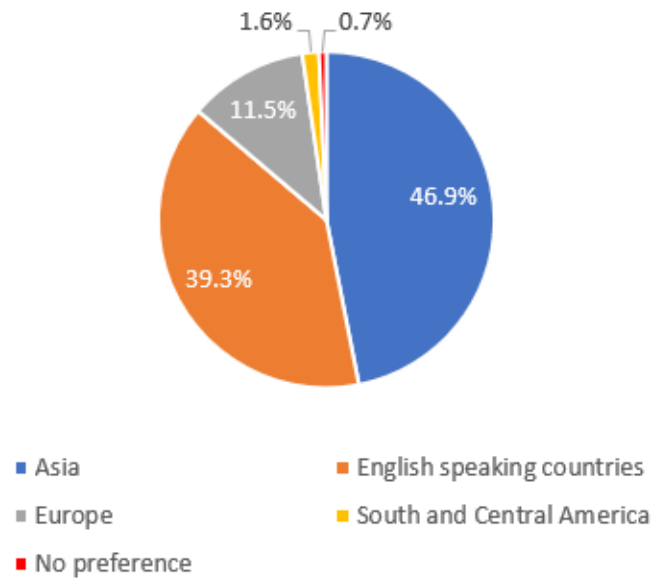
Second category with major preference were English speaking countries, which were represented by the USA, New Zealand, the UK, Australia and Canada in the top 10 list. As visible at Figure 14, disparities among the universities were minimal, at all of them appeared the trend of preference of Asian countries led by Japan and English-speaking countries.

Figure 14: Top 10 preferred destinations of Thai students



The domination of Asia and English-speaking countries as the most preferred destinations is visible even more on the figure below. Almost half of the respondents (46.9%) would like to study abroad in Asia, while 39.3% would like to study in an English-speaking country (the USA, New Zealand, the UK, Australia, Canada). Europe (the UK excluded) played only a minor role with preference of 11.5% respondents, only 1.6% would choose to study in Central or South America and 0.7% have no preferences at all.

Figure 15: Preferred destinations divided according to the regions in %



Length of the studies abroad

Length of the stay is an important aspect, which can affect participant's experience in many ways. Even though respondents stated they are not interested in living abroad, they showed a strong preferability towards longer types of study migration: 45.1% would choose to study abroad a whole study programme and only 11.5% would like to go abroad for a short period of time for up to one month. The Table 12 shows a similar trend at all four universities, with students from KU showing the highest preference of long-term stays.

Table 12: Students' preferences regarding period of stay

%	Up to one month	1 semester (average 5-6 months)	1 academic year (2 semesters = average 10-12 months)	Whole Bc, MSc, PhD programme abroad (2-4 years)
CMU	13.6	22.4	15.5	48.5
KKU	13.5	24.4	25.2	36.9
KU	3.8	23.6	17.9	54.7
PSU	15.6	22.7	20.3	41.4
Total	11.8	23.2	19.9	45.1

Positive aspects and challenges of international mobility according to the respondents

As suggested earlier, study migration is a complex issue with many possible positive outcomes, but also with many obstacles. For this reason, students were asked about their opinions towards the main issues of this topic both positive and negative.

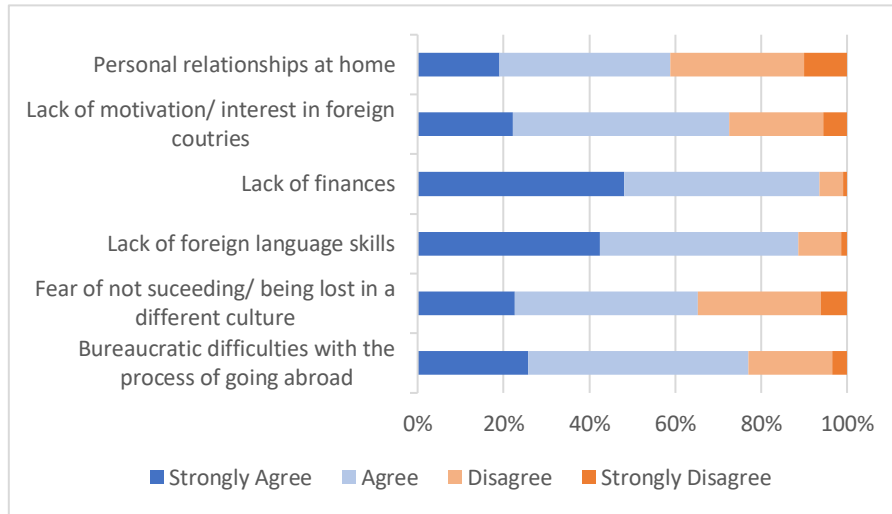
The survey showed that the respondents believed all aspects stated in Table 13 are a crucial part of the student mobility experience and important motivational factors to apply. Over 96% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed with all stated aspects, proving their importance.

Table 13: Aspects of international mobility according to the respondents

%	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Gaining better education	44.9	53.6	1.3	0.2
Experience different culture	58.6	40.8	0.2	0.4
Improvement of language skills	67.2	32.4	0.2	0.2
Possibility of getting a better job in the future	49.4	48.5	1.9	0.2
Raising personal independence	64.2	34.5	0.9	0.4
Travelling	58.4	39.7	1.5	0.4

Respondents' beliefs regarding the main challenges and obstacles of study migration were more diverse, as seen in Figure 16. The largest issue remains the lack of finances (95.5%) and the lack of foreign language skills (88.7%). Lack of motivation/ interest in foreign countries (72.5%) and bureaucratic difficulties with the process of going abroad (70.0%) also proved to be major issues according to the respondents, while fear of not succeeding/ being lost in a different culture (65.3%) and personal relationships at home (58.8%) had the lowest support among the respondents. Nevertheless, agreeability with each statement reached over 50% indicating their relevance in the student mobility process.

Figure 16: Challenges of the process of going to study abroad



As visible in Table 14, similar trends of student opinions can be found at all four universities. Although there are noticeable higher numbers at PSU, that can be explained by slightly higher sample size from this university. The data were further tested and there were proved statistically significant differences among the universities.

Table 14: Respondents' opinions regarding challenges with regard to international mobility

	Personal relationships at home	Lack of motivation/ interest in foreign countries	Lack of finances	Lack of foreign language skills	Fear of not succeeding/ being lost in a different culture	Bureaucratic difficulties with the process of going abroad
CMU	60	74	97	91	67	83
KKU	57	72	101	96	60	84
KU	69	82	112	108	79	83
POS	84	106	121	114	95	105
Total	431	409	355	334	301	270
Total in %	93.5	88.7	77	72.5	63.5	58.8
P-value	0.0003351 **	0.7183015	0.00020585 **	0.0118 *	0.04772855 *	0.793907

Note: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.001

6. Discussion

6.1. Attitudes towards agricultural studies

The issue of unpopularity of agricultural studies is well known phenomena worldwide (Acker 1999; Yaghoubi 2010; Kumar & Kumar 2014). While other studies usually focus on the negative aspects and reasons behind the unpopularity and low numbers of agricultural students, this study's focus was oriented towards the motivations of students studying in agricultural field for choosing this field and their plans for the future.

When asked about the reasons for choosing agricultural studies, most of the respondents suggested they would like to own land of their own and that their parents work in agriculture and/or encouraged them to study this field. As expected, many participants had an agriculture background and the arguments used by them also corresponded with similar research (Leven 2007; Onu & Ikehi 2013; Scherer 2016).

Our results suggest that family plays in many cases an important role when deciding what will the individual study and in which field he/she will work, which is also confirmed by previous studies (Tarry 2008; ICEF Monitor 2015; Rhein 2017). Since rural communities tend to be usually more traditionally oriented, the family influence can be even greater. We can suppose that children are often encouraged to follow the agricultural career path like their parents and work on family owned land or purchase their own. That said, parents can also encourage their children not to follow their agriculture path because it can be seen as a 'low quality' type of life. Childhood is an important part of human life and can strongly influence individual's future. Growing up on a farm or in an agricultural area in general, can result in a positive as well as negative attitude towards the agricultural field. Nonetheless, these individuals are more likely to have the knowledge and experience which can be very helpful

during agricultural studies and work. In addition, the possibility of inheriting land or a can be also a strong motivational to study agriculture for obvious reasons.

The topic of unpopularity of agricultural field appeared in the data as well when several dozen students stated they do not want to work in agriculture, which was expected since it is a common practice for some agriculture students to leave the field after studies (Chaloupková et al. 2015). However, the numbers were particularly high at CMU and KU where rather large group of students preferred to pursue career in wholesale and retail trade. This confirmed our expectations that the students from Bangkok show less interest in agriculture, yet the results from CMU were rather unexpected. Reason for these differences could be partially explained by the fact, that both cities of Chiang Mai and Bangkok are attractive tourist locations which offer many possibilities in the wholesale and retail sector, therefore local students are more motivated to focus on these possibly financially attractive fields.

In general, when comparing the four universities, we can see that KU respondents differentiate in many questions asked during this study. Except the already mentioned high percentage of students not interested in working in agriculture, there was also the difference in household income, which was in many cases higher than at the other universities. That said, Thailand has relatively high disparity of income among individual regions, therefore the findings correlate with other data: In 2017, average monthly income per household was 41,900 THB (1,228 EUR) in Bangkok (KU), 26,910 THB (788 EUR) in Southern region (PSU), 20,270 THB (594 EUR) in Northeastern region (KKU) and 19,050 THB (558 EUR) in Northern region (CMU) (Doan 2019). KU students had also the highest percentage of students who would prefer being an employee over establishment of their own business which can be closely connected with their career choice in wholesale and retail trade and again explained by Bangkok being the largest city with many job opportunities. Nonetheless, the official unemployment rate of Thailand is surprisingly low (0.63% in 2017) and does not differentiate much among the regions (NSO 2017). Therefore, employment opportunities should be available in other regions as well, which is also

suggested by the collected data: only 58% of KU students expects to work in their own region (Bangkok) in the future. Whilst the percentage is higher than at other universities, it is still relatively low given the fact that Bangkok is the largest city in the country and in a way also the main center of Thai economic activity. Nevertheless, in comparison with other fields, agricultural job opportunities can be lower in larger cities and establishment of farm or agriculture business can be problematic, especially due to high prices of land and other important commodities.

6.2. Willingness to study abroad

The survey of this study revealed that majority of students from all four universities showed willingness to study abroad, therefore disproving our assumption that students from the capital city would be more willing to go abroad than others. However, these findings contradict the low numbers of students who actually participate in some form of studies abroad, which steadily remains between 1-2% of tertiary students enrolled (UNESCO Institute of Statistics² 2019). Although this great difference can be surprising, it is not unusual: almost everyone would be willing to go study abroad or travel when asked a simple yes or no question, but very few individuals actively try to pursue this path and as it was mentioned before, the process of going to study abroad can very difficult with many obstacles in the way.

The survey also showed, that 6.7% of respondents had already participated studies abroad, which is much higher than the official state figures. However, this could be cause by the fact, that the participants might have had a wider definition of studies abroad.

Regarding the preferable location of future studies, Asian countries appeared to be the most preferred destinations, especially Japan proved to be the clear favorite. This confirms the new trend of high popularity of Asian region as a study destination (Lin & Kingminghae

2017). China, even though it is the country of origin of most of the incoming international students to Thailand (Office of the Higher Education Commission 2010) and was suggested as one of the raising powers in the educational field (Lin & Kingminghae 2017), had relatively low support among the participants and placed 8th on the list of the most preferred destinations. In fact, the number of students who would prefer China as their study destination was more than five times lower than the number of students who would like to go to Japan.

The respondents also showed strong preferability towards English-speaking countries. These countries were historically major destinations of Thai students (Tarry 2008; UNESCO Institute of Statistics¹ 2019). Although their preferability has been slightly decreasing over the last several years (Institute of International Education 2019), according to our results over 39% of respondents would prefer to study there, which still makes them key study destinations.

The rise of Asian countries as the new most preferred study destinations can be explained by their affordability and convenience as well as the recent increasing quality of education in the region. Studies in countries as the USA or the UK can be financially demanding, wide cultural differences can be problematic for some students as well and their distant locations, which can create additional logistic issues. Nevertheless, the main appeal of these countries is English language, which is highly valued in Thailand and Asian countries simply cannot fulfil this aspect as good as native English-speaking countries. Therefore, these countries still remain very popular with Thai students. Asian countries offer rather new alternative: a cheaper and more convenient option, where the cultural differences are not as wide, and the locations are not as far away. With the recent boom in Thai higher education, more students come from lower classes for which this more affordable option can be very appealing.

While studies conducted in the USA suggest that American students prefer mostly short-term length of studies abroad (Toncar et al. 2006; He & Chen 2010; Hackney et al. 2012), majority of Thai respondents would like to go abroad for a longer period, often for whole

study programme. This difference supports the fact that homeland universities are often preferred in the USA and Western Europe (Wiers-Jenssen & Try 2005; Wiers-Jenssen 2011), therefore the local students do not want to spend too much time abroad. Contrarily, in Asia and Southern and Eastern part of Europe, education abroad is viewed more positively (Rivza & Teichler 2007; Teichler & Janson 2007; Xiang & Shen 2009; Van Mol 2014), hence longer periods abroad are preferred.

Almost all respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the positive aspects of studies abroad stated in the survey, which corresponds with previous studies made on this topic: improvement of foreign language skills (European Commission 2016), which seems to have a direct impact on the location choosing- since English skills are very valuable in Thailand (Rappa & Wee 2006; Sisamouth & Lah 2015), high popularity of English-speaking countries was expectable. Factors like gaining a better education and possibility of getting a better job in the future which are usually seen primarily with the students from less developed countries (Lanzendorf & Kelm 2002; Maiworm & Teichler 2002; Zweig et al. 2004; Stafford 2005; Kelo et al 2006; Lanzendorf 2006; Frieze et al. 2006; Dreher & Poutvaara 2011) as well as factors more common with the students from 'developed' countries like experience a different culture, raising own independence and traveling (Mazzarol & Soutar 2001; Van Der Meid 2003; Hung 2010; Chaloupková et al. 2015) were all strongly supported. The findings show, how complex the topic of education abroad actually is, many different factors play a role and their importance can differ among individuals. These mentioned factors, however, seem to be the most common ones.

Previous studies suggested that financing is a major issue influencing possibilities of studying abroad and decision-making processes within the educational sector in general (Tangkitvanich & Manasboonphempool 2010; Mihi-Ramirez & Kumpikaite 2014; Rhein 2017; Michael 2018). This study's findings support this statement and confirms our hypothesis: when asked about obstacles of going to study abroad, lack of finances was the most common reason, almost all respondents mentioned this issue.

The second most common answer was a lack of foreign language skills, which was mentioned by almost 90% of all respondents. As stated earlier, English skills are highly valued because knowledge of English in Thailand remains relatively low (Agsornjarung 2003; Sivarnee 2013). In fact, Thailand received one of the lowest scores in EF English Proficiency Index 2015 and ranked 14th out of 16 Asian nations and 62nd out of 70 in the global rankings, proving the inefficiency of English education in the country (Dumrongkiat 2016). The low knowledge of English even among university students also shows the necessity of translation of the study survey. The fact that the focus group, which consisted of participants of summer school, handpicked for their English skills, were only able of only basic communication on a level A1-A2 further confirms the phenomena.

Another issue stated were bureaucratic difficulties with the process of going abroad. This issue was expected since administrative difficulties are connected with almost any long-term stay abroad. These difficulties can be even greater in the case of Thai students going abroad since Thai higher education has been going through the transition (ICEF Monitor 2015) and the country itself is in the state of political instability (The Department of Education and Training¹ 2015).

The issues of lack of motivation/interest in foreign countries and a fear of not succeeding/being lost in a different culture were both mentioned by roughly 2/3 of the respondents. When considering the high of willingness to go abroad, this is surprisingly high number, which can be one of the main reasons of Thai low outbound mobility. The last and the least stated obstacle were personal relationships at home, which even though were the least stated, were still mentioned by more than a half of the respondents. These last three obstacles can be influenced by the standards in Thai society, which is very patriotic and traditional (Tarry 2008; ICEF Monitor 2015; Rhein 2017) therefore family can have a big influence on individual's decisions and the individual himself/herself can be less interested or less motivated in actually studying in a foreign country.

7. Conclusion

This research study examined attitudes of students studying agricultural studies at four universities in four different regions in Thailand through an online questionnaire survey.

Firstly, reasons for choosing the agricultural field and plans for the future were examined. In this part, influence of family, particularly parents, was observed in many cases. Differences between the four universities were observed as well, namely CMU and KU students showed lower interest in working in the agricultural field.

Secondly, attitudes towards studies abroad were studied. Students across all four universities expressed willingness to study abroad with no great differences between the universities. The biggest challenges of going to study abroad according to the students still remain lack of finances and lack of foreign language skills. The most popular destinations turned out to be Asian countries led by Japan, while English-speaking countries, traditionally the most preferred study destinations, took the second place and longer periods abroad were preferred.

This study revealed that Thai agricultural students are willing to participate study programmes abroad, however due to many challenges only a small percentage actually does.

Further deeper research on the challenges, the way of defeating them and the benefits of studies abroad in Thai environment is needed in order to make clear universal conclusions.

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9. Appendixes

Appendix I. Survey example

Note 1: Questions regarding faculties and locations were modified for each university

Note 2: Official version on the Google forms platform was additionally translated into Thai

**Employment perceptions and willingness to study abroad survey:
Case of Agricultural majors of Chiang Mai University**

A. Education

1. What type of faculty do you attend?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty of Agriculture		<input type="checkbox"/> Faculty of Agro-Industry
2. What is your current level of studies?		
Bachelor <input type="checkbox"/> 1st year <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd year <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd year <input type="checkbox"/> 4th year	Master <input type="checkbox"/> 1st year <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd year	PhD <input type="checkbox"/> 1st year <input type="checkbox"/> 2nd year <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd year <input type="checkbox"/> 4th year
3. Do you have a work experience?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have work experience related to my field of study	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, have work experience, but not related to my field of study	<input type="checkbox"/> No, I do not have any work experience yet
4. In case you study agriculture, please cross all statements you agree with:		
<input type="checkbox"/> My parents encouraged me to study agriculture. <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to be a manager in a collective farm. <input type="checkbox"/> I would like to have my own farm. <input type="checkbox"/> My family owns land. <input type="checkbox"/> My parents work in agriculture. <input type="checkbox"/> I do not want to work in agriculture.		

B. Household factors

5. How many siblings do you have?				
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 3
6. How many of them do live outside the parental household?				
<input type="checkbox"/> 0	<input type="checkbox"/> 1	<input type="checkbox"/> 2	<input type="checkbox"/> 3	<input type="checkbox"/> more than 3
7. What is the highest grade completed by your mother?				
<input type="checkbox"/> secondary education	<input type="checkbox"/> secondary technical education	<input type="checkbox"/> university		
8. What is the highest grade completed by your father?				
<input type="checkbox"/> secondary education	<input type="checkbox"/> secondary technical education	<input type="checkbox"/> university		
9. My parents always encouraged me to reach the highest grade of education.				
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree	
10. What is the working status of your mother?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Business employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil servant	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	
11. What is the working status of your father?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/> Business employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil servant	<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed	
12. What is the average income of your family per month?				
<input type="checkbox"/> ≤ 20 000 THB	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 001 - 30 000 THB	<input type="checkbox"/> ≥ 30 001 THB		

C. Employment perceptions

13. Do you plan to be an employee or to establish your own business?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Employee	<input type="checkbox"/> Establish own business	
14. Where do you expect to find a job?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Within the Chiang Mai Province	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside the Chiang Mai Province	
15. Do you consider the establishment of your own business in the parental municipality as difficult?		
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is very difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes, it is difficult	<input type="checkbox"/> No, it is not difficult

16. In which area do you want to work or run a business after finishing the university?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> Manufacturing	<input type="checkbox"/> Wholesale & retail trade	<input type="checkbox"/> Services	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
17. How far are you willing to move from your parental municipality (hometown)?				
<input type="checkbox"/> Within the Chiang Mai Province	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside the Chiang Mai Province	<input type="checkbox"/> Bangkok	<input type="checkbox"/> Outside Thailand	

D. Willingness to study abroad

18. Would you like to study abroad?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Agree	<input type="checkbox"/> Disagree	<input type="checkbox"/> Strongly disagree
19. Have you studied abroad? If so, please specify in which country			
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have: Length of stay: Location:			
20. Do you know someone who has studied abroad? If possible, please specify how many people do you know and what were their study locations.			
<input type="checkbox"/> No, I have not <input type="checkbox"/> Yes, I have: Number of students: Locations:			
21. Where would you like to study?			
Asia <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> China <input type="checkbox"/> Japan <input type="checkbox"/> Philippines <input type="checkbox"/> Malaysia <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Europe <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> Great Britain <input type="checkbox"/> France <input type="checkbox"/> Germany <input type="checkbox"/> Other:	North America <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> The United States of America <input type="checkbox"/> Canada	
Central and South America <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> Specific location:	Africa <input type="checkbox"/> No preference <input type="checkbox"/> Specific location:	<input type="checkbox"/> Australia <input type="checkbox"/> New Zealand	
22. For how long would you like to study abroad?			
<input type="checkbox"/> Up to one month	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 semester (average 5-6 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 academic year (2 semesters = average 10-12 months)	<input type="checkbox"/> Whole Bc, MSc, PhD programme abroad (2-4 years)

23. Work carrier after finishing studies	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I would like to move and live abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to work abroad for a longer period of time (> 1 year)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to work abroad for short period of time (<1 year)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
I would like to work and live only in Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

24. What do you consider as the aspects of international mobility	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Gaining better education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Possibility of getting a better job in future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting higher social status	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvement of English skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvement/ learning other foreign language (Except English)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Raising personal independence	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Experiencing different culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Becoming more globally aware	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Traveling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of working opportunities in Thailand	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

25. What do you consider as the biggest obstacles of going to study abroad	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Lack of finances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Personal relationships at home	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of motivation/ interest in foreign countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lack of foreign language skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fear of not succeeding/ being lost in a different culture	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bureaucratic difficulties with the process of going abroad	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Other obstacles:.....

E. Personal background

26. You are			
<input type="checkbox"/> Male		<input type="checkbox"/> Female	
27. Please indicate your age.		28. Please write name of your home town/village	
29. Distance of the university from your home town/village?			
<input type="checkbox"/> The same place	<input type="checkbox"/> ≤ 100 km	<input type="checkbox"/> 101 – 300 km	<input type="checkbox"/> ≥ 301 km