International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach and Studies

ISSN NO:: 2348 – 537X

# Factors influencing Thai and International Logistics Management Program students' career choice

**DR. MEENA MADHAVAN**

***Lecturer-Faculty of Business Administration, St. Theresa International College, Thailand***

## ABSTRACT

*This research focus on identifying the factors that influence the Thai and International Logistics management program students' career choice. Interest towards logistics industry, scope and job stability in logistics industry, financial implications of Logistics related education and environmental influencers were considered as influencing factors for career choice decision making. An electronic Google form was distributed to the respondents studying logistics management bachelor courses at the institutions located in and around Bangkok. The participants' answered and submitted the online form; 234 valid responses were included for the study. Descriptive and Inferential statistics was carried out to find the factors influencing students' career choice. The results proved that both the environmental support and career in logistics industry (scope and job stability) significantly impact on career choice of logistics management students. Findings were discussed and appropriate suggestions were provided.*

**KEYWORDS:** *career choice; logistics management; factors influencing; Thai and International students*

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education in developing countries, especially Thailand is facing rapid changes in the past two decades. Higher education institutions are becoming more and more industry interactive. Schiller & Liefner (2007) in their research conducted over three universities located in Bangkok namely Chulalongkorn University (CU), Kasetsart University (KU), and King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT) along with Chiang Mai University (CMU) of North Thailand and Khon Kaen University (KKU) of North East Thailand found that university– industry relations are becoming more frequent and are promoted by university administrations. The results of the above mentioned move by educational institutions led to more new industry specific courses. The global higher education industry has also shifted from its traditional form to Internalization. Many overseas universities either directly or indirectly operate in Thailand through MOUs with major Higher Educational Institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007). Both budgeting reforms and internationalization have led to introduction of industry specific international programs throughout Thailand with English as medium of instruction. In spite of tremendous efforts taken by Universities to expand their horizons, the number of students' admission in the Thai Universities is falling in the past 3 years. The demand-supply gap is getting wider with just 105,046 and 80,000 students applying for 156,216 and 150,000 seats in 2016 and 2017 respectively (Bothwell, 2017). More than 50,000 seats became unfilled in the past couple of years and the gap is estimated to grow bigger in the near future (Asian Correspondent Staff,

2016). This alarming trend may lead to closer of many major courses in Universities. But limited research has been done to understand the students' career choice. (Kitchroen (2004) proposed measuring students' perceptions and expectations using service quality models. Yousapronpaiboon (2014) found that there was a gap in all 5 dimensions of service quality viz., reliability, tangibility, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. He found that perceptions are lower than expectations in all five dimensions of service quality and recommended the higher educational institutions to improve their facilities and upgrade their equipments to reduce the gap. Wesarat, Sharif & Majid (2016)developed a framework for assessing gender influence on career choice of undergraduate students in Thailand using social cognitive theory. They found that "gender differences in perceptions" and "cultural beliefs about gender" plays an important role in career choice of Thai students. They also added that the results may vary from country to country. But none of the researches have been carried out so far in understanding the career choice of Thai students from their interest, financial implications, environmental influences, job scope and career choice; especially with those majoring in International Logistics Management program. Thus this research aims to fulfill the literature gap and find possible root factors that influence Thai and International Logistics Management students' career choice.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Identifiable efforts to help people finding a suitable career have been in practice from early industrialization era. Few books were also been published in the nineteenth century. But modern development can be traced back from the early twentieth century when parsons introduced three broad factors by stating "In the wise choice of a vocation there are three broad factors: (1) a clear understanding of yourself, your aptitudes, abilities, interests, ambitions, resources, limitations, and knowledge of their causes; (2) a knowledge of the requirements, conditions of success, advantages and disadvantages, compensation, opportunities, and prospects in different lines of work; (3) true reasoning on the relations of these two groups of facts" (Parsons, 1909, p. 5). He believed that people's engagement in finding their suitable career is the most important deciding factor for satisfaction in their career choice. This simple theory later known as Parsons's model: trait-and-factor theory became the cornerstone for many modern theories including Holland (1985, 1997) and Dawis and Lofquist (1984). In 1940s and 1950s researchers criticized trait and factor theory as a static approach and introduced psychology based career theories of career development. The rapidly changing global environment after second world war had a great impact on commercialization and industrialization of almost every sector which resulted in researchers developing a new theories with a conclusion of "career development is not a onetime static process, but a life-long continuous process" Rogers (1942, 1951); Williamson (1939); Ginzberg, Ginsburg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951); Ginzberg (1972). Hence since 1950s more theories emerged, personality based theories such as Super's theory with trait-and-factor theory, developmental psychology, and personal construct theory (Kelley, 1955), later he suggested that he is leaving the efforts of building a comprehensive model of career choice to future researchers (Super, Savickas, & Super 1996), Roe's theory (Roe & Lunneborg, 1990), Holland Theory (Holland, 1985, 1997). Sociological approach based theories such as Hollingshead (1949), Reissman (1953), and Sewell, Haller, and Strauss (1957), Musgrave (1967) and Blau and Duncan (1967). These theories focused on sociological variables related

to and occupational attainment career choice. Even though many theories on understanding career choices through various dimensions such as sociological, psychological in early twentieth century and social constructionism, logical positivism in late twentieth century emerged, none of them addressed the career choice development from Asian context. Limited research have been carried out in Asia especially East Asia to understand the career aspiration and career choice. Hwei Ming, Ahmad, and Ismail (2007) in their research titled "Toward a Model of Career Aspiration for Women Employees" found that social support such as support from family members plays an important role in Malaysian working women's career aspiration.

## METHODOLOGY

A six section quantitative questionnaire was constructed based on various literature reviews, industry expert's opinions and pilot study. The first section inquired about the participants' gender, name of their university, language medium of their logistics course, year of study and their native province. The second section included questions about the participants' interest towards Logistics Industry. Their prior knowledge about logistics Industry during their high school, their interest towards logistics industry during their high school, attractiveness of job roles and job descriptions of Logistics Industry and their prior working knowledge / experience was measured using a 5-point Likert scale. The third section included questions about students' perception towards logistics industry. Job scope, exciting job nature, job opportunity and job stability were used as variables to measure the students' perception towards logistics industry. The fourth section included questions such as "Pay in logistics industry is better than other industries", "Quick return on investment / easy to payback my education loan" and "Financial incentives are better in Logistics Industry than any other industry" to measure the "financial implications of logistics education". The fifth section included questions to measure the environmental influences on career choice. The participants' answered to questions such as "My friend/relative is already studying the same course in the same university", "The parents / family members influenced me to take up this course", "My school teacher advised me to take up this course" and "University counselor / marketing representative convinced me to join this course". The final section comprised a question for understanding the participants' career choice. The respondents were informed about the purpose of the research and an electronic Google form was distributed to the respondents who study logistics management course at the institutions located in and around Bangkok. The participants' answered and submitted the online form, valid responses were included for the study (n= 234). Hence convenience sampling method was adopted for the study. The data was analyzed using SPSS 25 version. Frequency and percentage analysis was carried out for the demographic profile and mean was calculated to understand the participants' agreeableness towards all the variables from section two to section six. The multiple linear regression to identify the factor that has significant impact on logistics management students' career choice; cross-tabulation was computed to compare the career choice with medium of instruction and the results are discussed in the next section.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis and discussion covers the two parts: 1. Descriptive Statistics and 2. Inferential Statistics

### 1. Descriptive Statistics

The table below provides the basic information about the demographic profile of the respondents.

**Table 1**

| **Demographic Profile** | | **Frequency** | **Percent** |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | Male | 80 | 34.2 |
| | Female | 154 | 65.8 |
| | Total | 234 | 100 |
| **Major** | Logistics Management (International Program) | 93 | 39.7 |
| | Logistics Management (Thai Program) | 141 | 60.3 |
| | Total | 234 | 100 |
| **Year of Study** | Year 1 | 40 | 17.1 |
| | Year 2 | 153 | 65.4 |
| | Year 3 | 21 | 9.0 |
| | Year 4 | 20 | 8.5 |
| | **Total** | **234** | **100** |

From the above table 1 it is observed that major proportionate 65.8% of the respondents were female, and 34.2 % of the respondents were male. The major portion 60.3% of the respondents pursue logistics management course in Thai program, and remaining 39.7% of the respondents pursue the course in International program. Also, it is noted that 65.4% of the respondents belong to year 2, followed by 17.1% of the respondents in year 1, 9.0% of the respondents in year 3, and 8.5% of the respondents in year 4. In overall, the major group of respondents was female study in year 2.

### 1.1 Mean

The below tables provide the mean for various factors influencing Thai logistics management students' career choice.

**Table 2 Interest towards Logistics Industry**

| Items | Mean |
|---|---|
| I came to know about Logistics Management course in my high school. | 1.82 |
| I became interested to study Logistics Management in my High school itself. | 1.35 |
| I gained interest after knowing about the job roles and job descriptions of Logistics Industry. | 2.79 |
| I already worked in logistics industry (Part-time/ full-time) before joining university. | 1.41 |
| **Overall** | **1.84** |

From the above table 2, it is found that the mean value for all items with respect to interest towards logistics industry was at low level 1.8425. The item 'I gained interest after knowing about the job roles and job descriptions of Logistics Industry' is with a mean score of 2.79 (moderate level), whereas the variables 'I came to know about Logistics Management course in my high school' is with a mean score of 1.82 (Low), 'I already worked in logistics industry (Part-time/ full-time) before joining university' is at 1.41 (very low), and 'I became interested to study Logistics Management in my High school itself' is at 1.35 (very low). In overall, it is found that the students' gained interest after knowing about the job roles and job descriptions of Logistics Industry.

**Table 3 Career in Logistics Industry**

| Items | Mean |
|---|---|
| There is a very good job scope for Logistics graduates | 4.00 |
| Career in Logistics industry is very exciting | 3.94 |
| Logistics Industry job market is stable and ever growing. | 3.96 |
| Students' from my university are getting good job placements through campus interviews. | 3.94 |
| **Overall** | **3.96** |

From the above table 3, it is found that the mean value for all items with respect to career in logistics industry was at high level 3.96. The item 'There is a very good job scope for Logistics graduates' is with a mean score of 4.00 (high level), whereas the variables 'Logistics Industry job market is stable and ever growing' is with a mean score of 3.96 (high), 'Career in Logistics industry is very exciting' and 'Students' from my university are getting good job placements through campus interviews' is at 3.94 (high). In overall, it is

found that the students' learnt that there is a very good scope for logistics graduates as logistics industry is booming.

**Table 4 Financial Implications of Logistics Education**

| Items | Mean |
|---|---|
| Pay in logistics industry is better than other industries | 3.51 |
| Quick return on investment / easy to payback my education loan | 3.52 |
| Financial incentives are better in Logistics Industry than any other industry | 3.48 |
| **Overall** | **3.50** |

From the above table 4, it is found that the mean value for all items with respect to financial implications of logistics education was at moderate level 3.50. The item 'Quick return on investment / easy to payback my education loan' is with a mean score of 3.52 (high level), whereas the variables 'Pay in logistics industry is better than other industries' is with a mean score of 3.51 (high), and 'Financial incentives are better in Logistics Industry than any other industry' is at 3.48 (moderate). In overall, it is found that the students' believe that the pay in logistics industry is high and they can get quick return on their investment to pay back the educational loan.

**Table 5 Environmental Influences**

| Items | Mean |
|---|---|
| My friend/relative is already studying the same course in the same university | 4.08 |
| The parents / family members influenced me to take up this course. | 4.44 |
| My school teacher advised me to take up this course. | 4.41 |
| University counselor / marketing representative convinced me to join this course | 4.62 |
| **Overall** | **4.39** |

From the above table 5, it is found that the mean value for all items with respect to Environmental Influences was at high level 4.39. The item 'University counselor / marketing representative convinced me to join this course' is with a mean score of 4.62 (very high level), whereas the variables 'The parents / family members influenced me to take up this course.' is with a mean score of 4.44 (high), 'My school teacher advised me to take up this course' is at 4.41 (high), and 'My friend/relative is already studying the same course in the same university' is at 4.08 (high). In overall, it is found that all the items in environmental influence are high. And also the environment plays an important role in students' career choice.

**Table 6 Career Choice**

| Item | Mean |
|---|---|
| I made right decision by choosing the field of logistics as my career choice | 3.84 |
| **Overall** | **3.84** |

From the above table 6, it is found that the mean value for career choice that is 'I made right decision by choosing the field of logistics as my career choice' was at high level 3.84.

**Table 7**

| Variables | Mean |
|---|---|
| Career choice | 3.84 |
| Environmental Influences | 4.39 |
| Career in Logistics Industry | 3.96 |
| Financial Implications of Logistics Education | 3.50 |
| Interest towards Logistics Industry | 1.84 |

From the above table 7, it is found that the mean value for all factors influencing career choice was at high level, whereas for the factor interest towards logistics industry is with a mean score of 1.84 (low). In overall, it is found that the environmental influences are high, followed by the factor career in logistics industry.

**2. Inferential Statistics**

The multiple linear regression results help to identify the factor that has significant impact on logistics management students' career choice.

**Table 8**

| Variables | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | p-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Intercept | 2.376 | .394 | | 6.033 | .000* |
| | Environmental Influences | .202 | .073 | .194 | 2.777 | .006* |
| | Career in Logistics Industry | .133 | .060 | .154 | 2.204 | .029* |
| | Financial Implications | -.064 | .048 | -.085 | -1.349 | .179** |
| | Interest towards Logistics Industry | .151 | .118 | .080 | 1.276 | .203** |
| a. Dependent Variable: Career choice | | | | | | |

$R = .317$, $R^2 = .101$, $P \leq 0.05$*, $P \geq 0.05$**

It is observed from multiple linear regression (Table 8), the results indicated that various factors has significant impact on logistics students career choice F (4, 229) = 6.410, p<0.05. The correlation coefficient R was at .317 and R square values indicates that various factors accounted for 10.1% of the variance in the logistics students' career choice. The results indicates that the variables environmental influences (b = .194, p<0.05), career in logistics industry (b = .133, p<0.05) have significant and positive impact on career choice, whereas the variables financial implications (b = -.085, p>0.05), and interest towards logistics industry (b = .080, p>0.05) is statistically non-significant. However, in overall environmental influences and career in logistics industry plays an important role and affects the career choice of logistics management students. The regression equation is written as career choice = 2.376 - .064 (financial implications) + .202 (environmental influences) + .133 (career in logistics industry) + .151 (interest towards logistics industry).

### 3. Cross- Tabulation

The cross-tabulation table is a part of descriptive statistics. This compares the career choice and the major i.e. logistics management course in Thai and International Programme.

**Table 9**

| Career choice * Major | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Major | | |
| | | | Logistics Management (International Program) | Logistics Management (Thai Program) | Total |
| Career choice | Strongly Disagree | Count | 3 | 6 | 9 |
| | | % within Major | 3.2% | 4.3% | 3.8% |
| | Disagree | Count | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| | | % within Major | 2.2% | 1.4% | 1.7% |
| | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Count | 15 | 23 | 38 |
| | | % within Major | 16.1% | 16.3% | 16.2% |
| | Agree | Count | 60 | 87 | 147 |
| | | % within Major | 64.5% | 61.7% | 62.8% |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Strongly Agree | Count | 13 | 23 | 36 |
| | | % within Major | 14.0% | 16.3% | 15.4% |
| Total | | Count | 93 | 141 | 234 |
| | | % within Major | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |
| | | % of Total | 39.7% | 60.3% | 100.0% |

From above table 9, it is found that major portion of the respondents accounted for logistics management Thai Programme compared to the international programme. And 64.5% of the respondents in international programme agree that they made a right decision by choosing logistics management as their career choice, whereas in Thai programme 61.7 % of the respondents agree for the same. In Thai programme 16.3% of the respondents strongly agree, whereas in international programme 14% of the strongly agree that they made a right decision. The least numbers fall in international programme for strongly disagree category compared to Thai programme. In overall, majority of the respondents i.e. 62.8% and 15.4% agreed that they rightly made their career choice.

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The results confirmed that there are several factors that influence students' career choice. From the descriptive statistics it is inferred that awareness about logistics management courses in school level is very low. So, the universities marketing management team must plan and work on bringing awareness to teachers and students about the job scope of Logistics management courses at early stage in school level which may also eventually increase the students interest towards logistics management courses. Though the students' perception towards financial implications is comparatively low, their perception towards a career in logistics industry is very high, especially towards job scope for fresh logistics graduates. The major finding of this research is that environment plays an important role in students' career choice. Parents, family members, teachers and university counselors play an very important role in counseling and advising students' for deciding their career choice, which corroborates with the results of similar studies (Farmer, 1985, Aminah Ahamed, 2004; Hwei Ming, Ahmad, and Ismail (2007). Students' were also influenced through their friends or relatives who already study the same course in the same university. Even though they are influenced by their society on deciding the courses they also strongly agree that they made the right decision of choosing the field of logistics as their career choice. From multiple linear regression it is inferred that both environmental influence and students' perception towards career in logistics industry plays an important role on both the Thai and International logistics management programme students' career choice; whereas the factors interest towards logistics industry and financial implications doesn't influence their career choice.

**REFERENCES**


i. Altbach, P. G., & Knight, J. (2007). The internationalization of higher education: Motivations and realities. *Journal of studies in international education*, *11*(3-4), 290-305.

ii. Aminah Ahmad (2004). Role overload, social support and emotional exhaustion among married female medical officers. *Australian Journal of Psychology*, *56* (Supplement), 56.

iii. Asian Correspondent Staff. (2016). *Thai universities in 'crisis' as student enrollments decline.* Retrieved from: https://asiancorrespondent.com/2016/06/thailand-university-crisis-student-enrollments-decline/#qlgYifMXop6SXt0y.99

iv. Blau, P. M., & Duncan, O. D. (1967). The American occupational structure. Hoboken, NJ, US: John Wiley & Sons Inc.

v. Bothwell, E. (2017, May 30). *Three-quarters of Thai universities 'at risk of closure'.* Retrieved from:https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/three-quarters-thai-universities-risk-closure#survey-answer

vi. Dawis, R. V., & Lofquist, L. H. (1984). *A psychological theory of work adjustment.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

vii. Farmer, H.S. (1985). Model of career and achievement motivation for women and men. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 32, 363-390.

viii. Ginzberg, E. (1972). Toward a theory of occupational choice: A restatement. *Vocational Guidance Quarterly*, *20*, 169–176.

ix. Ginzberg, E., Ginsburg, S. W., Axelrad, S., & Herma, J. L. (1951). *Occupational choice: An approach to a general theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

x. Holland, J. L. (1985). *Vocational preference inventory*. Consulting Psychologists Press.

xi. Holland, J. L. (1997). *Making vocational choices: A theory of vocational personalities and work environments*. Psychological Assessment Resources.

xii. Hollingshead, A.B. (1949). Elmtown's youth: the impact of social classes on adolescents. Oxford, England: Wiley.

xiii. Hwei Ming, W., Ahmad, A. and Ismail, M. (2007). Toward A Model of Career Aspiration For Women Employees.In first edition: *Career Development: Advancing Perspective and Practice*, (pp.172-195). Malaysia: Universiti Putra Malaysia.

xiv. Kelley, G. A. (1955). *The psychology of personal constructs.* New York: W. W. Norton.

xv. Kitchroen, K. (2004). Literature review: Service quality in educational institutions. *ABAC journal*, *24*(2).

xvi. Musgrave, P. W. (1967). Towards a Sociological Theory of Occupational Choice. *The sociological review*, *15*(1), 33-46.https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954X.1967.tb01267.x

xvii. Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

xviii. Reissman, L. (1953). Levels of aspiration and social class. *American Sociological Review*, *18*(3), 233-242.

xix. Roe, A., & Lunneborg, P. W. (1990). Personality development and career choice. In D. Brown & L. Brooks, *The Jossey-Bass management series and The Jossey-Bass social and behavioral science series. Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice* (pp. 68-101). San Francisco, CA, US: Jossey-Bass.

xx. Rogers, C. R. (1942). *Counseling and psychotherapy.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

xxi. Rogers, C. R. (1951). *Client-centered therapy.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

xxii. Schiller, D., & Liefner, I. (2007). Higher education funding reform and university–industry links in developing countries: The case of Thailand. *Higher Education*, *54*(4), 543-556.

xxiii. Sewell, W. H., Haller, A. O., & Straus, M. A. (1957). Social status and educational and occupational aspiration. *American sociological review*, *22*(1), 67-73.

xxiv. Super, D. E., & Savickas, M. L. (81). super, CM (1996). The life-span, life-space approach to careers. *D. Brown & L, Brooks (Eds,), Career choice and development: Applying contemporary theories to practice*, 121-178.

xxv. Wesarat, P. O., Sharif, M. Y., & Majid, A. H. A. (2016). A Framework for Assessing Gender Influence on Career Choice of Undergraduate Students in Thailand.

xxvi. Williamson, E. G. (1939). *How to counsel students.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

xxvii. Yousapronpaiboon, K. (2014). SERVQUAL: Measuring higher education service quality in Thailand. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *116*, 1088-1095.